

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Second Sunday in Lent : 25 February A.D. 2018

Creation Reflects God's Glory

"The incarnation of God did not only happen in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. It began approximately 14 billion years ago with a moment that we now call "The Big Bang" or what some call 'The Great Radiance'. At the birth of our universe, God materialized and revealed who God is. Ilia Delio writes: 'Human life must be traced back to the time when life was deeply one, a Singularity, whereby the intensity of mass-energy exploded into consciousness'. This Singularity provides a solid basis for inherent reverence, universal sacrality, and a spiritual ecology that transcends groups and religions.

"St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) stated, 'The immense diversity and pluriformity of this creation more perfectly represents God than any one creature alone or by itself'. However, most Christians thought humans were the only creatures that God cared about, and all else—animals, plants, light, water, soil, minerals—was just 'food' for our own sustenance and enjoyment. I do not believe that the Infinitely Loving Source we call God could be so stingy and withholding, and only care about one species—unless that care would lead to care for everything else too, which I would call full consciousness. That is the unique human gift.

"God created millions of creatures for millions of years before Homo sapiens came along. Many of these beings are too tiny for us to see or have yet to be discovered; some have seemingly no benefit to human life; and many, like the dinosaurs, lived and died long before we did. Why did they even exist? A number of the Psalms say that creation exists simply to reflect and give glory to God (e.g., Psalm 104). The deepest meaning of creation and creatures is their naked existence itself. God has chosen to communicate God's very Self in multitudinous and diverse shapes of beauty, love, truth, and goodness, each of which manifests another facet of the Divine. (See Job 38-39, Wisdom 13:1-9, Romans 1:20.) Once you can see this, you live in an enchanted and spiritually safe world.

"Christians have gotten ourselves into a muddle by not taking incarnation and creation as the body of God seriously. As theologian Sallie McFague writes, 'Salvation is the direction of creation, and creation is the place of salvation'. All is God's place, which is our place, which is the only and every place'.

"I hope that our very suffering now, our crowded presence in this nest that we have largely fouled, will bring us together politically and religiously. The Earth and its life systems, on which we all entirely depend, still have the potential to convert us to a universal maturity. We all breathe the same air and drink the same water. There are no Native, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim versions of the universal elements. The periodic table is the same in every country, or as Shakespeare and musician Mandisa expressed it, we all bleed the same. Animals do not care whether they are on the Mexican or the American side of our delusional wall."

- Fr. Richard Rohr

TO OUR VISITORS, NEWCOMERS, AND SEEKERS

We thank you for joining us today and hope you will return often.

At Ascension, our mission is to become "ambassadors of Christ," so we welcome you to this community of resident aliens. We invite you to fill out a welcome card (located in the rack at the ends of each pew).

TODAY AT ASCENSION

Preacher: Randy Lord-Wilkinson

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the lower atrium.

A place of refuge for parents with restless children is available all morning in the Main Building, in Room 4.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Tai Chi

Tai Chi classes are offered at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons in the Chapel; a good time of peace and balance in a lovely place. Please come and join us. Tai Chi will be cancelled any Thursday that schools are closed for bad weather this winter. Contact Claire Rosser at 301.275.0617 or Cjrosser@aol.com if you have any questions.

A Joyful Path

The members of A Joyful Path will explore the meaning of being of service to others. I John 3:18 "Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. Also the meaning of this Mexican proverb: "A good deed is the best prayer." Come and join us in Room 2 after the 9:00 a.m. service (10:15).

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Ascension House. You don't need to know Spanish to come, because we get together to learn and/or practice. For more information contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Thursday Morning Yoga

Randy's yoga class is every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. in Chapel. These are gentle, entry level classes anyone may enjoy. No props are needed. There are some mats, blocks and blankets for those who want them. If you have your own mat, bring it. Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing.

Starting April 12, 2018, Tina Lightner-Morris will be teaching this class.

New Book for Wednesday Morning Book Group

Beginning Wednesday, March 7, the Wednesday morning group will begin to discuss Brian McLaren's latest book entitled *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian*. Watch the Sunday announcements and weekly e-mails for reading assignments. Here's a description from Amazon.com (<http://amzn.to/2nGabwg>): "Brian McLaren, a leading voice in contemporary religion, argues that— notwithstanding the dire headlines about the demise of faith and drop in church attendance—Christian faith is not dying. Rather, it is embarking on a once-in-an-era spiritual shift. For millions, the journey has already begun."

Godly Play

This week's Godly Play lessons, The Faces of Easter III and IV, continue to help us prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery of Easter by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This week we focus on the face of Christ as the One who was baptized and blessed as well as Christ's temptations in the desert.

The Listening Heart Community

The Listening Heart Community is Ascension's "monastery of the heart", an intentional group for seekers in all stages of their spiritual journey to explore Benedictine and other contemplative spirituality in community. This fall and winter, we will be praying with the writings and teachings of Thomas Merton, the American mystic and Trappist monk, in observance of the centennial of his birth.

We meet again on Monday December 4. Contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Lenten Bible Study: Contemplating Colossians

Contemplation is entering into the realm of spiritual mystery. In the New Testament, the mysterious letter to the Colossians takes up that theme with its claim that we have the mystery of Christ. Over the first five Sundays in Lent, Sister Elena will lead an encounter with this mysterious short text and its theologies of the pre-existence of Christ, invisibility (Harry Potter's not the only one with a cloak!), spiritual power and resurrection. We'll also engage the apparent contradiction with these theologies and their manifestation within an unjust social order. Meets from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. on five Sundays, February 18 through March 18, in the Undercroft.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Palm Sunday is a 1A Sunday!

There will be one service at 10:00 a.m. Afterward will be Randy's farewell celebration. Save the date: March 25.

Candidates' Forum

The candidates' Forum is today at 10:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. in the Main Church. We are moving it out of the Undercroft as there is a Lenten Bible Study there at 10:15 a.m. and the 11:00 a.m. community gathers in that space pretty much every Sunday.

Annual Meeting

Our annual parish meeting will take place at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 4 in the Main Church. Our primary business will be to elect new Vestry members and to have a time for shared reflection on the ministry and mission of Ascension.

Worship Committee News

Our singlehanded stellar Worship Committee Chairman Carleton MacDonald is moving to Orangevale, California. His last Sunday at Ascension is April 8. If you would like to serve as chair or committee member, please let me know.

Meredith Horan

eve 301-926-1054 horanm@hotmail.com

Interfaith Class on “Abraham’s Children”

This class, to have been offered in March as a Lenten study for local Jews, Christians, and Muslims, has been cancelled. For details, see Randy.

Pledge Envelopes

Please don't forget to pickup your pledge envelopes located on the table outside the Parish Office if you haven't done so. If your pledge envelope is not there and you did not pick it up please contact Lin by e-mail at office@ascensionmd.org.

Ascension Youth Group

Please plan to attend Youth Group today at 6:00 p.m.

Also our dioceses is planning to participate in the “March for Our Lives” on March 24th. More info here: <https://www.thecut.com/2018/02/march-for-our-lives-for-gun-control-will-be-on-march-24.html>

We plan to talk with the Youth about whether we want to participate as a group. Obviously based on their Memorial to the Lost project last year, there may be some interest.

Finally, on Sunday March 4th at 4:00 p.m., we will do another service project with Comfort Cases. We will need an approximate head count by noon on March 2nd. <https://www.comfortcases.org/>

Look forward to seeing you this Sunday evening!!!
Best-
Angie & Trevor

Zumba at Ascension

We will have Zumba classes at Ascension every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Undercroft Commons. Zumba is a dance fitness program created by Colombian dancer and choreographer Alberto "Beto" Perez during the 1990s. Zumba involves dance and aerobic movements performed to energetic music. The choreography incorporates hip-hop, soca, samba, salsa, merengue and mambo.

Men’s Shelter Lunch Program



The Men’s Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men, assembled in the Undercroft once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month.

The next program will be on March 18 at 10:15 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>

Gaithersburg HELP

This organization provides emergency food and other support to needy families in Gaithersburg. Non-perishable food collected at Ascension every week, and during specific holiday in-gatherings, helps to stock the pantry. Donations may be brought to church at any time and left in the narthex. **Please: no perishables.** For more information, contact Melanie Mitchell at 301.519.1074 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

Mobile Med

Mobile Med will not be at Ascension House starting tomorrow January 2nd (until the beginning of March). I have posted signs on the Ascension House bulletin board and on the door to the chapel. Signs list the alternate location as well as a number to contact for more information.

Jean Cohn
spangle1@comcast.net
240.372.3652.

Ministerio Felicidad

Ascension members prepare lunches and send love and prayers to day laborers in the neighborhood of the church. Join Javier at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 24 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

2018 Lenten Rice Bowl Recipient

A Lenten tradition since the tenure of Rector Harry Dalzell (1970-1980), your offering, placed in the wooden bowl in the font as you come forward for Communion, goes toward an outreach ministry. Typically, we alternate between local and domestic or international causes. This year the Rice Bowl offering goes to Gaithersburg HELP, an agency that provides material support to struggling residents of all kinds. Ascension’s food offering goes to the HELP food pantry on Muddy Branch Rd. Parish member Melanie Mitchell has been heavily involved with HELP board for many years. Former Rector Joe Clark served two terms as president of the HELP board.

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 <http://bit.ly/2tHzJuT>

 <http://bit.ly/2sYC8UV>

 <http://bit.ly/2tC0Ysa>

 <http://bit.ly/2paseJO>

CONTACT US

205 S. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 20877
www.ascensionmd.org

- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Phone: 301.948.0122 ◆ Fax: 301.926.9012
- ◆ Randy's Cell: 301.801.4347
- ◆ Javier's Cell: 202.903.6426
- ◆ Prayer requests: Fill out a yellow prayer request card on the table outside the office, in the Chapel or e-mail the office at office@ascensionmd.org.

Bishop of Washington - The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
mebudde@edow.org, 202.537.6550

Rector - (The Rev.) Randy Lord-Wilkinson
ral@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 12

Assistant to the Rector—The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 16

Interim Ministers of Music
9:00 a.m. Clarice Snyder
11:15 a.m. Karina Gomez McCarty

Parish Administrator - Lin Keene
office@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 10

Media Specialist—Eleni Hailu
comm@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 14

Altar Guild Directors, Mardia Dennis, 301.540.4499
mard908@gmail.com, Dotty Pfadenhauer, dottypfa@aol.com
and Georgana Maines, mainesgnh@verizon.net

LEADERSHIP AT ASCENSION

Senior Warden: Betsy Hasegawa
Junior Warden: Janet King

Vestry:

2018: Berenice Rodriguez, Avin Lalmansingh,
Gary McLaughlin

2019: Rose Buck, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner
2020: Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Luis Pedron
Sari Stoddard, *Clerk of the Vestry*
Avin Lalmansingh, *Treasurer*

Christian Formation for Children: Megan Didavi ~ Christian
Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker ~ Facilities: Ted Bell
Finance: Howard Holland ~ Mission: Paul Boynton ~ Pas-
toral Care: Randy Lord-Wilkinson ~ Personnel: Jean Cohn ~
Worship: Carleton MacDonald

Delegates to Diocesan Convention:

Kristen Keating, Carleton MacDonald, Sue Snay
Alternate: Mardia Dennis

Cycles of Prayer

In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for
St. David's Church, DC
Chapel of the Episcopal Center for Children
Rosemont Center

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Monday, February 26

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
7:00 p.m. Listening Hearts Community-Library
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

Tuesday, February 27

10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting—Library
6:00 p.m. Spanish Bible Study—Ascension House
7:00 p.m. Codependents Anonymous—Room 1
7:00 p.m. Stillwater Mindfulness Group—Chapel
8:30 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1

Wednesday, February 28

10:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Book Group—Library
1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
8:00 p.m. Gamblers' Anonymous—Chapel

Thursday, March 1

10:00 a.m. Yoga—Chapel
4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
7:30 p.m. Zumba—Undercroft

Friday, March 2

1:00 p.m. Al Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Couples 12-Step Program—Room 1

Saturday, March 3

9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft
11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

Sunday, March 4

Preacher: Randy Lord-Wilkinson
7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
10:00 a.m. Latin Choir—Room 1
10:15 a.m. Adult Class—Library
10:15 a.m. Godly Play—Room 6
10:15 a.m. Joyful Path—Room 2
10:15 a.m. Service for Young Children—Chapel
10:15 a.m. Annual Meeting—Main Church
10:15 a.m. Lenten Study—Undercroft
11:00 a.m. Eucaristia en Espanol—Chapel
11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
1:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting—Room 1
5:00 p.m. Contemplative Eucharist—Chapel
6:00 p.m. NoMoCo Youth Consortium

Attendance	January 28	February 4	February 11
7:45 a.m.	22	25	27
9:00 a.m.	60	84	79
10:15 a.m.	7	7	17
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	45	30	49
11:15 am	62	27	52
5:00 p.m.	6	6	9
Total:	202	179	233