

# WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

*The Third Sunday after Epiphany : 21 January A.D. 2018*

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## Breathe, Fire, Wind, Womb: A Reflection on the Holy Spirit

The Spirit is like breath, as close as the lungs, the chest, the lips, the fogged canvas where little fingers draw hearts, the tide that rises and falls twenty-three thousand times a day in a rhythm so intimate we forget to notice until it enervates or until a supine yogi says pay attention and its fragile power awes again. Inhale. Exhale. Expand. Release. In the beginning, God breathed. And the dust breathed back enough oxygen, water, and carbon dioxide to make an atmosphere, to make a man. Job knew life as “the breath of God in my nostrils,” given and taken away. With breath, the Creator kindled the stars, parted a sea, woke a valley of dry bones, inspired a sacred text. So, too, the Spirit, inhaled and exhaled in a million quotidian ways, animates, revives, nourishes, sustains, speaks. It is as near as the nose and as everywhere as the air, so pay attention.

The Spirit is like fire, deceptively polite in its dance atop the wax and wick of our church candles, but wild and mercurial as a storm when unleashed. Fire holds no single shape, no single form. It can roar through a forest or fulminate in a cannon. It can glow in hot coals or flit about in embers. But it cannot be held. The living know it indirectly—through heat, through light, through tendrils of smoke snaking through the sky, through the scent of burning wood, through the itch of ash in the eye. Fire consumes. It creates in its destroying and destroys in its creating. The furnace that smelts the ore drives off slag, and the flame that refines the metal purifies the gold. The fire that torches a centuries-old tree can crack open her cones and spill out their seeds. When God led his people through the wilderness, the Spirit blazed in a fire that rested over the tabernacle each night. And when God made the church, the Spirit blazed in little fires that rested over his people’s heads. “Quench not the Spirit,” the apostle wrote. It is as necessary and as dangerous as fire, so stay alert; pay attention.

The Spirit is like wind, earth’s oldest sojourner, which in one place readies a sail, in another whittles a rock, in another commands the trees to bow, in another gently lifts a bridal veil. Wind knows no perimeter. The wildest of all wild things, it travels to every corner of a cornerless world and amplifies the atmosphere. It smells like honeysuckle, curry, smoke, sea. It feels like a kiss, a breath, a burn, a sting. It can whisper or whistle or roar, bend and break and inflate. It can be harnessed, but never stopped or contained; its effects observed while its essence remains unseen. To chase the wind is folly, they say, to try and tame it the very definition of futility. “The wind blows wherever it pleases,” Jesus said. “You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). We are born into a windy world, where the Spirit is steady as a breeze and as strong as a hurricane. There is no city, no village, no wilderness where you cannot find it, so pay attention.

The Spirit is like a womb, from which the living are born again. We emerge—lashes still wet from the water, eyes unadjusted to the light—into a reanimated and freshly charged world. There are so many new things to see, so many gifts to give and receive, so many miracles to baffle and amaze, if only we pay attention, if only we let the Spirit surprise and God catch our breath.

From Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday*

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**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: Nan Hildebrand**

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.

#### Children's Formation

The members of A Joyful Path moved their classroom upstairs to Room 2 (the old nursery). Come and join us in our new setting today after the 9:00 a.m. service.

#### 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](mailto: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.

#### New Book for Wednesday Morning: Is Christ God?

We will begin study and discussion of Michael Morwood's book *Is Christ God? Finding Our Faith From Amazon*: "In the new millennium, the most central question is how to understand God and Jesus. This book is an invitation to Christians—and non-Christians—to challenge their inherited notions of how and why Jesus is to be thought of as divine." You can order the book by following this link: <http://amzn.to/2CRGzCs>. For the 17th read through the end of chapter one.

#### Godly Play

This week in Godly Play, we present the Parable of the Good Shepherd. In this story, we learn about the shepherd who knows each of his sheep by name and shows them the way to all good things. If one sheep goes missing, the good shepherd searches for it, even leaving the ninety-nine to do so. When he finds the missing sheep, he calls his friends to rejoice. This story underscores how well Christ knows each of us. It also reminds us that to stay on the true path, we must know Christ as well. We explore how our faith helps us through good times and bad times and take comfort that if we lose our way, Christ will come looking for us and welcome us back into the fold.

### 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. We meet the first and third Monday of each month in Library. Contact Lori Perine at [lperine@gmail.com](mailto:lperine@gmail.com) if you would like to join us.

### LIFE AT ASCENSION

#### Parish Town Hall Meeting a 10:15 on Sunday, February 11

Meet with Randy and Vestry members for updates and a Q&A session about Ascension's transition.

#### February 13 is Shrove Tuesday!

That's right, Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day this year! We need a team of people to organize this annual event. Sign the clipboard Randy will be passing around in church if you want to be part of creating this fun event!

#### 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.

#### Ascension Youth Group

##### January 28

Regular Ascension Youth Group  
6 pm - 8pm Ascension Undercroft  
Need dinner volunteers please

Please email or text us if you can attend this Sunday's service project or if your family can cover dinner one of the evenings. Also-I have dates for our Mission Trip in June. It is June 23rd through June 29th. We will return to Philadelphia and will be going with our Virginia diocese friends.

Finally-thank you all for the coats and winter wear we sent to St. James! We sent them 37 pounds of warm items and they were so grateful!!

Best- Angie and Trevor

#### Winter Weather Policy

At Ascension, we always TRY to have church even when the weather is bad. We realize that travelling may be very difficult for some, so please make the best decision for you and your family about Sunday church attendance. Even if we have Sunday services during inclement weather, we may cancel all other activities, such as Christian Formation for Children, Youth and Adults. Volunteer leaders, likewise, should use personal judgment about the safety of their travel that day. Cancellations will be announced by way of e-mail and on the outgoing message line at 301.948.0122.

As a rule, we will follow Montgomery County Public Schools for closing and cancellation decisions. If there is a delayed opening our morning activities are cancelled. If schools are closed, morning and afternoon activities are cancelled. In this event, evening activities still may be scheduled, so check in with the committee chair or call the outgoing message line at the church to check the status of your meeting or activity.



Interfaith Dialogue and Reflection Series



Church of the Ascension will be one of the hosts of a four-part program series of interfaith dialogue and reflection titled "Abraham's Children."

The four sessions will be held in March on Wednesday evenings, 7-9 PM as follows:

- ◆ March 7 at Church of the Ascension (205 S Summit Ave, Gaithersburg, MD 20877)
- ◆ March 14 at Kehilat Shalom (9915 Apple Ridge Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20886)
- ◆ March 21 at Islamic Center of Maryland (19411 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20879)
- ◆ March 28 at Tikvat Israel Congregation (2200 Baltimore Road, Rockville, MD 20851)

Developed by the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Abraham's Children offers text study and dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths in an effort to engage "the complexities of what is shared and what is unique in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions."

The Faith Community Working Group of Montgomery County and the Greater Gaithersburg Interfaith Alliance is teaming up with Church of the Ascension, the Islamic Center of Maryland, Kehilat Shalom and Tikvat Israel Congregation as co-sponsors if the series.

For more information or to sign up, write Richard Lederman at ledermanrc@gmail.com or call him at 240-441-8074.

Movie Night: *Spirited Away*  
February 2nd at 6:30 p.m.



Everyone is welcome to meet up in the Undercroft on Friday, February 2nd at 6:30 p.m. to watch *Spirited Away* (rated PG).

During her family's move to the suburbs, a sullen 10-year-old girl wanders into a world ruled by gods, witches, and spirits, and where humans are changed into beasts.

Chihiro and her parents are moving to a small Japanese town in the countryside, much to Chihiro's dismay. On the way to their new home, Chihiro's father makes a wrong turn and drives down a lonely one-lane road which dead-ends in front of a tunnel. Her parents decide to stop the car and explore the area. They go through the tunnel and find an abandoned amusement park on the other side, with its own little town. When her parents see a restaurant with great-smelling food but no staff, they decide to eat and pay later. However, Chihiro refuses to eat and decides to explore the theme park a bit more. She meets a boy named Haku who tells her that Chihiro and her parents are in danger, and they must leave immediately. She runs to the restaurant and finds that her parents have turned into pigs. In addition, the theme park turns out to be a town inhabited by demons, spirits, and evil gods. At the center of the town is a bathhouse where these creatures go to relax.

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 program operates today 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](mailto: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](mailto: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, January 27 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact Javier at [ocampo@ascensionmd.org](mailto:ocampo@ascensionmd.org)

PLEDGE UPDATE AS OF JANUARY 17, 2018



150 Pledges for a total of \$355,746

Thanks to those below who have pledged to the annual giving campaign this past week:

- |                                     |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ◆ Ricky Babcock                     | ◆ Randall Lord-Wilkinson        |
| ◆ Melody Bell                       | ◆ Martha Lubet                  |
| ◆ Johnathan Black                   | ◆ Bubba Pflantzbaum             |
| ◆ Robert & Cindi Bonsib             | ◆ Leonard & Erin Martinko       |
| ◆ Andrew & Joyce Bvumbe             | ◆ Maura Ryan & Marybeth Daucher |
| ◆ Brad & Carol Clark                | ◆ Karen Olsen                   |
| ◆ Georgette Dennis & Douglas Lozano | ◆ Christian & Marissa Simpson   |
| ◆ Megan & Coiffi Didavi             | ◆ Joyce Thompson                |
| ◆ Andrew & Amy Duncan               | ◆ Mary Thorpe                   |
| ◆ George Eng & Christine Yankus-Eng | ◆ Amy Van Dalinda               |
| ◆ Gerald & Kristin FitzPatrick      | ◆ Trevor & Angela Walker        |
| ◆ Geraldine Gil                     | ◆ Paul Boynton                  |
| ◆ Brenda Gumula                     | ◆ Daniel & Linda Yankie         |
| ◆ Pamela Irons-Forth                | ◆ Paul Boynton                  |

## 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 Be-  
dell 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. Paul's Church, Baden and St. Mary's Chapel, Aquasco  
St. Paul's Church, Rock Creek Parish  
St. Paul's Church, Piney Parish  
St. Timothy's Parish, DC

St. Timothy's Child Development Center, DC  
Diocesan Convention: The Bishop of Washington, Diocesan  
Convention Officers, Clerical and Lay Delegates, Conven-  
tion Task Force and Committee Chairs (January 27)

Pray for the Mission and Ministry of the  
Episcopal Diocese of Washington

## THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

### Monday, January 22

- 1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
- 6:00 p.m. Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
- 6:00 p.m. Spanish Class—Ascension House
- 7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

### Tuesday, January 23

- 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, January 24

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

### Thursday, January 25

- 10:00 a.m. Yoga—Chapel
- 11:00 a.m. Episcopal Seeking Seniors—Asbury
- 4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
- 7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
- 7:30 p.m. Zumba—Undercroft

### Friday, January 26

- 1:00 p.m. Al Anon—Room 1
- 6:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 3243—Room 1

### Saturday, January 27

- 6:00 p.m. Ministerio Felicidad
- 9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
- 11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft
- 11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

### Sunday, January 28

Preacher: Tina Lightner

- 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
- 11:00 a.m. Eucaristia en Espanol—Chapel
- 11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 1:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting—Room 1
- 2:00 p.m. Christian Counseling Network—Library
- 5:00 p.m. Contemplative Eucharist—Chapel
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group—Undercroft

Attendance	December 31	January 7	January 14
7:45 a.m.	—	26	20
9:00 a.m.	—	80	84
10:15 a.m.	161	6	6
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	—	40	42
11:15 am	—	31	44
5:00 p.m.	—	33	6
Total:	161	219	192