

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Third Sunday after Pentecost: 10 June A.D. 2018

Reading and Understanding the Bible

If you are like most people, you may find today's gospel pretty puzzling. Why are Jesus' associates, friends and family concerned about Him not being in his right mind? Do they really think that? And is Jesus disparaging his own family when he says, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." Further, isn't it a bit chilling to hear, "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness."? "Blaspheme" is not a word we use much any more; how many of us could define it in modern terms, let alone its exact meaning in the time of Jesus. But the consequences of blasphemy are terrible—surely we should know just what it is we are to avoid doing!

Reading and understanding the Bible is pleasure, consolation, and understanding. The reward for making the effort is powerful, and it gives a sense of the place of Scripture in God's drama of redemption. But as you might have guessed, it is not exactly easy. What makes it so challenging? Well, first we know that the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, and to some extent, ancient Greek. For most of us, our connection to these languages doesn't exist. So we can't simply look back at the original text for a confusing word or scene. The text can be rich with multiple meanings waiting to confound our understanding of the message. Which is the "right" one? IS there a "right" one? The story of the Bible certainly speaks to us today; but it is firmly rooted in a particular time and place which is foreign to us. If you like to travel, you know that a small effort to experience a place very different from our own yields a growth in understanding of the world, and our place in it. How much greater would be the result from learning a bit about the historical, social, and geographic context of the Bible.

There are a few simple things that can give us more, or a clearer understanding the Biblical texts. First, read a larger portion of the text. Remember that the Bible is a consistent story from Genesis to Revelation. Anywhere you look in the Bible, it either anticipates or reveals God's saving mercy in Jesus Christ. We tend to forget that this is a story. And like all stories, it was meant to be spoken aloud, often to people who who did not read. Imagine how confusing it would be to hear six sentences of a book and try to "get" the message. I think if you go to Mark in your own Bible and read the whole chapter, some of your confusion about today's passage would clear up. Also, if a chapter or verse puzzles you, there are endless commentaries in study Bibles and online to help. Try this once or twice to see if this works for you.

Read parts of the Bible that puzzle (or comfort) you multiple times. The Holy Spirit is with you, and I think it is his job to ease the transition from completely abstract to something wholly your own. Of course, you can always gather with others who are interested in studying the Bible. You will find inspiration and joy in the study. And the social component helps form bonds of friendship and mutual support.

I have been hoping that Bible study is something that might appeal to you. Do you think that there is any desire for such a program at Ascension in the near future? If you think that there is, perhaps you can tell me what is important to you, and when and where it would be most convenient.

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: Elena Thompson

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.

Summer Sunday School

This week (June 10) is the last week of the regular Sunday school year. Both Joyful Path and Godly Play will celebrate our time together in the godly play classroom.

There will be summer Sunday school in room 3 (the toddler room/room of refuge). It will be geared toward ages 5 and under, but older children are welcome to come help or just hang out.

If you have questions, contact Megan Didavi 703-636-7199 mdidavi@gmail.com.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

We are reading Derek Wilson's book entitled A Magical World: Superstition and Science from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Our group meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension's library. All are welcome to participate. Please read Chapter 5 for this coming Wednesday.

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 ocampoj@ascensionmd.org

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 on alternate Monday evenings. Please contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you would like more information.

Thursday Morning Yoga

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 AM, taught by Lucia Pires. The class is multilevel, with an emphasis on gentle yoga, and is appropriate for beginners. Props are offered, but the students are encouraged to bring their own yoga mats.

Lucia Pires is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is a 500-hour Pranakriya Yoga School of Healing Arts certified yoga



teacher. Her training focuses on cultivating and enhancing the relationship of the student with his or her life force through yoga postures, breath work and meditation, in order to create change in awareness and help the student move towards wholeness and greater aliveness. She completed her professional training in 2015.

Lucia is the mother of two boys, ages 14 and 10, and when they give her a little break she enjoys reading, writing, long walks in nature and dancing.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Diana Gustafson Ordination

Dear Ascension Friends

By the Grace of God and the people consenting I will be ordained to the priesthood on June 16, 2018 at 10:00 at the National Cathedral. I am joyful and humbled to invite you join me.

I will have a more formal invitation and further details to send in a few weeks. National Cathedral, 101 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016

Blessings, Diana

Attention Worship Leaders

I will be starting the roster of worship leaders (lectors, chalice, acolytes, hospitality angels, etc) soon. If there are any changes, if you have black-out dates, or if you would be interested in serving as a specific worship leader, please let me know before June 12.

Thanks,

Sari Stoddard | 301-972-0914 | Sari.stoddard@verizon.net

Father's Day Food Drive

Honor your dads, living and departed, while helping others. Bring a bag of groceries to church before or on Father's Day, Sunday, June 17, for the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. Forms for dedication information are found at the Narthex, and undercroft. As always, we will give thanks for the ministry of fatherhood in the Prayers of the People at all services on the 17th.

First Responder Presentation

Would you know how to act quickly if a person in your pew suddenly had a heart attack? Do you know where our AED is located, how to use it, or even what it is? What would you do if a stranger entered the church carrying a weapon, or simply looked threatening? A presentation given by a member of the Gaithersburg Police Department will address all these issues, and more, on Sunday, June 24th following the 10:00 a.m. service in the undercroft. Please plan to attend this important meeting to learn more about these urgent issues.

Kitchen Closed

Until repairs are completed, the kitchen will be closed. We are sorry for the inconvenience and thank you for your support during this time.

Events Schedule Update

We are in the process of updating "Together We Shine" and if you have any event that is scheduled between now and December 2018, Please email all the event's name and date to Eleni at Comm@ascensionmd.org

Facilities Committee Seeks Volunteers!

Have you ever built a house all by yourself? Neither have we. But we have lived in houses and apartments where things break and need repairs. If you have experience calling plumbers, electricians, roofers, etc., and meeting them when they come for estimates, you are just the kind of person we need for the facilities committee. While we welcome handy people who can fix a lock, drive a screw or change a light bulb, most of our duties consist of identifying projects, arranging for estimates and meeting prospective contractors. Perfect for retirees! The more of us there are, the less any one person has to do. If you are interested, contact one of the following: Ted Bedell, 301-520-8449; Luis Pedron, 301-922-5610; John Pruessner, 240-271-4739, or email Lin Keene at: office@ascensionmd.org

Ascension Work Camp 2018

Where: Philadelphia, PA St. James School

Cost: \$350 however scholarships will be found for those in need. Please make check out to Ascension and put "work camp" in the memo. Also please do not hand it to me but rather give it to church office in person or mail.

This is always a very rewarding experience for our Ascension Youth. The church will send them off on June 24th at the 120 am service.

Fifteen Ascension Youth, joined by 4 youth from the dioceses in Virginia, will head to inner city Philadelphia for a one week Work Camp on Sunday June 24th. Currently, Philly's poverty rate is 25% (adult poverty rate) and 38% (child poverty rate), giving the unwanted distinction of having the highest rate in the nation among the 25 most populous U.S. counties. The Youth will work specifically at the St. James School <https://stjamesphila.org/> with which Ascension has a long and rewarding relationship. St. James is a faith-based middle school in the Episcopal tradition, committed to educating traditionally under resourced students in a nurturing environment. This school is located in in northern Philadelphia where the poverty rate is nearly double the city's rate, surpassing 44%. The importance of education for these students can not be overstated considering that only 50% of Philadelphia high school students graduate on time and more than 40% drop out altogether. Please keep the Youth in your prayers and consider donating their cause.

Please contact Angie to sign up or with any questions: angela.hightwalker@nist.gov.

Ascension Music Update

Church of the Ascension is blessed to have so many talented and dedicated musicians to lead and inspire in our worship. Beginning Sunday June 10, 2018 The Ascension Choir will begin their summer hiatus. Music at the 10AM service will continue to be drawn from a variety of sources. The Ensemble will continue to provide accompaniment along with the organ. This summer is an opportunity for new and old members to come and join in the singing and the playing. Rehearsal for the music of the day will be held at 9 AM prior to worship. Additional instrumental rehearsal to be arranged as needed.

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 June 17 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>

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, June 30 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Donation for Gaithersburg HELP

Thank you all so much for your generous donations of food to the Gaithersburg HELP food pantry. We get a wide range of donations from week to week, and are very grateful. We especially appreciate donations of canned fruit, boxed cereal, pasta, beans, peanut butter, and soup. There are, however, a couple of categories of items that we cannot accept:

- ◆ Perishable items, especially bread. The pantry does have agreements with a couple of local bakeries, by which their unsold (but still fresh) baked goods are delivered directly to our freezers. Loaves of bread left at the church are likely to be crushed or go moldy before they can be delivered to the pantry.
- ◆ Open items, or items that are not in their original packaging. We respect our clients and show concern for their health and safety by not giving them open boxes, half-empty jars, pasta or beans in unlabeled plastic bags, or loose flavor packets.

If you would like to volunteer for Gaithersburg HELP, or if you need assistance, visit gaithersburghelp.org or call (301) 216-2510. Thank you!

Melanie Mitchell
301.519.1074 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

Prison Ministry

Bubba Pflantzbaum has been writing to an inmate in Cumberland for about 10 years, providing friendship and access to information. His name is Jim, and he may be released in the next year or so. Jim is always looking for people to correspond with, so if you are interested in getting involved with this ministry, please email Bubba at bubbashalom@gmail.com

Montgomery Hospice

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit hospice that has been serving the residents of Montgomery County for 36 years. We provide professional end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities and at Casey House, our acute care facility. We are looking for new volunteers. Our greatest need is for volunteers to visit patients. These volunteers provide companionship for patients, respite for family members, lavender oil hand massages, music by the bedside or help with practical matters. Many provide the gift of "presence" by simply being with a patient. All volunteers go through an application

CONTACT US

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

- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. 3:30 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
- ◆ Phone: 301.948.0122 ◆ Fax: 301.926.9012
- ◆ Javier’s Cell: 202.903.6426
- ◆ Prayer requests: Fill out a yellow prayer request card on the table at Narthex, 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

Priest in Charge –The Rev. Javier García Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 12

Interim Ministers of Music

9:00 a.m. Clarice Snyder

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,

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:

2019: Rose Buck, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner
2020: Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Luis Pedron
Sari Stoddard, *Clerk of the Vestry*
Avin Lalmansingh, *Treasurer*
2021: Berenice Rodriguez, Robert Waters,
Susan McLaughlin

Christian Formation for Children: Megan Didavi ~ Christian

Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker ~
Facilities: Ted Bedell ~

Finance: Avin Lalmansingh ~ Mission: Paul Boynton ~
Pastoral Care: Nan Hildebrand ~
Personnel: Jean Cohn ~

Worship: Gary McLaughlin, Curt Lindsay

Delegates to Diocesan Convention:

Mardia Dennis, Gary McLaughlin, Sue Snay
Alternate: Fred Diaz

Cycles of Prayer

In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for
St. Barnabas' Church of the Deaf, Chevy Chase
St. Barnabas' Church, Leeland
St. Barnabas' Church, Temple Hills

Ordination Service (June 16) - Pray for those who are being
ordained

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Monday, June 11

11:30 a.m. Living with a Chronic Illness—Room 1
1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Spanish Class—Ascension House
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

Tuesday, June 12

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, June 13

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, June 14

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

Friday, June 15

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Couples 12-Step Program—Room 1
8:00 p.m. Couples 12-Step Program-Library

Saturday, June 16

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

Sunday, June 17: Father’s Day

Preacher: Javier Ocampo
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist —Main Church
Bible School for 3+ year olds & under — Main
Church
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist —Main Church
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist —Main Church
11:00 a.m. Latin Choir — Room 1
11:00 a.m. Men’s Shelter Lunches
12:00 p.m. Eucaristia en Espanol—Main Church
12:30 p.m. Father’s Day—Undercroft
1:30 p.m. Maryland Uke Jam—Chapel

Attendance	May 20	May 27	June 3
8:00a.m.	25	20	27
10:00 a.m.	116	107	106
12:00p.m.	52	44	25
Total:	193	171	158