

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Last Sunday after Epiphany : March 3, A.D. 2019

The Drama of Ash Wednesday

When I was a child, I loved getting the ashes of Ash Wednesday on my forehead. I wasn't very clear about the theological or philosophical underpinnings of the ritual, but I certainly sensed the interest of my friends and companions in the blurry black marks on my forehead. I was special, in an interesting, good way. One memorable Lenten season, my father decided that my behavior was too headstrong to merit the ashes, and he wouldn't put them on. So much for my specialness that year! Now, I have come to believe that a little of this public "specialness" remains for the faithful who choose to retain the ashes for the day as they go about their business.

Where does all this ash drama come from? Certainly, ashes were used in ancient times to express grief, but they were not part of any early Christian ritual or practice. It took nearly a thousand years for civilization's general acceptance of ashes as a sign of penitence and mortality to filter into Lenten thinking—and another three hundred years to become part of the liturgy. At the same time, public, humiliating penance for notorious dinners was dropped (including the reading of God's curses against Satan, designed to inspire fear and repentance). Instead, the sense of Lent as a penitential season became commonplace, and it was marked by the sprinkling of ashes on the heads of all.

By the Thirteenth Century a robust ritual for the Lenten Season was established. It included the imposition of ashes on the forehead, and the words we still use, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". Alternatively, some priests intone, "Repent! And believe in the gospel." The Liturgy of today may also include the reading of Psalm 51, for its beautiful and hopeful message. Please do read this in your Book of Common Prayer, p.266. The Ash Wednesday service may also include the Litany of Penitence, and the Eucharist. The full liturgy expresses a cycle of emotions and realizations: a sincere confession that we have sinned in many ways; repentance for all our sins; desire to be restored in God's love; hope for our eternal life. This is a LOT of ground to cover in one service. In fact, it really takes the whole season of Lent to fully accept the degree to which we have strayed from the path of right thought and deed, and begin to make a change in the hope of redemption.

Of course, our society prefers quick action. Name it; fix it; move on. And there is some value in this approach, because it brings things to the forefront. In recent times, the church has come out from its comfortable doors and pews to meet people in very public spaces. "Ashes to Go" takes the message of repentance and renewal to shopping centers, train stations and sidewalks. In this action, Anglican priest Emily Mellott sees the imposition of ashes as an act of evangelism. She (and others) feel that offering ashes to go reminds people who have fallen away from their church—or who have never had one—that the Christian Church is alive and well in this community. People are invited to participate in one prayerful moment of reflection, to claim repentance and acknowledge God's grace for the challenges of life. For those who wear the ashes for the rest of the day, it lets them say very softly, "I am a Christian, and it means something. I am a little bit special."

This year, The Rev. Nan and I will be delivering "Ashes to go" at the Shady Grove Station on Wed. March 6, from 7-9am. We welcome anyone who would like to join in this effort. I think you will be surprised and pleased to discover how appreciative people are for this service.

At 12 noon on the same day, and 7:30 pm in the evening (bilingual) We will conduct a traditional Ash Wednesday service, including celebration of the Eucharist and imposition of ashes. It would be wonderful to start your Lenten Season off with one of these expressions of faith!

Blessings,

Javier

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 "Represent Jesus Christ wherever we may be." We welcome you to our church family and invite you to fill out a welcome card (located in the rack at the ends of each pew).

TODAY AT ASCENSION

Preacher: The Rev. Javier Garcia

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the lower atrium.

A place of peace for parents and a beginners Sunday School is available in Room 4.

Please feel free to bring your child.

Vestry Candidates Forum

We have a complete slate of three excellent candidates for next year's Vestry class. Please join us Sunday,

March 3rd for a Vestry Candidate Forum after each service.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

A Joyful Path—10:00 a.m.

The 10:00 Joyful path will learn about Mildred Norman Ryder who answered Jesus's call to leave family and friends and follow him by becoming a "peace Pilgrim". She walked across the United States several times in the 1950's, 60's and 70's teaching people about peace. For this service, all children will meet in the place of peace located in room 4 each week, and then separate by age groups.

A Joyful Path—12:00 p.m.

March 3rd Willpower We will use the story of Harriett Tubman's life We will learn willpower using the story of the life and times of Harriett Tubman. She overcame many obstacles in her life and world and prospered and succeeded. A Joyful Path 12noon Rm 2 Escuela Dominical Para Nin@s

Godly Play

Lent is the Season when we prepare for Easter. These six weeks are a solemn time, overflowing with meaning. This lesson gives an introduction to the relationship of Lent to the Mystery of Easter as well as how Easter overflows into the season of Easter. This lesson that introduces the Mystery of Easter will be followed by the lesson called The Face of Easter during the Week of Lent. Come and join us! For the 10:00 service, all children will meet in the place of peace located in room 4 each week, and then separate by age groups.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

Starting March 20th, Ascension's book group will be discussing the book, "Enlightenment Now" by Steven Pinker. This book claims that reason, science, and humanism have brought progress in the sense that health, prosperity, safety, peace, and happiness have tended to rise worldwide. We invite you to participate in our discussions. We meet weekly at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension's library. Please read Chapter 19 of the book, "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humanity", for this coming Wednesday.

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 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 Fr. Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org.

Thursday Morning Yoga

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. in Room 6, 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.

Tai Chi

Tai Chi class is 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 is 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.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ash Wednesday is March 06

We will celebrate the Holy Eucharist and offer the Imposition of Ashes at 12:00 noon and 7:30 p.m. in the Main Church. The evening service will be bilingual. The Labyrinth will be available for meditation in the Chapel from 10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m. "Ashes to Go" will be offered again this year for morning commuters at the Shady Grove Metro Station between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. We need volunteers to come and help with prayers and administering the Ashes.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

This fun annual event will be held on Tuesday, March 05, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Undercroft Commons. Come join us to celebrate Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fat Tuesday or Martes Gordo...or a good excuse to have pancakes and sausage! This fun event needs lots of helpers AND lots of attendees, 'the more, the merrier!' If you have an instrument you would like to play or if you have a fun activity or games, contact Padre Javier at frjavier@ascensionmd.org or Andrew at music@ascensionmd.org. There is no charge to attend, but donations are welcome.

Annual Meeting

Our annual Parish meeting will take place in the Parish Hall after the service on March 10th. We will only have one service at 10 a.m. The Vestry Committee will provide something to eat after the service. 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. The Vestry candidates will be available for dialog on the preceding Sunday after each service in the Parish Hall.

One Ascension Sunday

On March 31, 2019 the Youth group will be leading the One Ascension Sunday. There will be one service for everyone at 10:00am. This will be followed by a luncheon in the undercroft. All are asked to bring a favorite salad, some fruit, or a dessert for all to share. Come one, come all, to enjoy the Youth group's One Ascension Sunday.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

2019 Lenten Offering (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.

Immigration Consultations

Lucelia R. Justiniano worked at several immigration law firms as a law clerk assisting clients in removal defense cases and family-based applications before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Lucelia interned at the Executive Office of Immigration Review in Baltimore, Maryland drafting decisions for three of the immigration judges. She also interned at the Board of Immigration Appeals in Falls Church, Virginia where she worked alongside Board Attorney Advisors in drafting Board decisions. She has been part of Ascension for a long time. She is exceptionally dedicated to giving back to the community. Now, she is offering immigration consultations every first Sunday of the month. If you have question or know anybody who would need some legal advice she will be at the Library on February 03, from 10:30 to 11:45 AM Contact Lucelia Justiniano at lucelia@jezicfirm.com or Cell phone (240)565-5590

Midweek Eucharistic Service

During Lent, we will have a Holy Eucharist in the Chapel every Wednesday at 7:00 PM. It would be a Contemplative Eucharist featuring alternative Eucharistic prayers, Taizé music and from a variety of sources. During these services we will have conversations about some of the important and famous women in the Bible. If you have questions feel free to contact Padre Javier at frjavier@asceionmd.org

Classical Violin Concert at Ascension

Come enjoy a free classical violin concert in the main church on Sunday, March 10, at 2:00 p.m. The musician is Vijeta Sathyaraj a violinist in the National Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Sathyaraj is a highly accomplished performer who has given solo recitals in Denmark, India, Hong Kong, and the United States. A reception will follow the concert. This concert is a gift from Julie Yelle to Ascension in honor of the 75th birthday of her mother, Laurie Yelle. Ms. Sathyaraj donated the concert as a silent auction item for the Family & Youth Initiative, a Washington DC nonprofit organization that creates community and lasting relationships for teen and young adults in foster care.

PLEDGE UPDATE AS OF FEBRUARY 21, 2019

158 pledges for a total of \$358,060.00, as well as 11 Facilities Reserve Fund donations of \$7,648.00, and one Music Ministry donation of \$500.00 have been received to date.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ascension's Room 2 Renovation

Dear members of Ascension,

My name is Matthew Watson. I am a Boy Scout in Troop 207 in Gaithersburg. I am currently working on attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Scouting. For my service project, I will be renovating Ascension's Room 2 (also known as the Classroom) in March with brand new wooden shelving, building new cubby storage units, and painting the walls. I am seeking donations to help the church pay for supplies for the renovation. Your donation can help make Ascension's Room 2 a more calm, warm, and welcoming environment for both youths and adults. Thank you for your consideration and have a blessed day!

Sincerely, Matthew Watson

Connection Hour Bible Study on The Women of the Cross

From the Sundays of Lent from March 17th to April 7th, Reverends Eugene Wright and Nan Hildebrand will facilitate a bible study on the steadfast and courageous women who stayed with Jesus during the hours of his crucifixion. Our study and conversation will be a meditation on the role of their caregiving, prayer and their courageous love which led to their revelatory leadership. Our study will direct our thoughts to the anticipatory joy of Easter. Help yourself to some coffee and a treat at the 9am coffee hour and meet us in the library. Prayer and discussion will be from 9:10am to 9:50 am.

Attention all Worship Leaders

(and those interested in becoming a worship leader): I will be preparing the new worship roster for the months of April, May and June shortly; if you have any black-out dates for that period, or any changes specific to those months, please let me know as soon as possible. I won't be able to make any changes to the roster after March 12th. My email issari.stoddard@verizon.net, and my cell phone is 301-325-8791 (call or text). Thanks for your generous support of our wonderful church, Sari Stoddard

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ministerio Felicidad

Once a month, Ascension members prepare lunches and send love and prayers to day laborers in the neighborhood of the church. Join Fr. Javier at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 23rd in the church kitchen. For more information, contact Fr. Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org.

Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men. Lunches are assembled in the Undercroft once a month. Generous Ascension members donate the supplies. Depending on the season, we provide 40 to 80 lunches each month. The next program is on March 17th at 9:30 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help.

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
- ◆ Fr. Javier's cell: 202.903.6426
- ◆ Prayer requests: Fill out a prayer request card (pink or yellow, on the table in the narthex) or e-mail the office at office@ascensionmd.org.

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

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

Pastoral Associate—The Rev. Nan Hildebrand
hildebrandnan@gmail.com, voice mailbox 13

Deacon—Eugene Wright

Minister of Music—Andrew Kullberg
music@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 11

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

Communications — Jesse Velazquez
comm@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 14

Altar Guild Directors, Sari Stoddard *sari.stoddard@verizon.net*;
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: Zadinga Ogada

Vestry:

2019: Rose Buck, Janet King, John Pruessner
2020: Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Luis Pedron
2021: Berenice Rodriguez, Robert Waters,
Susan McLaughlin
Danielle Allen, *Clerk of the Vestry*
Avin Lalmansingh, *Treasurer*

Christian Formation for Children: Megan Didavi
Christian Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker
Christian Formation for Adults: Peg Ruppel
Facilities: Ted Bedell & John Pruessner
Finance: Avin Lalmansingh
Mission: Paul Boynton
Pastoral Care: The Rev. Javier Garcia
The Rev. Nan Hildebrand
Personnel: Jean Cohn
Worship: Gary McLaughlin & Curt Lindsay

Delegates to Diocesan Convention:

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

Cycles of Prayer

Prayers for those whose lives are closely linked with ours:

Washington Episcopal Clergy Association (WECA)
Network of National Episcopal Clergy Associations (NNECA)
Ash Wednesday (March 6)

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Monday, March 4, 2019

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Spanish Class- Ascension House
7:00 p.m. Listening Heart Community—Library
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

7:00 a.m. Mobile Med
11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting—Library
6:30 p.m. Shrove Tuesday Pancke Dinner
6:30 p.m. Ensemble—Main Church
7:00 p.m. Stillwater Mindfulness Group—Chapel
7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:30 p.m. Curso de Oración- Room 2
7:30 p.m. Spanish Bible Study—Library
8:30 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

7:00 a.m. Ashes to Go—Shady Grove Station
10:00 a.m. Book Club- Library
12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist/ Imposition of Ashes —Main Church
1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist/ Imposition of Ashes —Main Church
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
7:30 p.m. Worship Committee- Library
8:00 p.m. Gamblers' Anonymous—Room 2

Thursday, March 7, 2019

10:00 a.m. Yoga—Room 6
4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
7:00 p.m. Al-Anon/Spanish—Room 1

Friday, March 8, 2019

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1

Saturday, March 9, 2019

9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 2
10:30 a.m. Margaret Joseph Funeral- Main Church
11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft
11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
7:00 p.m. Al-Anon/Spanish- Room 1

Sunday, March 10, 2019

Preacher: The Rev. Javier Garcia

10:00 a.m. Bible School for 3+ year olds and under - Room 4
10:00 a.m. Godly Play- Room 6
10:00 a.m. HE - Main Church
10:00 a.m. Joyful Path - Room 2
10:00 a.m. St. Barnabas - Chapel
12:00 p.m. Annual Meeting - Undercroft
2:00 p.m. Classical Violin Concert - Main Church
6:00 p.m. Youth Group-Undercroft

| Attendance | Feb. 3 | Feb. 10 | Feb. 24 |
|------------|--------|---------|---------|
| 8:00 am | 34 | 32 | 38 |
| 10:00 am | 116 | 112 | 112 |
| 12:00 pm | 55 | 37 | 32 |
| Total: | 205 | 181 | 182 |