

# WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

*The First Sunday of Advent : 27 November A.D. 2016*

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*The Second Coming of Christ is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of God's nature, sustaining the universe by God's powerful command. —Hebrews 1:3, Jerusalem Bible*

Christ is not Jesus' last name. The word Christ is a title, meaning the Anointed One, which we so consistently applied to Jesus that to us it became like a name. But a study of Scripture, Tradition, and the experience of many mystics reveals a much larger, broader, and deeper meaning to "the Christ." Frankly, it is a metaphysical concept more than a religious one, although almost all people today would see it as a religious name for Jesus.

The above passage from Hebrews says that Christ "sustains the universe." Christ is a religious concept because it can be used to describe reality in an archetypal, symbolic, and profound way. But it names the shape of the universe before it names the individual who typifies that shape, the one we call Jesus Christ. All of creation first holds God's anointing ("beloved" status), and then Jesus brings the message home in a personal way thirteen billion years later!

This is a different way of thinking for most of us. The three Synoptic Gospels are largely talking about Jesus, the historical figure who healed and taught and lived in human history; whereas John's Gospel presents the trans-historical "Christ" (which is why so very few stories in John coincide with Matthew, Mark, and Luke). This Christ is frequently making universal "I AM" statements and claims (see John 6:35, 48; 8:12, 24, 58; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1), mirroring the unspeakable name of the Holy One in Exodus 3:14. This is very different than the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Among the four Gospels, we have both Jesus and Christ.

Paul also never met the historical Jesus and hardly ever quotes Jesus directly. In almost all of Paul's preaching and writing, he is referring to the Eternal Christ Mystery or the Risen Christ rather than Jesus of Nazareth before his death and resurrection. The Risen Christ is the only Jesus that Paul ever knew! This makes Paul a fitting mediator for the rest of us, since the Omnipresent Risen Christ is the only Jesus we will ever know as well (see 2 Corinthians 5:16-17).

Jesus' historical transformation ("resurrected flesh") allows us more easily to experience the Presence that has always been available since the beginning of time, a Presence unlimited by space or time, which is the promise and "guarantee" of our own transformation (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-53). In Jesus the Timeless Christ became time bound, so we could enjoy the personal gaze, as it were (see 1 John 1-2).

Whenever the material and the spiritual coincide, there is the Christ. Jesus fully accepted that human-divine identity and walked it into history. Henceforth, the Christ "comes again" whenever we are able to see the spiritual and the material coexisting, in any moment, in any event, and in any person. All matter reveals Spirit, and Spirit needs matter to "show itself"! I believe "the Second Coming of Christ" happens whenever and wherever we allow this to be utterly true for us. This is how God continually breaks into history—even before the first Stone Age, humans stood in awe and wonder, gazing at the stars.

Richard Rohr

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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: Randy Lord-Wilkinson**

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the Narthex.

**The Nursery is open today** from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is in Room 2, in the rear hallway of the annex at the high school end of the building. Ask a welcome team member for directions.

### LIFE LONG LEARNING

#### Godly Play

This week in Godly Play, we will study The Exodus, when Moses led the People of God out of slavery in Egypt through a parting in the Red Sea. This story helps evoke the People's experience of God's elusive presence. Godly Play classes meet downstairs in Room 6 during the 9, 11 & 11:15 services.

#### A Joyful Path

The members of A Joyful Path will be spending the next several Sundays studying and learning about "the Many Ways." We will be exploring and discovering the beliefs and rituals of the five major world religions. We will continue our journey from Hinduism to Buddhism. Come and join us in Room 11 during the 9, 11 and 11:15 services.

#### Youth Group Fall Service Activity

**November:** Prepare, invite and engage with the faith-based community, fund raise for supplies

**December 14th :** Attend special Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence (Wed evening, anniversary of Newtown)  
<http://www.stmarks.net/preventing-gun-violence/>

**December 17th:** Ascension Youth to lead establishment of "Memorial to the Lost" <http://heedinggodscall.org/content/heeding-gods-call-memorials-lost> on 355 on our church grounds. Rebar grounded, PVC piping installed, names put on T-Shirts, T-shirts hung, prayer circle

#### Yoga Classes

Randy's yoga class resumes on Thursday at 10:00 a.m. in the 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.

#### Tai Chi Class

Tai Chi class resumes on December 1. Tai Chi is an ancient tradition that helps us feel healthy and relaxed. It is a moving meditation. Claire Rosser proposes to lead a group through the 88 steps in the Yang Long Form on Thursdays from 4pm to 5pm in the chapel. For detailed information: <http://www.ascensionmd.org/tai-chi-class/>

Contact Claire Rosser at 301.275.0617 or [Cjrosser@aol.com](mailto:Cjrosser@aol.com) if you have any questions.

### LIFE LONG LEARNING

#### New Music Program for Sunday School

We are so pleased to announce a new component to our Sunday School program. The last Sunday of each month will now be "Music Sunday" with Howard Hanson, Ascension's Children's Music Director. Each Music Sunday we will spend approximately 15 minutes during the 9:00 and 11:15 Sunday School sessions to learn basic music theory, explore our favorite musical traditions and learn new Bible songs. So let's get our children fired up!

#### 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. Contact Lori Perine at [lperine@gmail.com](mailto:lperine@gmail.com) if you would like to join us.

#### Wednesday Morning Book Group

The Wednesday Morning Book Group continues exploration of *Finding God in the Waves: How I Lost My Faith and Found it Again Through Science*, by Mike McHargue. From Amazon.com: "From the host of the popular podcasts, The Liturgists Podcast and Ask Science Mike, a story of having faith, losing it, and finding it again through science—revealing how the latest in neuroscience, physics, and biology help us understand God, faith, and ourselves." For a fuller description and to purchase, go to <http://amzn.to/2ecQ9DC>

In preparation for this Wednesday's discussion, read Chapters 4 and 5.

#### Cell Group News

Once in a month, the group for parents of small children, facilitated by Sarah and Brian Annear will meet in the Library at 11:00am and the next meeting is on December 4. While the group originated from the 10:15 service, anyone who fits the profile is welcome! You can read the book's preface and introduction at the below Amazon link. <http://amzn.to/2d87Apx> It is based on this text from Genesis: <http://bit.ly/13yDft0> Feel free to bring snacks/toys to help distract the little ones.

#### Stillwater Mindfulness Practice Group

Our weekly program of meditation and mindfulness practices in the tradition of zen monk and peace activist Thich Nhat Hahn will continue on Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the chapel.

#### Mind-Body Skills Workshop

Dr. Tina Lightner-Morris will offer workshops on holistic health using research based healing therapies for 8 Mondays from November 14, 2016 to January 9, 2017 between 7pm and 9pm to help you deal with life changes, stress and illness. Participants have experienced a decrease in depression and anxiety, renewed sense of wellbeing, better coping skills to manage pain, increased energy and stamina, enhanced immune system, greater self-awareness and more. The fee is \$65 per session, \$520 for the series or \$500 if paid in full by the first session.

For more information or if you have question, contact Dr. Lightner-Morris, at 301.524.0808 or [tina@lightbalncecounseling.org](mailto:tina@lightbalncecounseling.org)

## LIFE AT ASCENSION

### Visitors' Welcome Kits Are Available

If you are visiting Ascension today, Welcome! To learn more about the community that is Church of the Ascension, please take home with you a yellow welcome packet, located on the Chapel counter and on the table next to the Office. A Welcome Team member will be glad to assist you!

### Blessing of the Cars



As we celebrate the beginning of the Christian year we pray that God will be with us wherever we go. For that reason we will have the Blessing of the Cars Today after the 11:00 am services. If you want you can decorate your car with flowers.

### Lady of Guadalupe Day

Join us on December 10 to celebrate the Lady of Guadalupe Day at 7:00 pm in the Main Church. After the service we will have a Mariachi Band to sing "Las Mañanitas" to the Virgin. If you want to experience more about the Latino Traditions, this would be a great opportunity to do it. After the service we would continue the celebration in the Undercroft with more Mariachi songs and Latin-American food.

### Worship Leaders' Roster

Sari will be starting the roster for January, February and March 2017 very soon. If you know of any dates when you won't be available, let her know by email (sari.stoddard@verizon.net) and she will make sure you aren't scheduled to serve on those dates. Please don't send her anything after the first week of December, though - she won't be able to make changes after that time.

### Vestry Nominations Welcome



It is that time of year when the Vestry is in discernment around who may be called to the ministry of leadership at Ascension. If you'd like to nominate someone simply approach any Vestry member, or e-mail one of the Wardens: Betsy Hasegawa (grhasegawa@verizon.net) or Janet King (bkmechanical@aol.com).

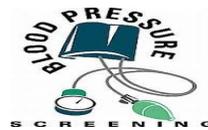
### Decluttering Ascension!

Let us prepare the way of the Lord but relieving our facilities of unwanted and unused artifacts. Join us if you are good at purging, on Saturday, December 3, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.



## CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

### Blood Pressure Screenings



Today, there will be blood pressure screenings after each service in Room 1. All are welcome.

### Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunches program provides bagged lunches, assembled in the Undercroft Commons once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month.

Sign-up for contributions are through an online system and assembly occurs by those present after the 9:00 am service on the third Sunday of the month. We will put lunches together on **December 18** at 10:15 am. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

Last Week's Income*	Weekly Budget Goal	Year to Date Income*	Year to Date Budget Goal
\$13,003.17	\$9,498.19	\$446,648.44	\$436,916.85

N.B.—In addition to pledge and plate income, together with what Ascension receives in rental fees and money from several small trusts, Ascension uses the cash portion of the Endowment Fund to meet month-to-month operating expenses. In general, we have been using between \$7,000 - \$8,000 per month from the Endowment on top of a monthly transfer of \$3,334 that the Vestry approved as part of the 2016 budget.

### Pledge Update as of 11-22-16:

- 92 Pledges for the Annual Giving Campaign, for a total of 218,597
- 50 Pledges for Facilities Reserve Fund, for a total of \$69,260

Below are the names of those who pledged to the annual giving campaign this past week:

Daniel & Linda Yankie, Paul Boyton, Sciou & Jacob Broderick, Monica Koenig Caphart, Raymond & Doris Chin, Charles Dickson, Kate Foley, Steve Heinig & Michelle Wood, Howard & Margaret Holland, Kristen Keating, Curt Lindsay, Barbara Mansfield, Bernice Rodriguez, Frank & Leslie Sanya, Charles & Rimie Sicard, Ruth Anna Skowronski & Luis Pedron, Fran Spina, Robert & Linda Waters, Fe Wlotzko, Chike Nwankwo, Emmanuel & Gloria Nwankwo, Melanie Mitchell, Maura Ryan & Marybeth Daucher

And to those who pledges to the Facilities Fund:

Paul Boyton, Sciou & Jacob Broderick, Raymond & Doris Chin, Howard & Margaret Holland, Kristen Keating, Curt Lindsay, Barbara Mansfield, Frank & Leslie Sanya, Charles & Rimie Sicard, Ruth Anna Skowronski & Luis Pedron, Robert & Linda Waters, Chike Nwankwo, Emmanuel & Gloria Nwankwo, Melanie Mitchell, Maura Ryan & Marybeth Daucher

## CONTACT US

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

- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm
- ◆ 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 García Ocampo  
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 16

**Seminarian**—Jason Cutshall  
jascut@mac.com

**Minister of Music**—Jerrold Tidwell,  
tidwellj@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 11

**Parish Administrator** - Kathy Van Arnum  
office@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 10

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

**Altar Guild Directors**—Sari Stoddard, 301.972.0914,  
Sari.stoddard@verizon.net, Mardia Dennis, 301.540.4499  
mard908@gmail.com

**Children's Music Leader** - Howard Hanson,  
howarddhanson@gmail.com

**Chapel Musicians** - Eric O'Loughlin, ericsmelody@gmail.com,  
Samuel Munguia, pianoconclave@verizon.net

**Nursery Attendant**—Brenda Alvarez

## LEADERSHIP AT ASCENSION

**Senior Warden:** Betsy Hasegawa

**Junior Warden:** Janet King

### Vestry:

2017: Denise Lionetti, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore

2018: Berenice Rodriguez, Avin Lalmansingh,  
Gary McLaughlin

2019: Rose Buck, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner  
Sari Stoddard, *Clerk of the Vestry*  
Howard Holland, *Treasurer*

Christian Formation for Children: Zadinga Ogada ~ Christian  
Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker ~ Facilities: Ted  
Bedell Finance: Howard Holland ~ Mission: Paul Boynton ~  
Pastoral 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. Nicholas' Parish, Darnestown  
Diocesan Latino Ministry  
Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington

## THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library
- 6:30 pm Overeaters Anonymous—Room 4
- 7:00 pm Jr. Girl Scout Meeting—Room 6

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

- 6:00 pm Bible Study—Ascension House
- 7:00 pm Codependents Anonymous—Room 1
- 7:00 pm Stillwater Mindfulness Group—Chapel
- 8:30 pm Al-Anon—Room 1

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

- 10:00 am Wednesday Morning Book Group—Library
- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library
- 7:00 pm Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
- 7:00 pm Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
- 8:00 pm Gamblers' Anonymous—Chapel

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

- 10:00 am Yoga—Chapel
- 4:00 pm Tai Chi—Chapel
- 6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal—Chapel
- 6:30 pm Spanish Class —Ascension House

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library
- 6:00 pm Couples 12-Step Program—Room 1
- 6:00 pm Movie Night—UC

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

- 9:00 am Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
- 11:00 am Al-Anon—Undercroft Commons
- 11:00 am Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

**Preacher:** (The Rev.) Randy Lord-Wilkinson

- 7:45 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 8:15 am Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
- 9:00 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 9:00 am and 11:00 am Godly Play—Room 6
- 9:00 am and 11:00 am Joyful Path—Room 11
- 10:15 am Service for Families with Young Children—Chapel
- 11:00 am Misa en Espanol—Chapel
- 11:15 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 11:15 am Family with Young Children Cell Group—Library
- 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist—Chapel

Church Attendance	Nov. 06	Nov. 13	Nov. 20
7:45 a.m.	35	25	31
9:00 a.m.	109	97	80
10:15 a.m.	19	20	17
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	87	53	46
11:15 am	71	34	52
11:30 a.m. At Sunrise		8	15
5:00 p.m.	9	19	17
Total:	330	256	258