

This Week at Ascension

What's Up with Randy?

If you are connected to me on social media or attended last Sunday's town hall meeting, or have just engaged me in casual conversation, you will already know what I am writing about here. The big news is that I am in week three of working as a part time lecturer in the astronomy department at the University of Maryland, College Park. Specifically, my title is Program Associate in the College Park Scholars program "Science, Discovery, and the Universe." SDU is one of twelve interdisciplinary tracks in the Scholars program for gifted and highly motivated freshmen [*sic*] and sophomores. There are also programs oriented around life sciences and economics, for example.

This was one of the first jobs I applied for 11 months ago after I announced to you at our annual meeting, that I was going to try to go bi-vocational. I had a stellar interview with the program director. I was actually amazed that I even got to the interview stage, as other applicants had Ph.D.'s. And it was in the *astronomy* department! I'd be teaching a class on the history and culture of astronomy, my first love. Most of you will recall that this was my first ambition as a child and teen. And I'd be fostering community among young adults new to university culture. Perfect!

But I wasn't chosen. Someone who worked for the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum was. The program director did say that he might invite me to be a guest speaker, however.

I continued to look for part time teaching positions and even signed up to be an MCPS substitute teacher. I was invited to apply for a part time position funded by Montgomery County and Interfaith Works, working with a colleague in the community who I very much respected. There was no teaching involved (my true calling), but it would be an extension of work I had already been doing for years. But that was not to be, either. Someone who had worked for Interfaith Works for 20 years was chosen. That news came to me last October, and that's when I realized that the bi-vocational model wasn't going to work for me and you.

I applied to a Montgomery College program for people transitioning into teaching called Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers. If admitted, I could be a fully compensated teacher-intern come Fall of '18 and get my certification pretty quickly. The ACET program recruits prospective teachers in high demand areas such as high school physics, math, computer science, and middle school science. Social studies would've been an obvious fit for me, but the program wasn't looking for those. After talking to the program director, we concluded that middle school science (!) might be a good fit.

Science, again. A major piece of the application process was to pass a standardized test for middle school science teachers. I took that test a few weeks ago and actually passed. Handily. So I was on my way to being a science

teacher (if I am admitted to the program)! What a journey!

I was at peace with this development, and excited even, when I got an e-mail a few weeks ago from the SDU program director entitled "Somewhat Urgent." The person chosen for the position at UMD had to resign and I was now the new Program Associate. I am still in state of shock and awe. The timing of this is actually better for me. I see now that I could not have done this and been even a part time rector of Ascension. Our parish is too big, and complex, and needs a full time priest.

A spiritual person might say that I am being led by the Spirit. It's what I would say to one of you if you told me this story. I mean, what are the odds? A 62 year old rector getting a teaching job at a university, or starting a new vocation as a science teacher? And yet I feel a sense of rightness about the whole thing, and joy, and peace, and a little intimidated. All of those subjective feelings go with a sense of "call." I do feel as though I am commencing a new mission.

A friend was quick to remind me that my spirituality as a child flowed out of my love and reverence for the cosmos. I was led to God by the stars, and now God was leading me back to them.

My new boss asked me if I were available for the Fall semester. I told him I was interested but that I was in discernment around being a middle school science teacher. God answers prayer through action. I need to keep moving and engaging to see where I am to go. It is good to have choices. Picasso said that "Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working."

I am as sure as I can be that Ascension is and will also be guided into the next chapter of its emerging mission. Your leaders are stellar (an astronomical term), and if you listen and watch with them, you will be part of the new thing that God wants to do with you.

Peace!

Randy

HEADLINERS

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

This fun annual event will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Undercroft Commons. Come join us to celebrate Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fat Tuesday...or a good excuse to have pancakes and sausage! Vegetarian sausage, gluten free pancakes and sugar-free syrup are included on the traditional menu as well as a gluten free option...there will be something for everyone. This fun event needs lots of helpers AND lots of attendees, 'the more, the merrier!' Cost (\$): \$5.00 per adult; \$3.00 per children 4 to 10 years; and children under 4 are free. N.B. We DO take debit and credit cards. If you have an instrument you would like to play, contact Randy at ral@ascensionmd.org. Sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a4caba82da75-shrove1>

Shrove Tuesday Organizational Meeting

Join me and others to see if we can perform a pre-Lenten miracle once again, in the Undercroft at 10:15 (or right after the 9:00 a.m. service). - RALW

Hand Sanitizer

Small bottles of Purell are in the pew racks for you to use if you intend to intinct. And if you forget, there's another bottle or two on the table in front of the fon

Ash Wednesday is February 14

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. and 9:00 a.m.

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.

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.

Spirituality and Dementia workshop: February 8

This workshop, led by Janice Hicks (candidate in the deacon formation process in the diocese), is designed to provide information to clergy and all who are interested about spirituality related to dementia along with resources for congregations and families dealing the effects of dementia. \$10 registration fee includes workshop, coffee, lunch and CEU certificate. Thursday, February 8 from 10:00 - 11:30, a.m. at The Village at Rockville (map). Please contact Alice Benson with any questions. To register: <http://bit.ly/2DC0sgx>

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 am on five Sundays, February 18 through March 18, in the Undercroft.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

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."

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](tel:301.275.0617) or [CROSSER@aol.com](mailto:Crosser@aol.com) if you have any questions.

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.

Godly Play

The Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Leaven. The Parable of the Sower, which is found in all three synoptic gospels, describes Jesus' promise of abundant harvest

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 ucampoi@ascensionmd.org

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

2018 Lenten Rice Bowl Recipient

A Lenten tradition since the tenure of Rector Bill Smalley (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.

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, February 24 in the church kitchen. If you have any question, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Men's Shelter Lunch Preparation

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 is February 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. For more information, contact Melanie Mitchell at [301.519.1074](tel: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](tel:240.372.3652).

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Youth Group at Ascention

Youth Group will meet this Sunday at 6:00 p.m. in Undercroft. Come and find out who won the \$24 Grammy prize. Any parents available to help with dinner this weekend? Also, please mark your calendars for another service project with Comfort Cases on March 4th at 4:00 p.m. More info to come!

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.

Special Christmas Offering

Ascension members raised \$705.00 toward Latino youth Henry Sanchez's bond, as he has been detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This will be forwarded to parish member Lucelia Justiniano, an attorney at the law firm representing his family.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: World Mission Sunday, Diocesan Commission on Ministry, All Seminaries, Seminarians, and Seminary Professors; Postulants and Candidates, Pray in thanksgiving for the life and witness of Absalom Jones, Ash Wednesday.

We pray for comfort, healing, courage and hope for Harriette Eleanor Cooper, Mike Darracott, Sally and William Glick, Sue Jenkins, Margaret Joseph, Melanie Mitchell, Sarah Olsen, Easton Pool, Fran Spina, Ruthie Swain, Kim Weaver, Suzanne Winterhalter, Sharon Wood, and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

QUICK LINKS

[Link to Service Leaflets for February 11](#)

[Link to Podcast of Randy's Sermon on Sunday, February 4: "The Matrix"](#)

[Link to Sermon and Other Videos page](#)

[Link to the Episcopal Diocese of Washington's Website](#)



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