

# *This Week at Ascension*

## **Creation Reflects God's Glory**

"The incarnation of God did not only happen in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. It began approximately 14 billion years ago with a moment that we now call "The Big Bang" or what some call 'The Great Radiance'. At the birth of our universe, God materialized and revealed who God is. Ilia Delio writes: 'Human life must be traced back to the time when life was deeply one, a Singularity, whereby the intensity of mass-energy exploded into consciousness'. This Singularity provides a solid basis for inherent reverence, universal sacrality, and a spiritual ecology that transcends groups and religions.

"St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) stated, 'The immense diversity and pluriformity of this creation more perfectly represents God than any one creature alone or by itself'. However, most Christians thought humans were the only creatures that God cared about, and all else—animals, plants, light, water, soil, minerals—was just 'food' for our own sustenance and enjoyment. I do not believe that the Infinitely Loving Source we call God could be so stingy and withholding, and only care about one species—unless that care would lead to care for everything else too, which I would call full consciousness. That is the unique human gift.

"God created millions of creatures for millions of years before Homo sapiens came along. Many of these beings are too tiny for us to see or have yet to be discovered; some have seemingly no benefit to human life; and many, like the dinosaurs, lived and died long before we did. Why did they even exist? A number of the Psalms say that creation exists simply to reflect and give glory to God (e.g., Psalm 104). The deepest meaning of creation and creatures is their naked existence itself. God has chosen to communicate God's very Self in multitudinous and diverse shapes of beauty, love, truth, and goodness, each of which manifests another facet of the Divine. (See Job 38-39, Wisdom 13:1-9, Romans 1:20.) Once you can see this, you live in an enchanted and spiritually safe world.

"Christians have gotten ourselves into a muddle by not taking incarnation and creation as the body of God seriously. As theologian Sallie McFague writes, 'Salvation is the direction of creation, and creation is the place of salvation'. All is God's place, which is our place, which is the only and every place'.

"I hope that our very suffering now, our crowded presence in this nest that we have largely fouled, will bring us together politically and religiously. The Earth and its life systems, on which we all entirely depend, still have the potential to convert us to a universal maturity. We all breathe the same air and drink the same water. There are no Native, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim versions of the universal elements. The periodic table is the same in every country, or as Shakespeare and musician Mandisa expressed it, we all bleed the same. Animals do not care whether they are on the Mexican or the American side of our

delusional wall."

- Fr. Richard Rohr

## HEADLINERS

### **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.

### **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.

### **Ascension Youth Group**

Please plan to attend Youth Group this Sunday February 25th! See you at 6 pm!!

Also our dioceses is planning to participate in the "March for Our Lives" on March 24th. More info here: <https://www.thecut.com/2018/02/march-for-our-lives-for-gun-control-will-be-on-march-24.html>

We plan to talk with the Youth about whether we want to participate as a group. Obviously based on their Memorial to the Lost project last year, there may be some interest.

Finally, on Sunday March 4th @ 4:00 p.m. we will do another service project with Comfort Cases. We will need an approximate head count by noon on March 2nd. <https://www.comfortcases.org/>

Look forward to seeing you this Sunday evening!!!

Angie & Travor

### **Yoga Class Starting April 12**

Starting April 12, 2018, Tina Lightner-Morris will be teaching Yoga at 10:00 a.m. at Chapel.

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# 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 [Cjrosser@aol.com](mailto:Cjrosser@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**

This week's Godly Play lessons, *The Faces of Easter III and IV*, continue to help us prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery of Easter by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This week we focus on the face of Christ as the One who was baptized and blessed as well as Christ's temptations in the desert.

## **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 [ocampo@ascensionmd.org](mailto:ocampo@ascensionmd.org)

# CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## **2018 Lenten 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. 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, March 24 in the church kitchen. If you have any question, Contact Javier at [ocampo@ascensionmd.org](mailto: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 March 18 at 10:15 a.m. Contact Edith at [esekasi@gmail.com](mailto: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](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](tel:240.372.3652).

# LIFE AT ASCENSION

## 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](mailto:office@ascensionmd.org).

## 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.

# PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: St. David's Church, DC, Chapel of the Episcopal Center for Children Rosemont Center

We pray for comfort, healing, courage and hope for Harriette Eleanor Cooper, Mike Darracott, Sally and William Glick, Margaret Joseph, Ophelia Magnusen, 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 25](#)

[Link to Podcast of Javier's Sermon on Sunday, February 18: "Leaving Home to Grow"](#)

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

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



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