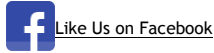




EPISCOPAL
Church of the
Ascension

"We are ambassadors who represent Christ." – 2 Corinthians 5:20



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This Week at Ascension

[Link to Service Leaflets for March 12](#)

[Link to Randy's sermon "Temptation in Theory and Practice"](#)

[Link to Randy's "The Ash Wednesday Sermon"](#)

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

Calendar Highlights

Friday, March 10

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Library

Saturday, March 11

8:00 a.m. Lenten Spanish Retreat

Overeaters

9:00 p.m. Anonymous—Chapel

Al-Anon—

11:00 a.m. Undercroft Commons

Overeaters

11:00 a.m. Anonymous—Room 1

Sunday, March 12

Dr. Marcus J. Borg: On John 3:16

John 3:16 is probably the best-known verse in the Bible. In the familiar form in which I memorized it more than sixty years ago: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (KJV).

For many Christians, this verse is the most concise summary of the Christian gospel. "John 3:16" often appears on homemade signs held up by fans behind the goal posts as football teams attempt to kick a field goal or the point after a touchdown.

It is easy to understand why. Understood within the framework of heaven-and-hell Christianity, it expresses the heart of what the heaven-and-hell framework affirms:

For God so loved the world: This expresses a main Christian conviction that God loves the world. It is how the rest of the verse is understood that gives it its distinctive meaning within the framework of heaven-and-hell Christianity.

That he gave his only Son (or in some translations, *his one and only son*): This is understood to mean both that Jesus is the only Son of God and that God gave him to die for the sins of the world. The "giving of the Son" means that Jesus died in our place, so that we can be forgiven.

7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist—
Main Church

8:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal—
Choir Room

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—
Main Church

9:00 a.m. &
11:00 a.m. Godly Play—Room
6

9:00 a.m. &
11:00 a.m. Joyful Path—
Room 11

10:15 a.m. Service for
Families with
Young Children—
Chapel

10:15 p.m. Sunday Morning
Small Group for
Small Group
Leaders—Library

10:30 a.m. Annual Meeting—
Main Church

11:00 a.m. Misa en Espanol—
Chapel

11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist —
Main Church

12:30 p.m. Sunday Morning
Small Group for
Small Group
Leaders—Library

5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist—
Chapel

6:00 p.m. Youth Group
Meeting & Spiritua
Formation —
Undercroft
Commons

Monday, March 13

11:30 a.m. Living with a
Chronic Illness—
Room 1

1:00 p.m. AI-Anon—Library

6:30 p.m. Overeaters
Anonymous—Room
4

6:30 p.m. Spanish Class —
Ascension House

7:00 p.m. Jr. Girl Scout
Meeting—Room 6

7:00 p.m. Outreach
Committee
Meeting—Library

7:45 p.m. Choir Rehearsal—
Choir Room

Tuesday, March 14

10:00 a.m. Yoga - Chapel

So that everyone who believes in him: What we need to do is to believe in Jesus as God's only son and as the one who died for us. This is the path of salvation.

May not perish but may have eternal life: The consequence of believing in Jesus is survival of death and everlasting life, meaning heaven.

To say the obvious, note how this understanding of the verse sounds the main themes of the heaven-and-hell Christian framework: we are saved (that is, get to go heaven) by believing that Jesus is the only son of God, who died for our sins. Notice also how this puts a condition on the opening line "For God so loved the world"; namely, the love of God is conditional. Though God loves the world, only those who believe in Jesus will be saved. In extreme form (not all that uncommon), the verse means that God loves you, but God will send you to hell and eternal torment if you don't believe in Jesus. But all of this is a significant misunderstanding of what John 3:16 means in the context of John's Gospel.

For God so loved the world: In John, as in the New Testament generally, *world* has two quite different meanings. One meaning is positive: the *world* is the world created by God—the whole of creation. The other meaning is negative: the *world* is "this world," meaning the humanly created world of cultures with their domination systems. In John and in Paul, "this world" rejected Jesus. But God loves the divinely created world—not just you and me, not just Christians, not just people, but the whole of creation.

That he gave his only Son: John's Gospel does not include the notion of substitutionary sacrifice; indeed, none of the Gospels do. The *giving* of the Son in John refers to the incarnation as a whole and not primarily to the death of Jesus. How much does God love the world? So much that God was willing to become incarnate in the world.

So that everyone who believes in him: The premodern rather than modern meaning of *believe* is intended. In this verse, as in the Bible generally, *believe* does not mean believing theological claims about Jesus, but *loving* Jesus, giving one's heart,

11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
 6:00 p.m. Bible Study—
 Ascension House
 Codependents
 7:00 p.m. Anonymous—Room
 1
 Stillwater
 7:00 p.m. Mindfulness
 Group—Chapel
 8:30 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1

Wednesday, March 15

Wednesday
 10:00 a.m. Morning Book
 Group—Library
 1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Library
 6:00 p.m. Yoga—Chapel
 6:30 p.m. Centering
 Prayer—Chapel
 Overeaters
 7:00 p.m. Anonymous—Room
 1
 7:00 p.m. Who Says So—
 Library
 Gamblers'
 8:00 p.m. Anonymous—
 Chapel

Thursday, March 16

4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel

loyalty, fidelity, and commitment to Jesus. This is the way into new life.

*May not perish but may have eternal life: Eternal life is commonly understood to mean a blessed afterlife beyond death. But in John's Gospel, it is a present experience. The Greek words translated into English as *eternal life* mean "the life of the age to come." Within John's theology, this is still future and to be hoped for. But it is also present, something that can be known, experienced now. Consider John 17:3: "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Note the present tense. This *is* eternal life (the life of the age to come); and its content is *knowing* God and Jesus. To know God and Jesus in the present is to participate already in the life of the age to come.*

Thus in John, this verse is not about believing a set of statements about Jesus now for the sake of heaven later. It is about believing Jesus and believing God as known in Jesus, in the incarnation, and entering into "the life of the age to come" now. It is not about people going to hell because they don't believe. It is about the path into life with God now.

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**Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday,
 March 12 at 2:00 am**

**Remember to set your clocks forward one hour before you go
 to bed
 on Saturday, March 11.**

[Link to our Online
Calendar](#)

HEADLINERS

[Call for Confirmation](#)

[Ascension 2017 Cookbook](#)

[Wednesday Nights in Lent](#)

[Sunday Morning Cell Group for Cell Group Leaders](#)

[Celebrate Girl Scout Sunday at Ascension, March 12](#)

[Calling All Current Girl Scouts: Help Sell Cookies at Ascension](#)

LIFELONG LEARNING

[Wednesday Morning Book Group](#)

[Monthly Music Program](#)

[Small Group for Families with Young Children](#)

[Thursday Afternoon Tai Chi Class](#)

[Yoga At Ascension - New Yoga Time](#)

[Listening Heart Community](#)

[Still Water Mindfulness Practice Group](#)

[Godly Play](#)

[Youth Group Schedule Spring 2017](#)

[A Joyful Path](#)

WORSHIP

[Attention, Worship Leaders and would-be Worship Leaders!](#)

[Worship Rosters, January-March](#)

SERVICE

[Men's Shelter Sandwich Making](#)

[The Lord's Table Soup Kitchen](#)

[Gaithersburg HELP](#)

[Mobile Med](#)

LIFE AT ASCENSION

[Prayer Request Updates](#)

PUBLICATIONS

[February Ascendant](#)
[Together We Shine](#)

Prayers

For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: St. Patrick's Church, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School

Pray for Comfort, Healing, Courage, and Hope:

Sandy, Monica, John, Abby, Diane, Dotty, Sarah, Wilma, Proscovia, Roz, and Suzanne and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

We pray for peace in the world and all who are serving our country here and abroad, especially those in harm's way, and their families.

Equip us and empower us to be witnesses to your love – as advocates and as servants, as ministers of welcome and of hope for refugees and all affected by natural disasters, violence, and war.

We pray for all special intentions, and those on our extended Healing Prayer List.

Worship Leaders

Sunday, March 12

Preacher: Randy Lord-Wilkinson

7:45 AM

Reader/Prayers:	Jean Cohn
Chalicians:	Wadai Dennis
Healing Prayer:	Janet King
Acolytes:	Raymond Chin, Aidan Douglas
Welcome Team:	Don Cohn, Jean Cohn
Altar Guild:	Enid Cole, Mardia Dennis
Hospitality Angel:	David Burton

9:00 AM

Reader: Gary McLaughlin, Susan McLaughlin
Prayer: Barbara Mansfield
Chalicians: Jason Cutshall, Esther Tellu
Healing Prayer: Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Acolytes: Raymond Chin, Aidan Douglas
Welcome Team: Dorett Sutherland, James Black, Jonathan Black
Altar Guild: Sarah Gallagher, Kristen FitzPatrick
Hospitality Angel: Nathalie Scott

11:15 AM

Reader: Sarah Rubin
Healing Prayer: Alex Langley
Welcome Team: Avin Lalmansingh, Karl Didavi, Clark Didavi
Altar Guild: Laura Shay
Chalician: Peg Ruppel, Georgana Maines
Song Leader: Betsy Hasegawa
Hospitality Angel: Anthony Lalmansingh

Eucharistic Visitors: Javier Ocampo
Flower Delivery: Alice Padmore, Esther Sawyer