



THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Prayer in the Modern Age

I have been thinking lately how similar prayer is to physical exercise. Does that sound too flippant or dismissive? I don't mean to be. Think about the similarities. Both prayer and exercise can be done in groups, or alone. Both are open to beginners through champions—and everyone in between. To get anything out of it, practitioners must have a certain degree of discipline, and more important, must persevere through dry spots where there is the inevitable question, “what am I doing this for?”

The number of times we hear prayer mentioned in public is quite amazing. We often say that we will pray for someone when we hear of some difficulty that they are having; we frequently hear public figures declare that they are offering “thoughts and prayers” to victims of violence; it's a cultural cliché to “pray for rain”- or the END of rain. But do we, in fact, pray? Indeed, how many of us can confidently say that we know how to pray? I've noticed that when I ask people to make a simple prayer, say, at the conclusion of a meeting, they will often have a look of panic and politely refuse. I think they are afraid that they will not have the “right words”, or will not express themselves in perfect Book of Common Prayer phraseology. Do you think God cares about this? I think He chuckles at the earnest and awkward attempts of people to sound like 19th Century poets.

Prayer (like exercise) can bring personal and metaphysical benefits. It is essentially a

conversation with a God who knows and loves you, and is WAITING for you to ask for what you need. Remember that Matthew (and for that matter Mark, Luke and John, in very similar words) says, “Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened.” This seems a very promising invitation. There is no hint of being obliged to do it in the “one right way”. In fact, multiple senses are involved: asking/speaking, seeking/looking, knocking/taking action. Sometimes, in our uncertainty about the words to use to speak with God, we fumble, lose concentration and end up dozing or thinking about something else. This is not a failure; one simply starts again. Perhaps using a different medium. As an example, I invite you to check out Ukuthula, an African prayer for peace, on You Tube. There are a dozen variations, all beautiful and heartfelt, singers begging God for peace with mind and body and voice. Similarly, people can feel and express God’s love through dance, art and meditation. Don’t let your childhood understanding of prayer limit your ability to communicate with the Lord, or to learn new and powerful expressions of joy.

Just as some form of exercise can be done at most times of day, and in many places, so is prayer unlimited by time and place. A prayer can be a momentary expression of thanksgiving at a new day, an hour’s meditation on the coming of Jesus, an expression of gratitude at a family meal—there are no limits. In my mind though, there IS one rule: if you tell someone you will pray for him, you MUST do it.

Blessings,

Javier

HEADLINERS

Ascension Retreat

This year for Advent, Ascension will host a half-day retreat of spoken reflection and contemplative prayer. It will take place in the Main Church on December 1, 2018 from 9 AM - 12 PM. We welcome you for a special “time-out” from all the hustle and the bustle of the holidays to remember the true purpose of Christmas.

Javier & Nan

Attention all Worship Leaders (and those interested in becoming a worship leader)

I will be preparing the new worship roster for the months of January, February and March shortly; if there 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 December 9th. My email is sari.stoddard@verizon.net, and my cell phone is 301-325-8791 (call or text).

Thanks,

Sari Stoddard

Two Bows and Eight Strings At Ascension

Please join us for the violin and cello concert on December 16, 2018 at 4 p.m. Our guest artists are cellist Vasily Popov and young violinist Yuri Popov. The artists will present a program of baroque and classical music by Corelli, Bach, Vivaldi, Telemann, Popper, Tchaikovsky and Claire Rosser.

!Call for Folk and Christmas Music from your countries! Our guest musicians invite you to participate in the repertoire selection for this performance by sending music scores or links to sound/video recordings of the favorite Christmas songs from your countries. They would like to include a selection of Christmas melodies from the world's continents on the program. Please send the music or the links before the end of November via email to celloworld@hotmail.com. More information online: vasilypopov.com.

Thanksgiving Day Eucharist

We will celebrate Thanksgiving in the spirit of gratitude for creation and how the earth God has given us supports our lives. Join us Thanksgiving Day in the main church at 10:00 a.m. for a Eucharist that will reconnect us to a sense of the goodness of creation, and creation as the body of God.

Sermon Series: Sharing your Faith in the 21st Century

For the season of Advent, our preachers will be presenting a sermon series on the “Call to Evangelism of the 21st Century”. Each Sunday, we will address the topic of spreading the Gospel according to our Lord Jesus Christ within the context of the Advent Collects and Readings. We look forward to a dialogue about Episcopal Evangelism with you as the series progresses. The series starts Advent I on December 2nd and ends on Advent IV December 23rd. Parishioners may wish to read the readings for those Sundays in advance of the sermon series to prepare. They can be found on the internet on “The Lectionary Page” or, in advance in the Sunday Bulletins published on our website .

Blessings,

Javier and Nan

Blessing of the Cars

As we celebrate the beginning of the Christian year we pray that God be with us wherever we go. For that reason we will have the blessing of the cars on December 2 after the 12:00 pm services in the parking lot. If you want you can decorate your car with flowers.

Lady of Guadalupe Day

Join us on December 8 to celebrate the Lady of Guadalupe Day at 6:00 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.

Our Choir is Recruiting New Members!

A new and exciting musical opportunity awaits you! The Ascension Choir is currently recruiting new members. Singers of all ages, abilities, and voice parts are welcome to participate. If you're interested, come visit our weekly choir rehearsals on Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm in the Choir Room- no audition required and no strings attached.

We'd love to see you there!

Questions? Contact Andrew Kullberg, music@ascensionmd.org

Continuing the Collection of Items for ComfortCases

The inspiring sermon in September by Robert Scheer, founder of ComfortCases, has prompted many congregants to ask what more we can do to help this local non-profit organization bring dignity and hope to youth entering foster care. We will continue to have a bin in the narthex for collecting additional travel-sized toiletry items. Further information on ways to help the organization—from donating pajamas to helping pack comfort cases—can be found at www.comfortcases.org. The organization is housed at 15825 Shady Grove Road, Suite 60, Rockville, MD 20850; phone: 202-253-0402.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Wednesday Morning Book Group

Ascension's book group is discussing the book, “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humanity”, by

Yuval Noah Harari. This book explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be “human”. We meet weekly at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension’s library on Wednesdays. There will be no meeting on the day before Thanksgiving. Please read Chapters 9 and 10 for Wednesday, November 28th.

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 will be 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.

There is no Tai Chi class on November 22.

Thursday Morning Yoga Class

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 AM in the Chapel, 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.

Lucia Pires is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is a 500-hour Pranakriya Yoga School of Healing Arts certified yoga teacher. Her training focuses on cultivating and enhancing the relationship of the student with his or her life force through yoga postures, breath work and meditation, in order to create change in awareness and help the student move towards wholeness and greater aliveness. She completed her professional training in 2015.

Lucia is the mother of two boys, ages 14 and 10, and when they give her a little break she enjoys reading, writing, long walks in nature and dancing.

There is no Yoga class on November 22.

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

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Servant Keeper—We see the Change

Thank you for updating your information and becoming familiar with Ascension's database, Servant Keeper. We can see the changes you've made to your addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses; we can also see that some of you have uploaded pictures of yourselves. This is amazing. Let me encourage you to continue to spread the word to others on how easy it is to get into the database and navigate it. I'm sure you've discovered how to see your contributions and print statements as needed. I hope you have found this to be a valuable tool and continue finding yourself entering the portal.

If you have not had the opportunity to log into Servant Keeper or are having difficulties logging in, please let me know.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me at office@ascensionmd.org or stop by the office.

Lin Keene

Godly Play

This week in Godly Play we will study a number of the prophets from the Old Testament. Much has changed since creation. The People of God have been freed from slavery, ruled their own country, been defeated, carried off into exile, and returned to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem. God had been with them all the way--but they had not always been with

God. The prophets' job was to show the people, the king and the priests when they turned away from God. We learn that prophets still exist today and continue to help all of us know the true way to live.

A Joyful Path

A Joyful Path—10:00 a.m.

The members of A Joyful Path will make discoveries about Vietnamese Peace Activist Thich Nhat Hanh. He believed sharing his beliefs in practicing inner peace and mindfulness would bring peace to others and the world. Come join us in Room 2 during the 10 a.m. service.

A Joyful Path—12:00 p.m.

Escuela Dominical Para Niños. The members of A Joyful Path at noon will learn about the most important source of our tradition- The Bible. We will learn about some sayings which are biblical and others attributed to the Bible which are not. Come join us at 12:00 pm. (noon) in Room 2.

Healing Prayer Ministers

We are in desperate need of Volunteers to provide this special function at our 8 o'clock service. Training and assistance will be provided to you on a one-on-one basis. Give your name to Father Javier, or call Lin at 301 948-0122.

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Montgomery Hospice

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit hospice that has been serving the residents of

Montgomery County for 36 years. We provide professional end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities and at Casey House, our acute care facility. We are looking for new volunteers. Our greatest need is for volunteers to visit patients. These volunteers provide companionship for patients, respite for family members, lavender oil hand massages, music by the bedside or help with practical matters. Many provide the gift of "presence" by simply being with a patient. All volunteers go through an application process and a three-day training.

For more information, call 301-921-4400 or visit www.montgomeryhospice.org/volunteer

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, November 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 will be on November 18 at 9:30 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 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

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 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: : Angus Dun Committee, Pray for all travelers, Pray for our national life and all of God's blessings (Thanksgiving Day - November 22)

We love the humble and needy: Be with all for whom we pray for comfort, healing, courage and hope for Ashley Alford, Kathy Bainbridge, Sciou Broderick, Susan Campbell, Cinthya Dorssett, Harriette Eleanor Cooper, Fredy Diaz, Peggy Donnellon, Patricia Griffith, Tana Hight, Jim & Carol Keenan, Daniel & Aillen Pagan, Wendy Jo Perkins, Bubba Pflantzbaum, Olive Rivera, Genia Saniul-Heinig, Fran Spina, Ruthie Swain, Samuel Tellu, Suzanne Winterhalter, Simon James Mwamba, and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity, as well as for all those on our extended healing prayer list.

QUICK LINKS

[Link to Javier's Sunday October 28 Sermon: "Way of Love-Rest"](#)

[Link to the Service Bulletin](#)

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

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



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