



WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 22 A.D. 2019

La Posada

Some five hundred years ago, the Spanish brought a Christmastime tradition to Latin America. It's called La Posada, meaning "inn" or "shelter" in Spanish, and its purpose is the reenactment of the struggle of Mary and Joseph to find shelter on their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Typically, two people, representing Mary and Joseph, start out in a neighborhood knocking on doors looking for a place to stay. The doors are shut, or slammed, or never answered. The couple redoubles their plea at additional homes. Finally, at a predetermined "inn", they are admitted, and a celebration begins. There are few firm requirements for this festival which can be held on one afternoon, or for nine nights running. Mexicans, who are extremely fun loving, have raised this tradition to an art form combining spirituality, drama, music, culinary excess, and community spirit. I should know!

There is no "right way" to have a posada; yes, there is a posada song for the "peregrinos," or wanderers to sing as they travel, (check it out on YouTube) but it has many interesting variations. When I was a child, my mother would make up new words every year, usually quite funny. And yes, you can have elaborate meals at the "inn", featuring tamales and ponche (a fruit punch containing whole fruit, and perhaps just a bit of tequila) that took hours to make—or something simple brought by the travelers. Costumes? If you like them. A role for children? Of course, if you have them.

La Posada is the ultimate strong community tradition. It is molded and renewed each year as the community (and all of us) are renewed and changed in unpredictable ways. At base, it reminds of how vulnerable we are in travel, or at the hands of bureaucracy, and against the forces of nature. But we also are reminded of the steadfastness of our life companions, the surprising generosity of strangers, and the enduring presence of God.

The Latino community at Ascension will have its annual posada in the undercroft after the 12 o'clock service on Sunday, December 22. Everyone is sincerely welcome to join the festivity.

If you would like to share the story of this feast with young people, go on line to hear famed children's author Tomie dePaola reading his book, "The Night of Las Posadas".

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 represent Jesus Christ wherever we may be. We welcome you to our church family and invite you to fill out a welcome card, located in the rack at the ends of each pew.

TODAY AT ASCENSION

Preacher: Ms. Peg Ruppel

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the lower atrium.

A place of peace for parents and a beginners Sunday School is available in Room 4.

All children are welcome!

Today's Gospel



Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they wed, Mary became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph decided to break the engagement. He changed his mind when an angel in a dream told him to receive Mary as his wife.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Sunday School

This is the final week of Advent. The Godly Play Advent lessons help us prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle in the church. This week we focus on the wise men and the celebration of Christmas.

There will be no Godly Play on December 29 for One Ascension, but we will have a class for all ages in the Place of Peace. We will have a story, songs, prayers, crafts and games. The children will rejoin their families for communion.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 8th, when we will continue discussing the book, "Brief Answers to the Big Questions", by Stephen Hawking. Please read Chapter 5 for this discussion. We meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays in Ascension's library. All people are welcome to participate.

Thursday Morning Yoga

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. in room 2, 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.

Tai Chi

Tai Chi class is at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons in the chapel, a time of peace and balance in a lovely place. Please come and join us. Contact Claire Rosser at cjrosser@aol.com or 301-275-0617 for more information.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Schedule of December Celebrations 2019

- **Tuesday, Dec. 24**—Christmas Eve Two services: 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist. 8:30 p.m. traditional Christmas Eucharist Service with carols
- **Wednesday, Dec. 25**—Christmas Day. A single Eucharist service at 10 a.m.
- **Sunday, Dec 29**—A single service at 10 a.m. followed by our New Years Party One Ascension (1A) luncheon

REALM has Arrived

Our new database program is up and running. REALM allows us to sort and network lots of information and allows you, the parishioner, to contribute your pledge, enter your data, put your picture in it, keep it up to date, and check your tax information. You'll be able to join a committee, sign up to be a Worship Leader, see who's on the vestry or who is running for the vestry. Try it out at <http://ascensionmd.org/realmsign-up/>

Next Baptism

The next baptism date will be January 12th. If you want to be baptized or know someone who would like to be, please contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Vestry/Convention Delegates Candidates' Forum

The Candidates' Forum will be held on January 12th in the Undercroft after each service.

Annual Meeting

Our annual parish meeting will take place at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 19th in the Undercroft. We'll begin with a potluck lunch. Our primary business will be to elect new Vestry members and to have a time for shared reflection on the ministry and mission of Ascension. The Vestry candidates will be available for dialogue on the preceding Sunday, January 12th, after each service in the Undercroft (see article above).

Christmas Flowers

If you would like to donate toward our beautiful Christmas poinsettias, there are Flower Offering envelopes in your bulletin and on the table in the Narthex. If you are paying by check, please annotate the check "Christmas flowers"

Ascension's Giving Tree

This Advent season, our traditional Giving Tree will once again be standing in the Narthex. This is a wonderful opportunity to support the work being performed by Comfort Cases in bringing dignity and necessities to foster children. Detailed instructions may be found in the Narthex.

Memorial Service

There will be a memorial service for Elaine Dunn, mother of Eliane Dunn Johnson, in the main church on Saturday, January 4th at 11:00 a.m. All parishioners are invited to attend in support of Eliane and the family.

Please help us with your pledge!

Thank you all for your continued support of Ascension. We are having glitches with our new system while breaking it in. So we ask you to do a couple of extra things this year.

- If you have submitted your pledge online, please *fill out a pledge card* also.
- If you are an EFT donor, please *fill out a new EFT authorization form* and submit it to the office.

We apologize for the inconvenience. As we move forward with our new database we will need to resubmit your information.

Coffee Supplies

I was so happy that several generous donors had brought in coffee supplies! With an average of 50 to 60 people per Sunday, we always need things. With the popularity of our coffee hour, please continue your generous gifts. In particular, right now we need *coffee, dinner plates and paper tablecloths*. Please bring your donation on Sunday or during the week during office hours.

Thank you! Padre Javier

One Ascension Sunday

New Years Party 1A!!! On December 29th after the 10:00 a.m. One Ascension service we will gather in the undercroft to celebrate the coming 2020 New Year. Be there for the traditional count-down (well, count down to noon rather than midnight) Please bring a dish to share. Salads, appetizers, and desserts are always needed. Bring your holiday spirit and good cheer to help start to bring in 2020 New Year.

The Parish Life Committee

MLK Choral Evensong on January 19, 2020
at 5:00 p.m.

The Ascension Music Ministry is presenting an evening prayer service in honor of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the main church. This service will be led by the Ascension Choir and will feature new service music composed by our former Minister of Music, Paul Kelley. If you are interested in taking part in the service by singing with our choir or reading scripture, please contact Andrew Kullberg at music@ascensionmd.org.

Stitchers Wanted!

Ascension is blessed in having priestly garments and hangings in most liturgical colors—but we don't have a set of the dark red ones used in Holy Week. We are interested in seeing if we can make them ourselves, maybe in a weekly sewing circle. Please email Fr. Javier if you are interested in being part of this group effort. He will set up an informational meeting to kick the project off.

PLEDGE UPDATE AS OF DECEMBER 17, 2019

Total Number of Pledges to date: 134 for a total of \$334,647.
Total Number of Facilities Reserve Fund Donations to date: 12 for a total of \$ 7,424.

Thanks to those below who pledged last week to the annual giving campaign:

Anthony, Florence &
Emmanuel Chukwurah
Josephine & Isaac Clarke
Kate Foley

Gerry Gil
Kate & Ben Heacock
Matilda Chibelu Muyangwa
Bendu Toe

Amazon Smile

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon. When you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to our church.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you are prompted:

- ◆ To login with your Amazon account.
- ◆ Then search for “Church of the Ascension” and select Church of the Ascension from the list with location “Gaithersburg MD”
- ◆ That’s all. It will be connected to your account; every time you shop, and when you go to smile.amazon.com, your selection will be there and will track your purchases.

Just make sure you select the right “Church of the Ascension” at Gaithersburg MD as this:



AmazonSmile is now in the Amazon Shopping App

You can now support your favorite charity when you shop using the Amazon Shopping App on your Android device. See below for instructions to turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping App.

Instructions:

Open the newest version of the Amazon Shopping App
Make sure you have updated to the latest version (instructions below)

Go to AmazonSmile Settings

1. Tap the Main Menu (see left)
2. Tap Settings
3. Tap AmazonSmile

Follow the instructions on the screen to turn on AmazonSmile

CONTACT US

205 S. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg, MD, 20877

www.ascensionmd.org

- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
- ◆ Phone: 301-948-0122 □ Fax: 301-926-9012
- ◆ Fr. Javier's cell: 202-903-6426
- ◆ Prayer requests: Fill out a yellow prayer request card (on the table in the narthex) or e-mail the office at office@ascensionmd.org.

Bishop of Washington - The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
mebudde@edow.org, 202-537-6550

Priest in Charge –The Rev. Javier García Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 12

Pastoral Associate—The Rev. Nan Hildebrand
hildebrandnan@gmail.com

Deacon—The Rev. Deacon Eugene Wright
genenatwright@gmail.com

Minister of Music—Andrew Kullberg
music@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 11

Parish Administrator - Lin Keene
office@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 10

Communications – Jesse Velazquez
comm@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 14

Altar Guild Directors, Sari Stoddard,
sari.stoddard@verizon.net; 8:00 a.m. director Mardia Dennis,
mard908@gmail.com; 10:00 a.m. directors Dotty Pfadenhauer,
dottypfa@aol.com and Georgana Maines,
mainesgnh@verizon.net

LEADERSHIP AT ASCENSION

Senior Warden: Betsy Hasegawa

Junior Warden: Zadinga Ogada

Vestry:

2020: Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Luis Pedrón

2021: Berenice Rodriguez, Bob Waters, Susan McLaughlin

2022: James Black, Kristen Keating, Wadai Dennis

Danielle Allen, *Clerk of the Vestry*

Avin Lalmansingh, *Treasurer*

Delegates to Diocesan Convention:

Mardia Dennis, Gary McLaughlin, Sue Snay

Alternate: Fredis Diaz

Cycles of Prayer

Prayers for those whose lives are closely linked with ours:

Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation /San Estaban y La Encarnación, DC

St. John's Church, Zion Parish

St. John's Church, Broad Creek

St. John's Church, Mt. Rainier

Christmas Day (December 25)

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Monday, December 23, 2019

- 1:00 PM Al-Anon—RM 1
- 2:00 PM English Tutoring- RM 2
- 6:00 PM Spanish Class - RM 2
- 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous—RM 1

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Christmas Eve; Office closes at 1:00 p.m.

- 7:00 AM Mobile Med
- 3:30 PM Staff Meeting—Library
- 5:00 PM Holly Eucharist—Main Church
- 6:30 PM Parables Bible Study-RM 2
- 8:30 PM Traditional Christmas Service with Carols- Main Church
- 8:30 PM Al-Anon—RM 1

Wednesday, December 25, 2019

**Merry Christmas
Office Closed**

- 10:00 AM Holly Eucharist—Main Church
- 1:00 PM Al-Anon—RM 1
- 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous—RM 1
- 8:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous—RM 2

Thursday, December 26, 2019

Office Closed

- 6:30 PM Ensemble - Main Church
- 7:00 PM Al Anon/Spanish - RM 1
- 7:00 PM Stillwater Mindfulness Practice Group - Chapel

Friday, December 27 2019

Javier's Day Off

- 1:00 PM Al-Anon—RM 1

Saturday, December 28, 2019

- 9:00 AM Overeaters Anonymous-RM 2
- 11:00 AM Overeaters Anonymous—RM1
- 11:00 AM Al Anon - Parish Hall
- 7:00 PM Al Anon/Spanish - RM 1

Sunday, December 29, 2019

Preacher: The Rev. Javier G. Ocampo

- 10:00 AM Bible School for 3 year olds and under -RM 4
- 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist - Main Church
- 10:00 AM St. Barnabas - Chapel
- 6:00 PM Youth Group - Parish Hall



Attendance	December 1	December 8	December 15
8:00 am	32	26	28
10:00 am	108	113	127
12:00 pm	20	24	18
Total:	148	163	173