

This Week at Ascension

“Altar in the World”

As I contemplate moving my altar from Ascension’s chancel to a classroom, I find a great deal of guidance in Barbara Brown Taylor’s *Altar in the World*. I highly recommend it to you. Here are some of my favorite quotes:

“To make bread or love, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger—these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir. Most of these tasks are so full of pleasure that there is no need to complicate things by calling them holy. And yet these are the same activities that change lives, sometimes all at once and sometimes more slowly, the way dripping water changes stone. In a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of life.”

“People encounter God under shady oak trees, on riverbanks, at the tops of mountains, and in long stretches of barren wilderness. God shows up in whirlwinds, starry skies, burning bushes, and perfect strangers. When people want to know more about God, the son of God tells them to pay attention to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, to women kneading bread and workers lining up for their pay. Whoever wrote this stuff believed that people could learn as much about the ways of God from paying attention to the world as they could from paying attention to scripture. What is true is what happens, even if what happens is not always right. People can learn as much about the ways of God from business deals gone bad or sparrows falling to the ground as they can from reciting the books of the Bible in order. They can learn as much from a love affair or a wildflower as they can from knowing the Ten Commandments by heart.”

“No one longs for what he or she already has, and yet the accumulated insight of those wise about the spiritual life suggests that the reason so many of us cannot see the red X that marks the spot is because we are standing on it. The treasure we seek requires no lengthy expedition, no expensive equipment, no superior aptitude or special company. All we lack is the willingness to imagine that we already have everything we need. The only thing missing is our consent to be where we are.”

“What is saving my life now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experiences of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them. My life depends on ignoring all touted distinctions between the secular and the sacred, the physical and the spiritual, the body and the soul. What is saving my life now is becoming more fully human, trusting that there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world.”

Peace, Randy

HEADLINERS

Latino Ministry Posada

At 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 9th, Ascension will host the Posada of the Latino Ministry of the Diocese of Washington. Members of all the Latino congregations will be visiting Ascension and everybody is welcome to join us.

One Ascension Sunday—December 31st

One Ascension Sunday is fast approaching. We are going to celebrate the end of one year and the start of another. Please join us after the service and bring a dish to share. The main course will be spiral cut ham. We need side dishes such as mac and cheese, potatoes, green beans, salads, desserts or your favorite dish. Please plan on joining in on the fun. A clipboard will again be passed around in the church so that we can have a rough idea of who is coming and what people are bringing.

Janet King, for the Parish Life Committee

Master the Calendar!

Did you know that Ascension keeps a master calendar, managed by our Parish Administrator Lin Keene, that organizes and displays all uses of all our space all the time? It's true. As you and your group decide to meet, reach out to Lin or check the calendar on the website to find a room you can use on the date you prefer. To book the room, contact Lin by phone: [301-948-0122](tel:301-948-0122) or by email : office@ascensionmd.org, and she will add you to the calendar. If there's a conflict, she will let you know and help you find an alternative space, day, or time.

It makes meeting easy. If you have any questions, please contact Lin.

Thanks all,

Betsy Hasegawa

90 Minutes of Advent Mindfulness

Join Randy next Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel for some gentle yoga, followed by an hour of instruction and practice of "Centering Prayer," a form of Christian meditation. If you want to do the meditation alone it will be in the Library from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Ascension Youth Holiday Party - December 10

It will be at Rockin Jump from 6 pm to 8 pm. We will jump from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm and then pizza will be served. For Youth who do not want to jump-please consider coming at least for the dinner and fellowship. The cost is \$20.

We will be collecting NEW Winter hats, gloves, scarves, and coats for the youth at St. James. Even if you can not come to the party please consider donating these items for mailing on Dec 18th.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers for the church office from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Contact Lin at office@ascensionmd.org

LIFE LONG LEARNING

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.

There will be no Tai Chi on December 21st and 28th. We will resume in January. 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 if you have any questions.

Thursday Morning Yoga

It will be on hiatus for the season and will resume at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2018.

Godly Play

We are now in the Advent season. 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's presentation focuses on the Shepherds.

Joyful Path

Members of A Joyful Path will be learning that the whole world is home and we are a divine family.. We use the following passage from Galatians to start: "Galatians 3:26-28 – For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As

many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

A craft project and a great seasonal story will complete our lesson for the day, Please come and join us in Rm 11 downstairs after the 9am service. See you there.

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:30 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

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

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, December 23 in the church kitchen. If you have any question, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Men's Shelter Lunch Preparation

The Men's Shelter Lunches program provides bagged lunches, assembled in the Undercroft Commons once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month.

[Read more](#)

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

Every Tuesday, Mobile Med will be open for the service until 3:00 p.m. If there are questions, contact us at spangle1@comcast.net or [240.372.3652](tel:240.372.3652).

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Epiphany Pageant - The King's Birthday

Wanted - Participants young and old; for speaking and nonspeaking parts in our Epiphany Pageant. Needed-Assistant Director(s), Piano Accompanist, Greeter, 4 Narrators, Innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Inn Workers, Stars, Angels, Kings, and Stable Animals. We have the scripts and the costumes we just need you. The pageant will tentatively be on Sunday January 7th. at the 5:00 p.m. service. Rehearsals on Saturday December 23, 30th and January 6th. from 9:00-10:30 a.m. Please contact Gordon Donnelly. I sing in the choir at 9:00 a.m., teach in Room 11 at 10:15 a.m., in the instrumental ensemble for the 11:15 a.m. My e-mail is vagordon1@yahoo.com

Thanks,

Gordon

What is a "Contemplative Eucharist?"

As you may know we are trying this out at 5:00 p.m. on Sundays in the Chapel. It features meditative easy to sing a capella chants (think 'Taize'), and moments of silence. Rather than a full length sermon the celebrant offers a reflection on the biblical readings of the day and invites a response from the congregation. Intercessions and Communion complete the service.—RAL

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 10 after the 11:00 am services in the parking lot. If you want you can decorate your car with flowers.

Lady of Guadalupe Day

Join us on Saturday, December 16 to celebrate the Lady of Guadalupe Day at 7:00 p.m. 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.

Pledge

The Pledge Campaign has been extended into December 2017 to reach all congregation members who have not yet pledged for funding year 2018. For tax planning purposes, please be aware that the last day to fulfill a 2017 pledge commitment or to make a donation/gift for calendar year 2017 will be Tuesday, December 26th, 2017.

PRAYERS REQUEST

Prayers For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: Episcopal Church Women, Memorial Scholarship of the Episcopal Church Women, United Thank Offering, Bishop John Bryson Chane Scholarship for Social Justice

Pray for Comfort, Healing, Courage, and Hope: Harriette, Mike, Sall & William, Sue, Ruthie, Melanie, Mitchell, Fran, Suzanne and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

The flowers on the altar this morning were given by Charles Thomas Byrne in memory of his mother Virginia Byrne Polin.

The flowers on the altar were in memory of Clara A. Thomas given by her daughter, Enid Cole, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

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.

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

Quick Links

[Link to Service Leaflets for December 10](#)

[Link to Podcast of Enid's Sermon on Sunday, December 3: "God Works for those who wait for Him"](#)

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