

This Week at Ascension

Reading and Understanding the Bible

If you are like most people, you may find today's gospel pretty puzzling. Why are Jesus' associates, friends and family concerned about Him not being in his right mind? Do they really think that? And is Jesus disparaging his own family when he says, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." Further, isn't it a bit chilling to hear, "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness."? "Blaspheme" is not a word we use much any more; how many of us could define it in modern terms, let alone its exact meaning in the time of Jesus. But the consequences of blasphemy are terrible—surely we should know just what it is we are to avoid doing!

Reading and understanding the Bible is pleasure, consolation, and understanding. The reward for making the effort is powerful, and it gives a sense of the place of Scripture in God's drama of redemption. But as you might have guessed, it is not exactly easy. What makes it so challenging? Well, first we know that the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, and to some extent, ancient Greek. For most of us, our connection to these languages doesn't exist. So we can't simply look back at the original text for a confusing word or scene. The text can be rich with multiple meanings waiting to confound our understanding of the message. Which is the "right" one? IS there a "right" one? The story of the Bible certainly speaks to us today; but it is firmly rooted in a particular time and place which is foreign to us. If you like to travel, you know that a small effort to experience a place very different from our own yields a growth in understanding of the world, and our place in it. How much greater would be the result from learning a bit about the historical, social, and geographic context of the Bible.

There are a few simple things that can give us more, or a clearer understanding the Biblical texts. First, read a larger portion of the text. Remember that the Bible is a consistent story from Genesis to Revelation. Anywhere you look in the Bible, it either anticipates or reveals God's saving mercy in Jesus Christ. We tend to forget that this is a story. And like all stories, it was meant to be spoken aloud, often to people who who did not read. Imagine how confusing it would be to hear six sentences of a book and try to "get" the message. I think if you go to Mark in your own Bible and read the whole chapter, some of your confusion about today's passage would clear up. Also, if a chapter or verse puzzles you, there are endless commentaries in study Bibles and online to help. Try this once or twice to see if this works for you.

Read parts of the Bible that puzzle (or comfort) you multiple times. The Holy Spirit is with you, and I think it is his job to ease the transition from completely abstract to something wholly your own.

Of course, you can always gather with others who are interested in studying the Bible. You will find inspiration and joy in the study. And the social component helps form bonds of friendship and mutual support.

I have been hoping that Bible study is something that might appeal to you. Do you think that there is any desire for such a program at Ascension in the near future? If you think that there is, perhaps you can tell me what is important to you, and when and wherein it would be most convenient.

HEADLINERS

First Responder Presentation

Would you know how to act quickly if a person in your pew suddenly had a heart attack? Do you know where our AED is located, how to use it, or even what it is? What would you do if a stranger entered the church carrying a weapon, or simply looked threatening? A presentation given by a member of the Gaithersburg Police Department will address all these issues, and more, on Sunday, June 24th following the 10:00 a.m. service in the undercroft. Please plan to attend this important meeting to learn more about these urgent issues.

Kitchen Closed

Until repairs are completed, the kitchen will be closed. We are sorry for the inconvenience and thank you for your support during this time.

Ascension Music Update

Church of the Ascension is blessed to have so many talented and dedicated musicians to lead and inspire in our worship. Beginning Sunday June 10, 2018 The Ascension Choir will begin their summer hiatus. Music at the 10 AM service will continue to be drawn from a variety of sources. The Ensemble will continue to provide accompaniment along with the organ. This summer is an opportunity for new and old members to come and join in the singing and the playing. Rehearsal for the music of the day will be held at 9 AM prior to worship. Additional instrumental rehearsal to be arranged as needed.

Thank-you all,
Clarice Snyder, Interim Organist and Choir Director
ocampoj@ascensionmd.org or 202 903-6426.

Father's Day Food Drive

Honor your dads, living and departed, while helping others. Bring a bag of groceries to church before or on Father's Day, Sunday, June 17, for the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. Forms for dedication information are found at the Narthex, and undercroft. As always, we will give thanks for the ministry of fatherhood in the Prayers of the People at all services on the 17th.

Facilities Committee Seeks Volunteers!

Have you ever built a house all by yourself? Neither have we. But we have lived in houses and apartments where things break and need repairs. If you have experience calling plumbers, electricians, roofers, etc., and meeting them when they come for

estimates, you are just the kind of person we need for the facilities committee. While we welcome handy people who can fix a lock, drive a screw or change a light bulb, most of our duties consist of identifying projects, arranging for estimates and meeting prospective contractors. Perfect for retirees! The more of us there are, the less anyone person has to do. If you are interested, contact one of the following: Ted Bedell, 301 - 520-8449; Luis Pedron, 301 -922-5610; John Pruessner, 240-271-4739, or email Lin Keene at: office@ascensionmd.org

Attention Worship Leaders

I will be starting the roster of worship leaders (lectors, chalcists, acolytes, hospitality angels, etc) soon. If there are any changes, if you have black-out dates, or if you would be interested in serving as a specific worship leader, please let me know before June 12.

Thanks,

Sari Stoddard
301-972-0914
Sari.stoddard@verizon.net

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Wednesday Morning Book Group

We are reading Derek Wilson's book entitled A Magical World: Superstition and Science from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Our group meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension's library. All are welcome to participate. Please read Chapter 5 for this coming Wednesday.

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 or Cjrosser@aol.com if you have any questions.

Thursday Morning Yoga

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

Godly Play

In Godly Play, we will learn about how Paul discovered the power of the holy spirit and went to the ends of the earth to teach people the message of love.

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

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Prison Ministry

Bubba Pflantzbaum has been writing to an inmate in Cumberland for about 10 years, providing friendship and access to information. His name is Jim, and he may be released in the next year or so. Jim is always looking for people to correspond with, so if you are interested in getting involved with this ministry, please email Bubba at bubbashalom@gmail.com

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, June 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 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 June 17 at 10:15 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

Mobile Med

Mobile Med: Ascension hosts the Mobile Med van on Tuesday at Ascension House (where the van parks) and the Chapel (where the patients wait). We have volunteers that man the waiting room from 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. You do NOT need medical knowledge or training - we act as hosts to the patients as they wait. We welcome new volunteers!

Jean Cohn
spangle1@comcast.net
240.372.3652.

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

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Diana Gustafson Ordination

Dear Ascension Friends

By the Grace of God and the people consenting I will be ordained to the priesthood on June 16, 2018 at 10:00 at the National Cathedral. I am joyful and humbled to invite you join me.

I will have a more formal invitation and further details to send in a few weeks.

National Cathedral

[3101 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016](https://www.nationalcathedral.org/3101-Wisconsin-Ave-NW-Washington-DC-20016)

Blessings,
Diana

Ascension Work Camp 2018

Where: Philadelphia, PA St. James School

Cost: \$350 however scholarships will be found for those in need. Please make check out to Ascension and put "work camp" in the memo. Also please do not hand it to me but rather give it to church office in person or mail.

This is always a very rewarding experience for our Ascension Youth. The church will send them off on June 24th at the 120 am service.

Please contact Angie to sign up or with any questions: angela.hightwalker@nist.gov.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers For Those Whose Lives are Closely Linked With Ours: St. Columba's Church, DC, St. Columba's Nursery School, DC

We pray for comfort, healing, courage and hope for Reba Brown, Jean Cohn, Harriette Eleanor Cooper, Fredy Diaz, Peggy Donnellon, Sally & William Glick, Rudi Miksa, Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro, Leslie Pool, Fran Spina, Doret Sutherland, Samuel Tellu, Martha Tieran, Elvia Valencia, Suzanne Winterhalter, 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 Leaflets for Services](#)

[Link to Podcast of Nan's Sermon on Sunday, June 3rd: "Where is God in the Summer"](#)

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

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