



This Week at Ascension

[Link to the Bulletins for January 18](#)

[Link to Randy's Sermon "The Shape of Things to Come" from January 11.](#)

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

Calendar Highlights

Friday, January 16
6pm Couples 12-Step Program, Ascension House

Saturday, January 17
9am Women's Mini Retreat, Panera in Gaithersburg
9am Overeaters Anonymous, Undercroft Commons
11am Memorial Service for Betty Rossi, Main Church
11am Al-Anon, Undercroft Commons
11am Overeaters Anonymous, Ascension House

Sunday, January 18
7:45am Holy Eucharist, Main Church
9am Holy Eucharist, Main Church
9am Godly Play, Room 6
10:15am Holy Eucharist for Families with young Children, Chapel
10:15am A Joyful Path, Room 3
10:15am Rite 13 & Confirm, not Conform, Ascension

What's Your Star?

Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him."

- Matthew 2:1b-2

In the parish I served as an assistant priest in Massachusetts the "renewal committee" organized what was then called a "Faith Alive" weekend. The concept was that members of the parish hosting one of these events would house visitors from other congregations who'd come and spend the weekend with them. There would be very lively worship services, small group meetings for all ages, and lots of great food.

The weekend ended with a terrific and very emotional Eucharist that included lay testimonials and an "altar call." Eventually, some of the visiting leaders met with the rector to reflect on the fruits of the event for the parish. The thing that stands out in my mind to this day was the concern expressed about a certain family who had an astrology program on their home computer. For some of our visitors this was on a par with devil worship or dabbling in the occult. For the family in question it was a source of entertainment as much as reading horoscopes on the comic pages of the local newspaper was.

I understand why some Christians view astrology with caution. In Christ we are made free; liberated from oppressive influences, such as self defeating, inherited family or cultural "scripts." Maybe not abruptly or instantly (which can be actually spiritually and psychologically harmful), but over time as one defers more and more to life in Christ and the dream of God for each of us and the world. To make decisions based on the movements of planets and stars is at the least an inadequate source of guidance through the sometimes bewildering complexities of real life situations, which are full of moral ambiguity. At worst, it is one way to relinquish the sometimes terrible and terrifying burden of Christian liberty and responsibility.

Astrology is probably one of our least worries in this regard.

House

10:15am *We Make the Road by Walking* Book Group, Library

11am Holy Eucharist in Spanish, Chapel

11am Godly Play, Room 6

11:15am Holy Eucharist, Main Church

2pm Fibromyalgia Support Group, Ascension House

5pm Holy Eucharist, Chapel

Monday, January 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Office Closed

6:30pm Overeaters

Anonymous, Undercroft Commons

Tuesday, January 20

9:30am Staff Meeting, Library

11am Yoga, Chapel

6pm Spanish Bible Study, Room 3

7pm Education for Ministry, Library

7pm Still Water Mindfulness Practice, Chapel

8:30pm AI-Anon, Ascension House

Wednesday, January 21

10am *Speaking Christian* Book Group, Library

6pm No Yoga

6:45pm No Meditation

7pm Codependents

Anonymous, Ascension House

8pm Gamblers Anonymous, Ascension House

Thursday, January 22

11am Episcopal Seeking Seniors, Asbury

6pm Spanish Class, Room 3

7:45pm Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room

[Link to our Online Calendar](#)

Worship Leaders

Surrendering our freedom to powerful leaders who would stifle individual thought and healthy dissent is an all too familiar scenario in human history. Addiction to controlled substances (legal and illegal) is a well known way to lose one's soul. None of these ways of getting lost need be permanent. Revolutions topple tyrants and, miracle of miracles, millions have been delivered from bondage to alcohol addiction.

The Gospel embraces and uses our losses and weaknesses as well as our strengths, and testifies to the power of God to create meaning and purpose with and through them. Our sins and wounds are vessels of grace, and people are just as often led to Christ through the obscure path of looking into the sky as hearing the words or reading the books of renowned spiritual teachers. What unlikely "star" have you followed home?

Peace, Randy

Announcements

(click for more info)

HEADLINERS

[Godly Play, January 18](#)

[A Joyful Path, January 18](#)

[Rite-13 and Confirm, not Conform](#)

[Wednesday Evening Spiritual Practice Opportunities](#)

[Men's Shelter Lunch Preparation](#)

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

[Women's Minis Retreat, January 17](#)

[Still Water Mindfulness Practice Group](#)

[Listening Heart Community at Ascension](#)

[Wednesday Morning Book Study](#)

[We Make the Road by Walking Book Group](#)

WORSHIP

[Ash Wednesday, 2015](#)

[Youth Sunday, February 22](#)

[Bulletins for Tablets Link](#)

[Worship Rosters, January - March 2015](#)

Sunday, January 18

Preacher: Ms. Peg Ruppel, Jr.
Warden

Flower Delivery: Eliane Dunn, Hawa Clemens, *Altar Guild:* Fran Spina, Margaret Mirin, Caryl Thomas, Gerry Sammartino, Margaret Joseph, Ruby King, Ruth Anna Skowronski

7:45 AM *Reader/Prayer:* Jean Cohn, *Chalicians:* Enid Cole, Wadai Dennis, *Healing Prayer:* Meredith Horan, *Acolytes:* Raymond Chin, Jackson Douglas, Aidan Douglas, *Welcome Team:* Jean Cohn, Don Cohn

9:00 AM *Readers:* Gary McLaughlin, Susan McLaughlin, *Prayers:* Sarah Rubin, *Chalicians:* Shirley Allen, Swithin Kwamena-Poh, *Healing Prayer:* Major Clemens, *Acolytes:* Kofi Dickson, Lisa Dickson, Nuelle Johnson, *Welcome Team:* Nii Armah Akuete, Ruby King, Charles Dickson

11:15 AM *Reader:* Alice Benson, *Chalicians:* Kirk Fitch, Anika Lalmansingh, *Healing Prayer:* Alex Langley, *Welcome Team:* Page Salazar, Avin Lalmansingh

5:00 PM *Reader/Usher:* Rebecca Smith-Kevern

Eucharistic Visitor: Barb Mansfield, Kate Foley

SERVICE

Lord's Table Soup Kitchen

Gaithersburg HELP

Youth Against Hunger

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Memorial Service for Betty Rossi, Saturday, January 17

Ascension Adventure Group to the Museum of Civil War Medicine, January 24

Ceiling Tile Hanging Party, January 31

Family Movie Night, February 6

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, 2015

Prayer Request Updates

Annual Giving Campaign

Winter Weather Policy

THE ASCENDANT

January 2015

Prayers

FOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE CLOSELY LINKED WITH OURS:

St. Peter's Church

Ascension and St. Agnes, Washington

Washington Interfaith Network (WIN)

Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Ministries

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

PRAY FOR COMFORT, HEALING, COURAGE, AND HOPE:

The Bonesio Family, Carol, Helen, Abby, Major, Terry, George, Heather, Susan, Gary, Sarah, Glenn, Ernie, Diane, Nancy, Rimie, Jim, Laurie, 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. For all people affected by natural disasters, violence, and war.

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

We pray for all who are threatened by the Ebola virus, those who suffer and have died, those who've lost family and friends,

and those who are working toward a cure and who are helping the afflicted, especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.

We pray for the victims of violence cloaked in the mantle of religion wherever it may be found, especially for Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East.

We pray that the leadership of our nation will adapt legal measures that will reduce the incidence of gun violence.

We pray for the victims of the latest violent attacks and killings in northern Nigeria by the extremist group Boko Haram, where more than 2,000 people are thought to have been killed - and in Maiduguri and Potiskum - where children as young as 10 are said to have been used in suicide bomb attacks, and for the orchestrators of these acts.

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