

# EPISCOPAL Church of the Ascension



## This Week at Ascension

[Link to the Bulletins for March 15](#)

[Link to Randy's Sermon "A Light to the Nations" from March 8.](#)

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

### Calendar Highlights

**Friday, March 13**  
6pm Vestry Retreat,  
Ascension House

**Saturday, March 14**  
8am Vestry Retreat,  
Ascension House  
9am Overeaters Anonymous,  
Undercroft Commons  
11am AI-Anon, Undercroft  
Commons  
11am Overeaters  
Anonymous, Ascension House

**Sunday, March 15**  
7:45am Holy Eucharist, Main  
Church  
9am Holy Eucharist, Main  
Church  
9am Godly Play, Room 6  
9am ESOL Class, Room 1  
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  
House

### "Taking Up Your Cross"

"All of the intimate friends of Jesus are portrayed in Mark as unreliable, doltish cowards. As Jesus hung on the cross, none of his chosen inner circle were present, only "women looking on from afar." The Gospel of John, written three decades after Mark and in different circumstances, describes a poignant post-Resurrection reunion of the Lord with his dear friend Peter, where the threefold betrayal is reversed as Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?"— a beautiful ritual of forgiveness and reconciliation, of which we will see more. But Mark offers no such consoling denouement. Instead, Mark ends with the breach between Jesus and Peter, and the others— except for the women— entirely unhealed. This Gospel seems to have as its central subject the abject failure of the friends of Jesus to support him. What is going on here?

"But if we keep our focus on the Roman War as the defining key to Jesus *actually*, there is a far simpler explanation for this frankly shocking portrait of Peter as a cowardly, unreliable man. If the Gospel of Mark was addressed to a frightened, demoralized collective of Jesus people holed up in Galilee, to people threatened on all sides by marauding Romans, revenge-seeking Jewish Zealots, or Jews associated with rabbis who insisted that acceptance of the false Messiah Jesus threatened the survival of what remained of Judaism; and if those Jesus people, additionally, bore the burden of guilt at their failure to join in the anti-Roman resistance, or were tempted to believe the accusations of cowardice hurled at them by their fellow Jews; and if they had even lost faith in their Lord, whose rescuing return had yet to come about— well, what in the world would good news look like to such people? In this context, the message of Mark was straightforward: Do not feel guilty because you have faltered in the faith; do not feel disqualified because you have lost hope; do not count yourselves lost—because look! The most intimate friends of Jesus behaved in exactly the same way, including, especially, the exalted Peter, whose name everyone reveres. What you need to hear in this time of grotesque tribulation is that Jesus extends his call not to heroes but to cowards, who fail him. An honest reckoning with such failure is the starting point of discipleship. In reading the Gospel of Mark, or hearing it read,

10:15am Choir Practice,  
Choir Room  
10:15am Men's Shelter  
Lunch Preparation,  
Undercroft Commons  
11am Holy Eucharist in  
Spanish, Chapel  
11am Godly Play, Room 6  
11:15am Holy Eucharist,  
Main Church  
1:30pm Maryland Uke Jam,  
Undercroft Commons  
2pm Fibromyalgia Support  
Group, Ascension House  
3pm Christian Counselors  
Gathering, Library  
5pm Holy Eucharist, Chapel

#### Monday, March 16

1pm Lord's Table Soup  
Kitchen, St. Martin's  
6:30pm Overeaters  
Anonymous, Undercroft  
Commons  
7pm Listening Hearts  
Community, Library

#### Tuesday, March 17

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, March 18

10am *Speaking Christian*  
Book Group, Library  
6pm Yoga, Chapel  
6:45pm Meditation, Chapel  
7pm Codependents  
Anonymous, Ascension House  
7:30 *Christ, Actually: The  
Son of God for the Secular  
Age* Class, Library  
8pm Gamblers Anonymous,  
Ascension House

#### Thursday, March 19

such people would have had their fears transformed, for this Gospel's very subject is the flawed condition of all. Peter's rejection of the suffering and persecution that Jesus knows awaits him would have rung with pointed resonance for people who were— even as they read this text— themselves facing just such suffering and persecution, and wanting no more of it. Indeed, they would have taken special note of what Mark describes as following directly on the rebuke of Peter for his rejection of the Lord's suffering, where Jesus called "to himself the multitude with his disciples and said to them, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'

"Recall that as this verse was written, ten thousand crosses were ringing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. That is what the Christians in Galilee would have known, and that is what would have defined their dread. The cross was no mere religious symbol to them, as the author of Mark knew very well when he put that word in Jesus' mouth. Mark's readers were themselves already undergoing what, in the Gospel, Jesus predicts for them, and that alone would have offered consolation. Their suffering itself was a way of drawing close to their Lord—" you will be hated by all for my name's sake." While such words did not relieve their suffering, the words changed its meaning."

- from James Carroll, *Christ Actually: The Son of God for the Secular Age* (pp. 75-77).

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#### Announcements

(click for more info)

#### HEADLINERS

[This Year's Rice Bowl Offering](#)

[Men's Shelter Lunch Preparation, March 15](#)

[Lenten Lectio Retreat: March 21](#)

[Holy Week and Easter at Ascension](#)

#### CHRISTIAN FORMATION

[Godly Play, March 15](#)

[A Joyful Path, March 15](#)

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

[Confirmation Class](#)

[Baptisms on Easter Eve](#)

[Wednesday Evening Spiritual Practice Opportunities](#)

[Still Water Mindfulness Practice Group](#)

6pm Spanish Class, Room 3  
6:45pm Girl Scouts, Room 6

[Link to our Online Calendar](#)

## Worship Leaders

Sunday, March 15  
Preacher: (The Rev.) Randy Lord-  
Wilkinson

*Flower Delivery:* Musu Rogers, Alice  
Padmore

7:45 AM *Reader/Prayers:* Jean  
Cohn, *Chalicians:* Edna Leake, Kate  
Siberine, *Healing Prayer:* Janet  
King, *Acolytes:* Raymond Chin,  
Jackson Douglas, Aidan Douglas,  
*Welcome Team:* Jean Cohn, Don  
Cohn, *Altar Guild:* Georgette  
Dennis, Yarvo Jones

9:00 AM *Readers:* Gary McLaughlin,  
Sue Snay, *Prayers:* Kate Siberine,  
*Chalicians:* Sari Stoddard, Shirley  
Allen, *Healing Prayer:* Paul  
Whitmore, *Acolytes:* Kofi Dickson,  
Lisa Dickson, Alex Hanson, *Welcome  
Team:* Nii Armah Akuete, Ruby King,  
Charles Dickson, *Altar Guild:*  
Adoma Baffoe, Ruby King

11:15 AM *Reader:* Anika  
Lalmansingh, *Chalicians:* Peg Ruppel,  
Laura Shay, *Healing Prayer:* Alex  
Langley, *Welcome Team:* Page  
Salazar, Avin Lalmansingh, *Altar  
Guild:* Alice Padmore

5:00 PM *Reader/Usher:* Christine  
Yankus-Eng

*Eucharistic Visitor:* Musu Rogers,  
Kate Foley

[Listening Heart Community at Ascension](#)

[Speaking Christian Morning Book Study](#)

[Christ, Actually: The Son of God for the Secular Age Lenten  
Class](#)

[Men's Retreat - Save the Date!](#)

## WORSHIP

[Youth Sunday, New Date](#)

[Acolyte Training and Review](#)

[Bulletins for Tablets Link](#)

## SERVICE

[Lord's Table Soup Kitchen](#)

[Gaithersburg HELP](#)

[Youth Against Hunger](#)

[Ascension's Cancer Support Group](#)

## LIFE AT ASCENSION

[Ascension's Adventure Group to Hike Cunningham Falls Trail](#)

[Easter Artwork and Filled Eggs](#)

[Easter Flowers](#)

[ESOL Class](#)

[Fall Event](#)

[New FACTs on Episcopal Church Growth and Decline](#)

[Annual Report](#)

[Prayer Request Updates](#)

[Winter Weather Policy](#)

## THE ASCENDANT

[March](#)

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## Prayers

FOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE CLOSELY LINKED WITH OURS:  
St. Patrick's Church  
St. Patrick's Day School

PRAY FOR COMFORT, HEALING, COURAGE, AND HOPE:

Debar, Carol, Sue, Lee, Joseph, Susan, Nancy, Nancy, Janet, Lou, Fran, Robert, 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, and give thanks that the tide is turning.

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 adopt legal measures that will reduce the incidence of gun violence.

**THANKSGIVING:**

We give thanks for the birthday on March 10 of Sean Ekundayo Cole, son of Enid Cole.

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension**  
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