

WELCOME TO ASCENSION

SAVE YOUR PEOPLE, OH GOD, AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE

“NOTHING EMBITTERS A PERSON MORE THAN SUFFERING. BUT WHEN IT IS CONSECRATED TO GOD, IT BECOMES HOLY”

THOMAS MERTON

SUN DEC 15 SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

After – Hospitality

1:00pm Advisory Board Meeting in Betta Hall.

Col 3:4-11; Lk 14:16-24 Tone 5

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners & HGB Helen Luecke by Fr. Alex

Tue Dec 17 8:30 Divine Liturgy For Capt. Francis Fetsko by William Fetsko

Wed Dec 18 8:30 Divine Liturgy For HGB Katharina Margan by Fr. Alex

After - Moleben to the Theotokos -Special Intention

Thu Dec 19 8:30 Divine Liturgy For HGB Larry & MaryAnn Drumtra by Fr. Alex

6:00pm - **ROSARY - Prayer** For Peace in Our Country & **for Protection and Healing** of all serious illnesses by Men's Club

Sat Dec 21 1:00pm Church **Cleaning** Hours

SUN DEC 22 SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS – OF THE ANCESTORS

After – Hospitality

1:00pm Advisory Board Meeting in Betta Hall.

Heb 11:9-10 7 17 – 23 & 32 - 40; Mt 1:1-25 Tone 6

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners & + Joseph Baysura by Marilyn Jensen

Happy DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11th Joshua Karlson; 20th Kathy Alexander; 29th Abraham Kusno

Bible Study: the Book of Genesis

The next adult Bible study will be held on Tuesday **December 10 from 5:15 to 6:30 PM.**

The subject will be Sodom and Gomorrah- Lesson 11, Genesis Chapters 19 and 20.

This will be the only session in December. Respectfully submitted, Dr. Michael Lechman

Please Join us on the (2nd and 4th Tuesday Evening Bible Study of St. John Hall at 5:15pm. in the Social Hall.

+

Ascension Parish Family would like to express their deepest condolences to Michelle Massie for the loss of her beloved cousin Aaron Cramer. Who passed away unexpectedly last week. ETERNAL MEMORY

Attention all Parishioners, Visitors, and Guests: please do your part to help us keep the Social Hall clean. After Sunday Hospitality and Pot Lucks please make sure the table area where you were sitting is wiped clean. **Also, please place your chair on top of the table.** Doing these things will be a big help and save much time in maintaining and keeping the floors clean. Thanks for your help and cooperation Fr. Alex

The **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is fully operational and located on the wall above the fire extinguisher in St. Phillips Hall. Eight parishioners were certified on the use of the AED on Oct 8, 2023 and other parishioners have been certified in the past. Periodic updates will follow. Dr. Michael Lechman

SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOMED.

Many unique items come into the shop weekly. We have a great selection of special-occasion gifts and religious items unique to the Williamsburg area, including a wide selection of spiritual books, music, icons and devotional and inspirational articles plus hand-made soaps, local honey.

We have several faithful from Ascension who are in need of **special prayer.**

Some of those who need special prayer are:

Frank and Chris Janke, Mary Grace Dorsey, Ben Pawers, Betty May Hertz, Emma Bernier, Lolly Vinson, June Mathews, William McGraw, Myron Kotyk, Darren and June Hall, Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea, Lary, Mary Ann Drumtra & their Family, Katharina Margan, Elaine Hampton, Dr. Micheal & Linda Lechman, Orysia Stefaniv, Elisabeth Branden, Merly & Teresa Phillips, Mary Sullivan, Mary Saupp, Francis Fenderson, Gareth & Patricia Reeves. Abigail Johnson, Don Wilson & his Family, Johnny Morris, Hazel Reeres, Richard Bapst; Joan Ruszkowski and her Family, John Adzima, Michael Derkacz Thank you. Fr. Alex

Parish Activities: All activities should be recorded on the **main calendar**. Please write in the activity you are responsible for and let Fr. Alex know the details so he can include it in the bulletin

Visitors, family and friends: Are you curious, do you have questions or inquirers about our church, icons, Divine Liturgy, or Byzantine Catholic traditions? Someone will be waiting to answer your questions after Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings in the vicinity of the icon corner at the front of the sanctuary. Don't be afraid to ask, there are no wrong questions.

Liturgy and Candle Requests: Often we want to remember someone and offer special prayers for the departure of a loved one, special occasion, birthday, anniversary, etc. with celebration of a Divine Liturgy or lighting of a candle in front of an icon. To request a liturgy or candle, please complete the form in the appropriate envelope which you will find in the rack on the wall as you enter Ascension church and place it in the Sunday offering basket. Thank you. Fr. Alex.

10 signs you're doing well in life:

- 1.) you have a roof over your head. 2.) You ate today. 3.) You have a good heart.
- 4.) You wish good for others. 5.) You have clean water. 6.) Someone cares for you.
- 7.) You strive to be better. 8.) You have clean clothes. 9.) You have a dream. 10.) You're Breathing.

Be Thankful For The Little Things

Welcome Back ECF Students!

Welcome Back, Children and teachers! Our children's ECF classes will meet weekly at 10am before Divine Liturgy. All children are welcome to attend! If you have any questions, please reach out to Lisa Edwards at LisaCVoice@yahoo.com.

Young Adults, Children, Adult Bible Study Comity: Subdeacon Adithia Kusno, Dr. Michael Lechman, Lisa Edwards. **Special Event/Retreat Speakers Comity:** David Efimetz, Don Merkley, Dr. Mary Jean Sotack

We will still collect donations for the Ukrainian Humanitarian Cause. You may place your generous gift in the basket with the Ukrainian Flag. You will find it at the Icon Screen. Thank you for your gift of hope! Fr. Alex

The Hospitality Committee is again in need of additional volunteers for 2025 year. We all enjoy staying for Hospitality after Sunday Liturgy, so please consider joining our Committee. It usually works out to about three times per year for each hostess. If you will be away on a scheduled Sunday, just ask someone else to switch dates with you. If interested, please see Chris Noonan after liturgy in the Parish Hall. Thank You.....

This Nativity Fast, our parish children will be collecting socks to keep our neighbors in need warm this Nativity season, and throughout the winter. Socks are the most desired but least donated item in shelters and donation centers. Our children are embracing the spirit of St. Nicholas and his spirit of giving (and hiding things in socks!!!!) with our St Nicholas Sock Drive!!!! Socks of all sizes, children through adult, can be given to our parish children or placed in the donation bin in the hall. Thank you ALL in advance for your support and let's fill up the bin! Donations will be collected through Dec 15 and will be taken to the local shelters the following week. If you have any questions please see Lisa Edwards after Liturgy or email at LisaCVoice@yahoo.com.

God bless America!!!

Prayer to Guardian Angel

ANGEL OF GOD, MY GUARDIAN DEAR, TO WHOM HIS LOVE COMMITS ME HERE: EVER THIS DAY
BE AT MY SIDE, TO LIGHT AND GUARD, TO RULE AND GUIDE. AMEN



FINANCIALS, Dec 8, 2024

Monthly Dues –690.00; Offertory –1,811.00; Special Gifts – 4, 000.00; Candles-111.00;
In – 6,532.00; Out- 909.17

Candles for December

Sanctuary Lamp...+ John & Betta Labanish
Tetrapod... HGB Lainie Noonan by Chris Noonan
Theotokos & Child... HGB Andrey by Keith & Nadia Shckly
John Baptist... + Jonathan Duttry by Patty Duttry
St Nicholas... + Nicholas Yackanovich by Evelyn Yackanovich
Protection Theotokos... HGB Michael Noonan by Chris Noonan
Christ Teacher... HGB Irene Slysh by Keith & Nadia Shockly

NEEDED!!! The parish is in need of a parish photographer. We have so many events and undertakings at Ascension that go largely unrecorded; lost to memory. A photographer helps us capture our history, making for great memories. In order to spread the work load, it would be best to have several parishioner's willing to take pictures and organize them for parish use. If you are interested see Father Alex.

To Be a Saint – A Thirst For God

One of the saddest comments I ever heard was from a young man who just became a new father. I congratulated him. Knowing that he was a non-practicing Christian, I asked if he would be getting back to church. He told me “No, I do not want to force God on my son. I will let him make up his own mind when he is ready”. That was an actual conversation some 30+ years ago. The young father who said this was not a bad man; he was however decidedly lazy, and blind to the responsibilities of fatherhood. Fast forward now 30 years...

Recently I wrote a letter outlining the decline of those who believe in God, Satan, heaven and hell. There was also a corresponding rise in those who accepted paganism, and a full 28% of adults in the United States now identify themselves as religiously unaffiliated.

A bleak picture? Possibly, but then how do you explain this? According to the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, Bible sales are up 22% this year through the end of October? Compare this with overall print book sales up less than 1% during the same time frame. A trend? In 2019, Bible sales hit 9.7 million, and in the first 10 months of 2024, they have already surpassed 13.7 million, marking a 41% increase since 2019. Worries about the economy, conflicts abroad, political and social uncertainties pushed readers toward the Bible in droves. “People are experiencing anxiety themselves, or they’re worried for their children and grandchildren,” said Jeff Crosby, president of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. “It’s related to artificial intelligence, election cycles...and all of that feeds a desire for assurance that we’re going to be OK.”

Chad Pecknold, theologian and professor at The Catholic University of America, told the Daily Caller News Foundation. “We are currently seeing a kind of clarity about the civilizational conflict that ‘woke’ ideologies provoked. In brief, the people are fed up with this fake religion, and even if they aren’t Christian themselves, they’re realizing that Christianity provides a far better ‘unwritten constitution’ for the nation than anti-Christian wokism can supply. While it has been apparent to a few of us for some time, millions are now realizing that ‘woke’ ideologies are destructive attempts to re-found the nation according to a new civic religion which both parodies and persecutes Christianity”.

All this comes as Church attendance among Christians has remains very low in the United States, with only 30% of Protestants and 23% of Catholics attending church every week,

according to a March Gallup poll. Yet, we are seeing more Americans than ever consuming religious content, with the Hallow prayer app becoming the first religious app to top Apple’s App Store in 2024.

So, it seems as a nation there is a thirst for God, yet for many, the traditional anchors that has kept us grounded with God are missing. Many Americans have grown up without the basic foundation of parental example, and catechism provided by organized religion. This guidance is so important to provide a frame work and correct interpretation. In a word, many people are not “Churched”. Without the proper foundation, many of those seeking God, including those who study scripture in a vacuum, will invariably burn out, stray off course, or worse, place themselves in the hands of those who will intentionally mislead.

Why say this? Why do we not just trust that the Holy Spirit will guide these people who thirst for God? What would Jesus do (WWJD)? Let’s rephrase that to read, What “DID” Jesus Do.....

Jesus chose His Apostles to preach the good news faithfully and fully. He gave them power to forgive sins, cast out demons, and to be good and faithful shepherds to the flock. Yes, the Holy Spirit came, and is still present today, which may explain the thirst we are seeing to reconnect with God. However, it is to Christ’s earthly ministers, the successors of the Apostles, His priests and clergy, that He entrusts the faithful to, and in this we see the importance of their guidance in developing our life and relationship with God. We see this clearly in the “Great Commission” that our Lord gave to the Apostles before His Ascension.

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Mt.28:19-20

For those who have a thirst for God, let these words from our Lord be a sign.

Yours in Christ
Brother Joseph

Psalm 1

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Blessed the man who follows not
the counsel of the wicked
Nor walks in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the company of the insolent,
But delights in the law of the LORD
and meditates on his law day and night.

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

He is like a tree
planted near running water,
That yields its fruit in due season,
and whose leaves never fade.
Whatever he does, prospers.

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Not so, the wicked, not so;
they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,
but the way of the wicked vanishes.

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 95

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Messiah in the desert,
Where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.”

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Psalm 23

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side.

Psalm 16

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the LORD, "My Lord are you."
O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence;
Because you will not abandon my soul to the nether world,
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

You will show me the path to life,
fullness of joys in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

Psalm 138

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,
for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple,
and give thanks to your name.

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

Because of your kindness and your truth,
you have made great above all things
your name and your promise.
When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me.

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

Your right hand saves me.
The LORD will complete what he has done for me;
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

Psalm 113

The Lord will give him a seat with the leaders of his people.

Praise, you servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD.
Blessed be the name of the LORD
both now and forever.

The Lord will give him a seat with the leaders of his people.

From the rising to the setting of the sun
is the name of the LORD to be praised.
High above all nations is the LORD;
above the heavens is his glory.

The Lord will give him a seat with the leaders of his people.

Who is like the LORD, our God, who is enthroned on high
and looks upon the heavens and the earth below?

The Lord will give him a seat with the leaders of his people.

He raises up the lowly from the dust;
from the dunghill he lifts up the poor
To seat them with princes,
with the princes of his own people.

The Lord will give him a seat with the leaders of his people.

Psalm 104

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O LORD!
the earth is full of your creatures.

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD be glad in his works!
Pleasing to him be my theme;
I will be glad in the LORD.

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

If you take away their breath, they perish
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Psalm 11

The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD's throne is in heaven.
His eyes behold,
his searching glance is on mankind.

The just will gaze on your face, O Lord.

The LORD searches the just and the wicked;
the lover of violence he hates.
For the LORD is just, he loves just deeds;
the upright shall see his face.

The just will gaze on your face, O Lord.

Psalm 103

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.
Bless the LORD, all you his angels,
you mighty in strength, who do his bidding.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

Psalm 15

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

He who walks blamelessly and does justice;
who thinks the truth in his heart
and slanders not with his tongue.

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Who harms not his fellow man,
nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor;
By whom the reprobate is despised,
while he honors those who fear the LORD.

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Who lends not his money at usury
and accepts no bribe against the innocent.
He who does these things
shall never be disturbed.

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Exodus 15

Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.

I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.
He is my God, I praise him;
the God of my father, I extol him.

Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.

The LORD is a warrior,
LORD is his name!
Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into the sea;
the elite of his officers were submerged in the Red Sea.

Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.

The flood waters covered them,
they sank into the depths like a stone.
Your right hand, O LORD, magnificent in power,
your right hand, O LORD, has shattered the enemy.

Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

I am sunk in the abysmal swamp
where there is no foothold;
I have reached the watery depths;
the flood overwhelms me.

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

But I pray to you, O LORD,
for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me
with your constant help.

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

But I am afflicted and in pain;
let your saving help, O God, protect me;
I will praise the name of God in song,
and I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

“See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the LORD hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.”

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

Psalms 69

Psalms 106

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Our fathers made a calf in Horeb
and adored a molten image;
They exchanged their glory
for the image of a grass-eating bullock.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

They forgot the God who had saved them,
who had done great deeds in Egypt,
Wondrous deeds in the land of Ham,
terrible things at the Red Sea.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Then he spoke of exterminating them,
but Moses, his chosen one,
Withstood him in the breach
to turn back his destructive wrath.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Psalm 99

Holy is the Lord our God.

Extol the LORD, our God,
and worship at his footstool;
holy is he!

Holy is the Lord our God.

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
and Samuel, among those who called upon his name;
they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

Holy is the Lord our God.

From the pillar of cloud he spoke to them;
they heard his decrees and the law he gave them.

Holy is the Lord our God.

Extol the LORD, our God,
and worship at his holy mountain;
for holy is the LORD, our God.

Holy is the Lord our God.

Psalm 95

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
Where your fathers tested me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.”

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Psalm 106

Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.

We have sinned, we and our fathers;
we have committed crimes; we have done wrong.
Our fathers in Egypt
considered not your wonders.

Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.

But soon they forgot his works;
they waited not for his counsel.
They gave way to craving in the desert
and tempted God in the wilderness.

Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.

They forgot the God who had saved them,
who had done great deeds in Egypt,
Wondrous deeds in the land of Ham,
terrible things at the Red Sea.

Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.

Then he spoke of exterminating them,
but Moses, his chosen one,
Withstood him in the breach
to turn back his destructive wrath.

Remember us, O Lord, as you favor your people.

Psalm 97

The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.

The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice;
let the many islands be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him,
justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.

The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.

The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,
before the LORD of all the earth.
The heavens proclaim his justice,
and all peoples see his glory.

The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.

Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth,
exalted far above all gods.

The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD—for he proclaims peace
To his people, and to his faithful ones,
and to those who put in him their hope.

The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and salvation, along the way of his steps.

The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

Psalm 85

The Lord speaks of peace to his people.