

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 FEB 16 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON`

After – Hospitality Men’s Club breakfast

2 Tim 3:10-15 Lk 18: 10-14 Tone 5

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners & + Peter Nicholas Peltier by Paula Peltier

Mon Feb 17 **5:30pm Chant Camp**

Tue Feb 18 8:30 Divine Liturgy HBG Ivanna & Luba & Zenovii Tsybulyak by Fr. Alex

Wed Feb 19 8:30 Divine Liturgy + Dulcelina Ramos by David c. Alan

After - Moleben to the Theotokos -Special Intention

Thu Feb 20 8:30 Divine Liturgy HGB Shuter Family 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 Feb 22 1:00pm Church **Cleaning** Hours

SUN FEB 23 SUNDAY OF MEAT FARE

After – Hospitality

1 Cor 8:8-92 Mt 25: 31-46 Tone 7

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners & + Peter Nicholas Peltier by Paula Peltier

Happy FEBRUARY Birthdays

2nd Michelle Massie; 4th Dr. Angela Bross; 4th Dr. MaryJean Sotack; 9th Greg Pula; 16th Don Merkley; 17th Dr. Nadia Shockley; 17th Mike Olson;

“Chant Camp” will be returning on a new day and time starting in February! Join us weekly beginning Monday, **February 3rd at 5:30pm in Beta Hall.** The first area of focus will be chant for reading. Any and all skill levels are welcome! Questions can be sent to Lisa Edwards at LisaCVoice@yahoo.com

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.

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

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 and local honey. Special orders welcomed.

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 Ann Hall; Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea; Ann, 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; Adzima & John Adzima; Michael Derkacz; Retha Williams; Michael & Michaela Bross; Dara Horvath Murphy Thank you. Fr. Alex

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.

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

Ascension Young Adults will continue Byzantine spiritual studies Spring 2025: **Today February 2**, March 2, April 6, and May 4. at 12:30 pm. Come and pray together. In Christ Adi

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

Bible Study: the Book of Genesis

The next adult Bible study will be held on Tuesday February 11 from 5:15 to 6:30 PM. The session will cover Genesis, Chapters 23 and 24-Sarah, Isaac and Rebakah, Lesson 14 in the workbook. 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.

7 Practical Ways to Pray More This New Year

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to “pray without ceasing.” If taken too literally, it means we can do nothing else, but I like to think of it as having an open-ended conversation with God. Think about your parents or close friends that you talk to daily. God the Father wants to hear from his children, but He also wants us to listen to Him. This is the kind of relationship-building that can happen at any time.

We can offer a word of praise for answered prayer or a beautiful sunrise, or we can just share what’s on our hearts. You can talk to Him in spirit even when you’re among a crowd of people, or while driving down the road because you don’t have to close your eyes and fold your hands to pray. You can do it anytime and anywhere.

If you want to pray more, then you need to take every opportunity to talk with the Father. A daily quiet time where you lift specific prayers to Heaven is a must, but don’t forget the spontaneous or the everyday moments when we share our hearts with God and each other. Once we start building a prayer life, it becomes a means of communication instead of a formal ritual. Then, prayer will no longer be a chore on your to-do list; it will be something you look forward to, like a cup of tea or coffee with your best friend. What are you waiting for? You don’t have to wait for New Year’s Day. You can start right now.

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, Jan 2, 2025

Monthly Dues –1,250.00; Offertory –556.00; Holydays –20.00; Candles-34.00; Kitchen Income – 0.00; In – 1,912.00; Out- 3205.59

Candles for January

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 Merly & Teresa Phillips & Mary Ann Drumtra

2024 – 2025 Annual Bishop’s Appeal

The campaign has begun! We are well on the way of reaching our parish goal of \$6,800. To date we have raised \$3,700 with just 7 donors! We are more than halfway to our goal with only \$3,100 more to raise. Our success has always been through the generosity and giving spirit from you the members of our Parish. To make your donation you can go online at WWW.Eparchyofpassaic.com and make you pledge directly to the Eparchy or mail in you pledge card to the Bishop’s Office. For your convenience additional Bishop Appeal envelopes are in the front of the church. Everyone is welcome to participate. When we reach our goal, 40% of our donation will be paid back to our Parish.

Our Daily Bread – As Lent Approaches, Beware the Judas Touch

“What is a cynic? A person who knows the cost of everything, and the value of nothing.” Attributed to Oscar Wilde

He was from the city of Kerioth, in the extreme southern part of Judah. His name was Judas Iscariot. He was chosen by Jesus as an Apostle, so that scripture may be fulfilled (John 13:18). The only Apostle from Judah, he was bright, intelligent, and oh so skeptical. He became the Apostle’s treasurer, but as John notes, he stole from it on occasion. He thought himself to be wise, and was his own council.

Jesus’ sermons and many miracles certainly left an impression on Judas, but he, like many, expected the Messiah to be a leader who would liberate the Jewish nation politically. He believed that Jesus would lead a revolution. However, Jesus came to liberate humanity from sin and announce the kingdom of God. This did not fit with Judas’ thinking. Of what value was the liberation of mankind if it did not liberate Israel?

Judas’ disillusionment grew. Jesus taught in Capernaum that to have eternal life you must eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood. That was an abomination according to Judas, and many other Jewish disciples. Jesus lost many followers that day. He asked His Apostles if His teaching offended them? Peter spoke clearly; “...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life...”, John 6:68. Judas remained silent. He bided his time. But Jesus knew which ones did not believe, and who would betray Him.

When Jesus came to Bethany, a supper was prepared for Him and His companions. John tells us that a woman named Mary, took a costly ointment and anointed Jesus’s feet and wiped them dry with her hair. This beautiful act of reverence and love did not move Judas. He turned it into a purely financial matter, and fixed a price to the ointment of 300 denarii, or about 300 days wages. He exclaimed, this could have been sold and the money given to the poor! Jesus, who knew the price as well as the value of what Mary had done, told the group, “The poor you will have with you always, but you do not always have me.” John 12:8

I suspect Judas went on, whispering to others, maybe under his breath. All the while building up a case in his own mind to prove he was correct. What might he have said? “I heard you on the mount that day, ‘Blessed are the poor’; where is your love for the poor now?” Shortly after this episode, Judas made arrangement to hand over Jesus to the authorities.

And now we come to the Last Supper. This episode held great meaning and symbolism, and contains crucial teachings. Jesus took on the role of a servant, and went to each and washed their feet, including Judas, instructing them to learn from this and do the same. But Judas put no value in this. And while the washing of the feet cleaned the others, Judas was not cleaned. Shortly afterward Jesus announced that one would betray Him.

Then according to John, Jesus took a morsel of bread, dipped it and gave it to Judas. Shortly afterward Jesus dismissed him to carry out his treachery. For as John noted, Satan had entered into Judas, and Satan had no place there. When Judas had departed, Jesus pronounces, “Now is the Son of man glorified...” John 13:31

And so, Judas carried out his betrayal for 30 pieces of silver. Four months wages in those days to betray the Son of God. Think of how many poor he could feed with that? Yes, Judas knew the price

well, but did not understand the value of what he had sold until it was too late. His own council had failed him, but it was not his council, for in the end his council came from Satan.

Judas was overcome with remorse, but instead of asking for forgiveness and coming back to embrace his master, like Peter did after his denial, he went out to a tree and hung himself; throwing away the last gift of all, his life, for in the end he did not understand the value of that either. Thus ended the life of a cynic.

Beware the Judas touch. Do not mistake cynicism for critical thinking. Cynicism is a foot soldier of pride, the sin of Satan, and like Judas, your cynicism will be guided by the same evil that guided Judas in the end.

Those who fall from their faith, first take on the aspect of a cynic. Listen well to their words.... “Well, that communion is not really the Body and Blood of Christ, it’s just a symbol.” “The sacraments are words only, incantations that have no lasting value.” “Repentance and humility? They are for those who do not have my understanding.” These cynics may put on a good show. Did not Judas embrace and kiss our Lord when he betrayed Him in the Garden? But for all of their show, their deeds will lead them to the same end as Judas. Like the washing of feet at the Last Supper did not clean the feet of Judas, going through the motions of our faith without belief and understanding the value, will leave a cynic unclean also.

Resolve then to understand and place proper value on your faith, the value of your relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the most precious thing you possess.

Love Dad

Carpathian Kitchen - Potato and Cheese Lenten pierogi are on sale now. Be sure to get yours before supplies run out. Our next production run will be 7-8 March.

Men's Club - Thanks to the team for the breakfast sandwiches today! The Old Testament grillers will be in Action again on Sunday 2 March for Lenten Fish & Chips.

Want to get to know Ascension better? Come join us in the Carpathian Kitchen our the Men's Club, at Bible study, or any one of our many activities. Find out what a great thing belonging to a parish is.

NEEDED!!! Many thanks to Katya Dahdah for volunteering to help with parish photography needs. Her efforts will help us to capture and save many special parish moments. A strong team is best, so we will continue to ask for a few more volunteers to help out with photography needs. Please see Father Alex if you are interested in helping with this important ministry.

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

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.

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.

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;

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.

Psalm 69

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.

Psalm 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.

Psalm 85

The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

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.