

## WELCOME TO ASCENSION

SAVE YOUR PEOPLE, OH GOD, AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE

**PLEASE KEEP SOCIAL DISTANCE**

### Sun Dec 25 CHRISTMAS BIRTH OF OUR LORD

Gal 4:4-7 Mt 2:1-12

**11:00 DIVINE LITURGY For Our Parishioners**

### Mon Dec 26 SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

8:30am For Our Parishioners and For USA and Ukraine by Fr. Alex

Tue Dec 27 8:30am Privet prayer For USA and Ukraine by Fr. Alex

Wed Dec 28 8:30am For Our Parishioners and **MOLEBEN TO THE THEOTOKOS**

Thu Dec 29 8:30am Privet prayer For USA and Ukraine by Fr. Alex

**6:00pm** - **ROSARY** - Prayer for Protection and Healing of the coronavirus and all serious illnesses by Men's Club

## I WISH YOU HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2023

### SUN JAN 1 SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY; CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD

2 Tim 4:5-8; Col 2:8-12 Mk 1:1-8; Luke 2:20-21 & 40-52 Tone 5

**11:00 Divine Liturgy For All Our Parishioners and HGB Elisabeth Labanish by Elisabeth Branden**

**After – Hospitality**

The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be held on Monday January 9 at 6PM.

Fr. Alex.

**Christmas is a time for peace, hope, and love.**

To those we love and see each day and other loved ones far away, to all good friends who mean so much and those with whom we're out of touch... Wishing you every happiness this CHRISTMAS season and throughout the **coming 2023 year.**

**GOD BLESS YOU ALL. Fr. Alex**

## 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

**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, Betta Labanish, Betty May Hertz, Emma Bernier, Lolly Vinson, William McGraw, June McGraw, Darren and June Hall, Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea, Mary Ann Drumtra, Katharina and Steven Margan  
Thank you. Fr. A

### Candles for December:

Sanctuary Lamp... + John Labanish by Betta Labanish  
Tetrapod... + Elvira & Anthony DeGaspari by Ann Kelly  
Theotokos & Child... + Anna Oberhauser by Elisabeth Branden  
John Baptist... HGB Morgan Kelly by Ann Kelly  
St Nicholas... HGB Merle & Teresa Phillips by MaryAnn Drumtra  
Protection Theotokos... For Our Parishioners  
Christ Teacher... + Anthony DeGaspari by Ann Kelly

### IN THIS CHURCH, WE BELIEVE

IN THE HOLY SPIRIT; THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH; THE COMMUNION OF  
SAITS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND  
LIFE EVERLASTING

**If any parishioners plan to visit Edmonton, Canada, please speak with  
Father Alex regarding picking up a needed item for faith formation.**

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.

**SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOMED.**

**FINANCIALS, December 18 2022**

Monthly Dues –0.00; Offertory –0.00; Candles-0.00; Flowers-Christmas –0.00; Holyday - 0.00 In – 0.00; Out –0.00

Happy DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3rd GwendolynRose Picconi; 4th Robert Sotack; 7th Yaroslava Nicola Collins; 11th Joshua Karlson; 19th Joe Baysura; 20th Kathy Alexander; 29th Abraham Kusno

The Williamsburg **House of Mercy feed and shelter your neighbors?** *This summer, Williamsburg House of Mercy gave food to 208 families in a single a day and has moved 25 households into stable housing. For more information on how to donate or our shopping list, please visit WilliamsburgHouseOfMercy.org. Will you help? Thank you for being the hands and feed of Christ to our community!*  
Thank you. God Bless, Larissa

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

Our **Children's Formation program** has open enrollment. If you would like your child to learn about the faith and have space to have thoughtful conversations about God with peers, reach out to Sasha Kusno, 660-287-1003. Upcoming dates include: December 11 & 18 and January 8, 15, 22, and 29.

**God bless America!!!**

**Do you want to protect the children in your life?**

On Saturday, January 21st from 9 am - noon, the parish will host a *Stewards of Children* training facilitated by Sasha Kusno and Nick Corsi, who works for Child Development Resources. Through watching videos of first-hand accounts and dynamic dialogue, participants will learn how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The training is free to parishioners and community members due to a generous grant. Contact Sasha at 660-287-1003 to sign up.

IN THIS CHURCH, WE BELIEVE

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AS you are shifting you will begin to realize you are not the same person you use to be.

The things you used to tolerate have now become intolerable. Where you once remained quite you are now speaking truth. Where you once battled and argued you are now choosing to remain silent. You are beginning to understand the value of your voice and there are some situations that no longer deserve your time, energy and focus

**Men's Club** will meet on **Tuesday January 17th at 6:30 pm** in the Hall. ALL MEN please attend as we plan for the yearly activities - new and old!!

Interested in learning more about Christ, but perhaps from a different perspective? Come and join us as we set out on a new journey one chapter at a time through perhaps the most unique story of Christ - the **Gospel of John!** We will begin on **Tuesday January 17th at 5:15 pm**. Come and join us as we "cast the net" (Jn 21.6) to bring in the multitudes of wisdom in what is often referred to as the "spiritual gospel!"

*Michael Jack Bracelin*

## To be a Saint – Christmas Meditations

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isa.9:6*

On this Christmas day, we will take a break from our study of the seven signs of John's Gospel, and dwell on the beautiful nativity of our Lord. So let us go back in time. Back to the early church historians, back to the Evangelists and before; back through Old Testament scripture, even back to Genesis.

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will come forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His times of coming forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2*

Bethlehem Ephrathah (meaning fruitfulness). “To little to be among the clans of Judah”... Bethlehem was a small village of no particular significance. It was mentioned specifically in the Book of Genesis, for it was near to the place Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin (Gn. 35:19). Bethlehem was so insignificant that it is not even named in the list of the tribe of Judah's possessions as one of their chief cities, Joshua 15:20-68. Bethlehem may be presumed then to be contained in the unnamed list of villages, yet even in the villages of Judah, named in Nehemiah 11:25, we find no mention of Bethlehem.

Yet the term Ephrathah is appropriate, for from Bethlehem would come King David in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, and as Micah foretells in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Jesus Christ, the Son of God would be born in little Bethlehem.

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them at the inn. Lk 2:7*

“No place for them at the inn.” Bethlehem was not prepared for the hordes of people coming for the “enrollment” ordered by Augustus. Only the wealthy could afford the transportation to arrive early and secure lodging. The poor had to travel, usually by caravan, on foot or rudimentary transportation. Those that arrived late would have been on their own. Joseph's family came from Bethlehem, yet the Bible mentions no relatives that would take them in. There are wonderful stories about an Innkeeper letting the Holy Family stay in a stable, but alas it is a story only. The bible does not mention an Innkeeper. So, whatever the circumstances were, Joseph brought Mary to the only place that would welcome them, a place where animals were kept. I wonder now, would I welcome the Holy Family within my heart, or would I be like the innkeepers that turned them away, my heart to full of other concerns to make room? Of course, I tell myself, I would welcome the Holy Family. I would never turn them away. Yet

how often have I turned my back on my Lord, having no room in my proud heart to hear His voice trying to reach out to me.

So, was Christ born in a free standing stable or a cave? The Early Church Fathers wrote about Jesus being born in a cave. Justin Martyr (150 A.D.), Origen (250 A.D.), Jerome (325 A.D.). Each of these historians believed that the birth took place in a cave that served as a stable. The people of Bethlehem were known to keep their flocks in a nearby cave and there is some archaeological evidence for animals being housed in caves. Regardless, cave or stable, Christ chose to be born among God's humblest creatures. He chose to share their warmth and company over all the palaces and kingdoms of the world. He laid His head and slept in a feed trough meant for animals. He was wrapped in bands of cloth according to Jewish Custom, with limbs unextended. This binding prevented the new born from hurting himself by kicking or scratching or rolling over. The same Christ that 33 years later would be similarly wrapped in linen and hastily buried in a tomb.

Which brings me to a final meditation. *And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Lk 2:12*

What did the angels mean? What sort of sign were the shepherds looking for? There is an ancient tradition that these shepherds, who tended their flocks nearby to Jerusalem, provided the “lambs without blemish” for sacrifice in the temple of Jerusalem at Passover time. This custom dated back to the first Jewish Passover in Egypt as we read in Exodus Chapter 12. The shepherds, to protect the newborn lamb from blemish, would wrap the lamb in swaddling cloth and place it in a manger apart from the other sheep.

Ah, this would be a sign indeed! The shepherds would find the Savior, Christ the Lord, wrapped just like they wrapped their own precious sacrificial lambs after their birth. The Lamb of God that was destined for sacrifice to atone for the sins of all mankind.

For the present though, let us marvel at the sight of the new born Child as the shepherds did. Let us wrap ourselves in this blessed event that was foretold from days of long ago; from the days of eternity.

Yours in Christ  
Brother Joseph

## *Nothing but a Number*

*Japanese mountain climber Yuichiro Miura reached the summit of Mount Everest at age 70.*

*George Brunstad was also 70 when he swam the English Channel. Naval officer Grace Hopper became the first female rear admiral of the United States Navy when she was 79. Margaret Haggerty completed her quest to run a marathon on each of the seven continents when she was 84.*

*If stories like these teach us anything, it's that senior adults are capable of amazing things.*

*That was certainly true of Joshua. Even though he was probably nearing the century mark, God had a plan for him. Age didn't matter to God. Rather than telling Joshua to rest, retire or step aside for a younger replacement, God instructed him to get to work.*

*Perhaps we should take a cue from God in our attitude toward older adults. From an early age most of us were taught to respect our elders. However, too often we confuse politeness for respect. What's the difference? Politeness might include offering a hand to senior adults when they struggle with steps or making awkward small talk with aging relatives at family gatherings. Respect, however, would include realizing that with their years of challenges and experiences these adults are a rich, God-given resource.*

*In this age of politically correct labels, perhaps a better name for senior citizens is "ultra-experienced adults." God entrusted Joshua with an important duty a quarter century after Joshua reached retirement age because of his vast military experience and knowledge.*

*Think of the older adults you know. How does God want to use them in your life? What experiences of theirs might benefit you? What life lessons have they learned that might keep you from making a bad decision? And what might you be able to learn from hearing their stories and asking for their advice?*

### ***To Take Away***

- *How would you describe your attitude toward senior adults?*
- *Think of two or three seniors you know. What might getting to know them better add to your life?*
- *What steps can you take this week to build a mutually beneficial relationship with an older adult?*

## **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.**

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.**

### Psalm 15

**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.**

### 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.**

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.**

I will hear what God proclaims;  
the LORD—for he proclaims peace