

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 10 28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Col 1:12:18; Lk 17:12-19 Tone 3

11:00 Divine Liturgy For All Our Parishioners and + Mary Ann Hertz by Betty May Hertz

After -Hospitality

Tue Dec 12 OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

8:30am For Our Parish + George & Yulia Piszko by Patty Piszko Dunhan

5:15pm Bible Study

Wed Dec 13 8:30am For Our Parish and For who need special prayer by Fr. Alex

After - **MOLEBEN TO THE THEOTOKOS** -Special Intention

Thu Dec 14 8:30am For Our Parish and + Catherine Larsen by Ann Kelly

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

Sat Dec 16 1:00pm Church Cleaning Hours

SUN DEC 17 28th SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

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

11:00 Divine Liturgy For All Our Parishioners and + John Labanish by Betta Labanish

After -Hospitality

Happy DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

LOVE YOUR HOSPITALITY GOODIES AFTER SUNDAY LITURGY?? WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR 2024 TO ENSURE THAT IT CONTINUES. IF INTERESTED, PLEASE SEE CHRIS NOONAN IN THE PARISH HALL OR EMAIL HER AT, CDFNOONA@GMAIL.COM

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, June Mathews, William McGraw, Myron Kotyk, Darren and June Hall, Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea, Mary Ann Drumtra, Katharina Margan, Elaine Hampton, Linda Lechman, Orysia Stefaniv, Elisabeth Branden, Merly & Teresa Phillips, Thank you. Fr. Alex

Bible Study: The Gospel of John

The next Bible study session will be held on December 12 from 5:45 until 6:30 PM. The subject for discussion will be John: 17-High Priestly Prayer. This is Lesson 21 in your Gospel of John workbooks.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Lechman

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.

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

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

NEVER REPLY WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY. NEVER MAKE A PROMISE WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY. NEVER MAKE A DECISION WHEN YOU'RE SAD.

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

Candles for December

Sanctuary Lamp... + John Labanish by Betta Labanish
Tetrapod... HGB Roman Slysh by Dr. Nadia Shockley
Theotokos & Child... HGB Michael Noonan by Christine Noonan
John Baptist... HGB Morgan Kelly by Ann Kelly
St Nicholas... +Michael & Avanelle Bross by Angela Bross
Protection Theotokos... In Love & Gratitude by Jim & Gia Hoolan
Christ Teacher... + Anthony DeGasparly by Ann Kelly

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.

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 made 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

Church Cleaning Hours: A change in church cleaning day/hours has been established in order to accommodate schedules. All your time and energy are deeply appreciated and perhaps this schedule will enable you to join with the cleaning of Ascension church. Please help with this very important mission. Thank you. Father Alex.

God bless America!!!



FINANCIALS, December 3, 2023

Monthly Dues -970.00; Offertory -1,325.00; Candles-17.00; Holyday St. Nicholas -25.00;
In - 1954.00; Out 709.62

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

“Lord, teach us to pray” Luke 11:1

Coming In January 2024

Lecture Series on The Byzantine Carpathian-Ruthenian Catholic Church. This series will concentrate on the History and Byzantine Roots of the Church from the 10th Century to Modern Times. What were the Historical influences surrounding it in Central and Eastern Europe and how was it transported to America and Specifically to Williamsburg, Virginia?

MAY GOD GRANT YOU ALWAYS A SUNBEAM TO WARM YOU, A MOONBEAM TO CHARM YOU, A SHELTERING ANGEL SO NOTHING CAN HARM YOU. LAUGHTER TO CHEER YOU, FAITHFUL FRIENDS NEAR YOU, AND WHENEVER YOU PRAY HEAVEN TO HEAR YOU. (An Irish blessing)

To be a Saint – Catholic Christmas Traditions

As I write this letter, we are getting started with Advent in the Western Church, and well into Saint Philips Fast as observed in the Eastern Church. Whichever tradition you observe, this is a time of preparation, a time of taking stock, putting your house in order, and so on. It is also a time for growing confidence, anticipation and fulfillment, culminating in the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Lk. 2:11

Many traditions of the eastern and western rites, are very similar. Some are different, or may have a different focus. All are beautiful, all are appropriate, and all need to be passed down to a new generation, so as not to be lost or rendered meaningless, or confused with the secular traditions. It is worthwhile then to take a look at some in the next few letters.

Advent - Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means arrival. As originally practiced, advent is a time of preparation for both the coming of the Christ Child in Bethlehem, and the second coming of Christ. Advent traces its roots back to at least the fourth century. At first both Eastern and Western Churches practiced a 40-day Advent period consisting of fasting, alms-giving and prayer. It was Pope Saint Gregory I that shortened the length of Advent in the Western Church to four weeks, starting the Sunday after the feast day of Christ the King, or the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

Advent in the Eastern Church differs on several points, it is sometimes called “little lent”, for like lent it is 40 days in length, six weeks. The primary focus in the East during these 40-days continues to be fasting, prayer, almsgiving and an increase in love. Whereas fasting during advent has fallen by the wayside in the West, the Eastern Church still continues to observe an Advent fast called Saint Philip's Fast, named after the Apostle Philip, because it begins on Nov. 15, the day after his feast day. I wonder now; could it have something to do with Jesus’ conversation with Philip before feeding the 5,000? Jesus, who already knew what He would do, tested Philip: “*Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?*” Philip: “*Two hundred denarii worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little.*” (John 6:5-7). Was Philip advocating a fast?

The Advent Wreath - The origin of the Advent wreath has been traced back to Germany. Some ascribe it to a Lutheran minister back in 1839, while others say it dates back much farther, to pagan times when the lighting of the candles brought light into the winter darkness, and hope for the return of the sun. Whatever the source of the Advent wreath, you will find several traditions. In the Roman Catholic Church, it is traditional to use four candles. In the Ambrosian tradition there are six candles, so too in some Franciscan communities. It is the same six candles which are also used in the Eastern Rites including the Byzantine and Ukrainian rites.

In Roman Catholic households and churches, a circular wreath is laid out with four candles, three purple and one pink. A candle is lit during the evening meals for each

Sunday in succession, steadily brightening the room with light representing the approach of the Lord. The 1st Sunday of Advent symbolizes Hope, with the "Prophet's Candle" reminding us that Jesus is coming. The 2nd Sunday of advent symbolizes Faith, with the “Bethlehem Candle” reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. The 3rd Sunday of Advent symbolizes Joy with the "Shepherd's Candle" reminding us of the Joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus. The 4th Sunday of advent symbolizes Peace, with the "Angel's Candle" reminding us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.” Somewhere along the way a fifth candle has been added. It is a white candle in the center of the wreath that has been designated the “Christ Candle”, as Christ is at the center of all things. No, the pink candle is not lit last. It is lit on the third Sunday, called Gaudete Sunday, representing the midway point of Advent.

In the Eastern Church the tradition of an advent wreath is carried on through what is called in Slavonic, a Filipovka wreath. I have also seen it spelled Philipovka, and Philipivka. Once again, it is a circular wreath, and as mentioned earlier it has six candles for each week of the fast, with an additional 7th white candle in the middle to light on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. As in the west, a candle is lit for each successive Sunday leading to Christmas. The lighting of the wreath can be done daily or just on Sundays. For each candle lit there is a reading and prayer associated with it, that serves to bring us closer to the nativity.

I have only scratched the surface of Advent and Saint Philip’s Fast in this letter. So many variations and rich traditions! All of them beautiful, all of them serve to enrich us, to bring us closer to God through His Son Jesus Christ. It is hard to imagine a young child not being attracted to these advent customs in the home, as well as seeing them carried out in the church. The ritual surrounding the lighting of candles followed by prayer, followed maybe by a family meal, indicate to a young mind the importance of what is to come through the nativity. These customs, along with other traditions of the church, will help to forge a bond that will serve to hold the child, grown to adulthood, fast to the faith in times of trouble, confusion and temptation.

Yours in Christ
Brother Joseph

Nothing but a Number

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.

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 138

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.

“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 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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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
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.