WELCOME TO ASCENSION

SAVE YOUR PEOPLE, OH GOD, AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE

"NOTHING EMBITTERS & PERSON MORE THAN SUFFERING. BUT WHEN IT IS CONSECRATED TO GOD, IT BECOMES HOLY" THOMAS MERTON

SUN DEC 17 28st SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

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

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

- <u>Tue Dec 19</u> 8: 30am For Our Parish and + Peter Nicholas Peltier by Paula Peltier After Liturgy, Reflection and Meditation on Today's Gospel Reading.
- <u>Wed</u> <u>Dec 20</u> 8:30am For Our Parish and + Jemes Peter Hertz by Betty Mae Hertz After - MOLEBEN TO THE THEOTOKOS -Special Intention
- Thu
 Dec 21
 8:30am For Our Parish and + James Murphy by Loretta Murphy

 6:00pm ROSARY Prayer for Protection and Healing of the coronavirus and all serious illnesses by Men's Club
- Sat Dec 23 1:00pm Church Cleaning Hours

 SUN
 DEC 24
 SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS – OF THE ANCESTORS Col 11:9-10 & 17-23\$32-40 Mt 1:1-25 P.M. Heb 1:1-2 Lk2:1-20 Tone 5

 11:00
 Divine Liturgy For All Our Parishioners and + Gloria Hertz Walasavage by Betty May Hertz After –Hospitality SUNDAY CHRISTMAS EVE

 0:00
 Provide the Divide t

9:00 pm Compline 10:00 pm DIVINE LITURGY For Our Parishioners

MonDec 25CHRISTMAS BIRTH OF OUR LORD
Gal 4:4-7 Mt 2:1-128:30AMDIVINE LITURGY For Our Parishioners

MAY THE WONDER OF THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS, THE JOY OF GOD'S ABUNDANT BLESSINGS, AND THE PEACE OF JESUS PRESENCE BE WITH YOU ALWAYS. Fr Alex

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, <u>CDFNOONA@GMAIL.COM</u>

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 adult Bible study will be held on January 09,2024 from 5:15 to 6:30 PM. The discussion will cover Lesson 22, John 18: 1-27- The Arrest and Trial of Jesus. 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 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

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 DeGaspary by Ann Kelly

<u>SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOMED.</u>

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

God bless America!!!



FINANCIALS, December 10, 2023

Monthly Dues –840.00; Offertory –761.00; Candles-25.00; Holyday St. Nichlas & St Ann -25.00; Flowers – Christmas – 45.00 In – 1,696.00; Out 97.53

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

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Prayer to Guardian Angel <u>ANGEL OF GOD, MY GUARDIAN DEAR, TO WHOM HIS LOVE COMMITS ME HERE: EVER THIS DAY</u> <u>BE AT MY SIDE, TO LIGHT AND GUARD, TO RULE AND GUIDE. AMEN</u>

Our Daily Bread. The Holy Family's Trip to Bethlehem The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the Lord tests hearts. Pro. 17:3

"Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. and all the people were on their way to register for the census, each to his own city. Now Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was pregnant." Lk. 2:1-5. - How often we have heard those words. Have we ever thought about that passage, and considered the effort of that journey?

Mary, so young, riding on a donkey and anticipating the delivery of her first born. Joseph, confidently leading the way; husband and protector, with a sturdy staff in hand. Joseph is often portrayed as old, sometimes feeble. He was indeed far older than Mary, a girl in her teens, but my belief is that Joseph was in his prime, maybe late 20s to mid-30s, an accomplished craftsman, with a strong moral character. Someone that would have the skill sets necessary to care for a young wife and child. Joseph would later lead the Holy Family into Egypt by a route even the Roman Legions of that time tried to avoid. He was certainly no feeble man.

But back to the journey to Bethlehem. It was roughly a 95-mile trip. Each of them had made similar trips before. Mary had recently completed service at the Temple of Jerusalem just a short time ago. This time though was different, for Mary was carrying the unborn infant Jesus. Yes, 95 miles to travel with no support except each other, and what help they could find along the way. There were three possible routes in those days.

The shortest route goes through Samaria. Although this route would have taken as little as three days by foot, many Jews chose to avoid it. They preferred longer routes that were safer. The Jewish historian Josephus, and others of that time, record an often-violent quarrel between some Jews and Samaritans, stemming from Jewish inter-marriage with gentiles and other religious differences. Passing through this volatile region carried real risks for travelers.

To the east of Samaria, the second route crosses the Jordan River, passes through the region of Perea, and then crosses back over the Jordan River near Jericho. It would have taken travelers five to seven days to traverse it. There were also greater benefit and opportunity to stay at inns along the way. But there were also the dangers of robbers since this was a preferred route for merchants.

The third major route is situated closer to the Mediterranean Sea. This western route also avoids Samaria, and takes the traveler along the coastal plain. It was another route favored by Merchants from various nations, but the longest way for Galilean pilgrims to reach Jerusalem, and Bethlehem just beyond.

Which brings up a question. How far could the Holy Family travel in a day? How long would it have taken to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Vigorous travelers could perhaps travel about twenty miles a day. However, even riding a donkey, given Mary's late stage of pregnancy, that number would have been much less, perhaps around ten miles a day, with possibly a day or so for rest along the way. This means their journey may have taken as much as a fortnight to complete.

There is another consideration. Perhaps Joseph led Mary by another way, fearing evil and ambush, should word get out about the anticipated birth of the Savior. This was a real concern. Did not Herod, upon speaking to the magi, seek to kill our Lord? Perhaps Joseph stayed away from the more traveled roads, and made a hidden passage to Bethlehem, as suggested in the writings of the visionary, Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich.

Whatever the route, it was difficult, strenuous and highly dangerous. The gospels fail to convey just how challenging it was. Their concern was to illustrate, among other things, Joseph's lineage to King David. Matthew and Luke do not make much of the journey, possibly because everyone was familiar with the hardships associated with travel in those days.

The hazards were many. The potential for getting injured was very real. There were wild animals, including lions, poisonous snakes, scorpions, and of course the robbers waiting to ambush travelers. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan?

Weather was also a consideration. Assuming the Holy Family traveled in late autumn or winter, and Jesus was born in December (there's no hard evidence indicating he was not), it's possible that the Holy Family may have encountered cold temperatures. The record low temperature in Bethlehem is 25 degrees. Normally in December and January, lows are around 41 degrees, the perfect temperature for hypothermia. Warm clothes were a must, and at night, when they could not find shelter of another sort, a fire would be needed for warmth and protection. There was always the potential for rain, as it would have been the rainy season in that region, which runs from October to April. Mary and Joseph would have relied on bread, herbs and oil, with perhaps some dried fish and maybe dates or figs. Water would need to be carried, and collected along the way from springs, streams or wells.

All of this, only to find upon arrival in Bethlehem, there was no room for them at the inn. The hardship of travel, combined with the stress, worry and the physical realities associated with a late term pregnancy, would have been overwhelming for many, yet within this setting the Holy Family made do. They did not despair. In fact, they seemed to have thrived. A few days later Mary brought forth her first born Son in a cave, that served as a stable, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.

In the end, Joseph rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's, and Mary rendered unto God what was God's. Yes, there is much to consider here. There is much we can learn. Love Dad

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 10 th 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?

<u>Church Cleaning Hours:</u> 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.

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 "ultraexperienced 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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 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. 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.