

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 21 **SUNDAY BEFOR CHRISTMAS – OF THE ANCESTORS**

Heb 11:9-10,17-23 & 32-40 Mt 1:1-25 Tone 3

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and HGB Advisory Bord members by Fr. Alex
After – Hospitality

Tue. Dec 23 8:30 Liturgy For +Peter Nicholas Peltier by Paula Peltier

Wed Dec 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE**

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

9:00 pm Compline and DIVINE LITURGY For Our Parishioners

Thu Dec 25 **CHRISTMAS BIRTH OF OUR LORD**

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

8:30 DIVINE LITURGY For Our Parishioners

12:00 (NOON) – ROSARY- Prayer For Peace in Our Country & for Protection and Healing of
all illnesses by Men’s Club

Fri Dec 26 **SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS**

8:30 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners

Sat. Dec 27 **1:00pm Church Cleaning Hours**

Sun. Dec 28 **SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**

Gal 1:11-19 Mt 2:13-23 Tone 4

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and HGB Advisory Bord members by Fr. Alex
After – Hospitality

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 2025 year. GOD BLESS YOU ALL. Fr. Alex

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

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Dr. Michael Lechman

Advisory Bord: Fr. Alex (Pastor)-Security; David Efimizt & Dr. Micheal Lechman-Trustees; Betty May Hertz-outreach; Michelle Massie- Property; Sb. Dicon Adithia Kusno-Facebook-Young Adult Education; Patricia Duttry-Book Keeper; Don Merkley, Website; Lee Alexander-Men’s Club President; Dr. Micheal Lechman-Adult Bible Study; Lisa Edwards-Children’s Christian Formation Director-Liturgical Committee; Ann Merkley-Bookstore Manager

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

Some of those who need special prayer are:

Frank Janke; Mary Grace Dorsey; Ben Pawers; Betty May Hertz; Emma Bernier; Lolly Vinson; William McGraw; Myron Kotyk; Darren and June Ann Hall; Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea; Lary & Mary Ann Drumtra & their Family; 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; Halyna & Micheal; Caroline and Vince Spinella; Sharon & Steve Guethe; Christopher Berkery; Desiree & Brandon Hartlaub; Peter & Lisa Margan; Sasha Kuno: 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.

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

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.

Bible Study: the Book of Genesis

The study of The Book of Genesis has been completed. We will start a ten week course on The Book of Exodus in January 2026. Please let me know if you are interested in attending these sessions so that we can order an adequate number of study materials.

Respectfully submitted, Dr. Michael Lechman

maclech@aol.com

Happy DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

We will be holding a special version of **Chant Camp on Dec 19 at 5pm with the Emanuel Moleben to follow at 530pm.** We will be learning the music for the Moleben as well as address the seasonal music as we approach the upcoming birth of Our Lord. Please join us on the remaining Fridays before Christmas to help prepare our hearts for His birth! Lisa.Edwards@rivhs.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.

Enjoy Hospitality after Sunday Liturgy? Please give prayerful consideration to joining Committee. Interested, **SEE Chris Noonan** after liturgy in the Parish Hall.

Read Luke 2 before Bed on Christmas Eve

My mom would read [Luke 2](#) to us every [Christmas](#) Eve night. I've heard that chapter so much that I can almost quote its entirety. What a beautiful testimony to my mom's faithfulness to honor the true reason for the Christmas season!

Many are quick to read *The Night Before [Christmas](#)*, a children's classic that I won't tell you not to read, but [Christmas](#) Eve is a night for preparation, waiting, and hope. It's the night before Hope breaks forth and sheds light and love on a weary world. Don't neglect the power of Christmas Eve, much like the day before Easter, by forgetting to read the greatest birth story ever told to your family.

One day, when your children are adults and the holiday season feels heavy, they will need to remember the story of their "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, [and their] Prince of Peace" ([Isaiah 9:6](#)).

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



December 14, 2025

Monthly Dues -512.00; Offertory -652.00; Candles -11.00; Flowers-Christmas-25.00;
In -1,203.50; Out- 403.74

Candles for December

Sanctuary Lamp...+ Merrill & +Holen Le Blanc by Lisa Margan

Tetrapod... For + Steven & + Katarine Margan by Peter Margan

Theotokos & Child... + Steven & + Katarina Margan by Peter Margan

John Baptist... For +Katharine Smith & + Marie Mc Gvekin by Peter Margan

St Nicholas... For Nicholas Yacknich by Evelyn Yackanich

Protection Theotokos... For + Steven & + Katarine Margan by Peter Margan

Christ Teacher... HGB June ann & Darren Hall by M.A. Drumtra

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.

To be a Saint – The Christmas Nativity Scene

We are well into advent now, and approaching the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. I note the different nativity scenes popping up in churches and public places. All traditional nativity scenes are beautiful, and contain much spiritual significance. Some are so simple and put together with such love and piety, that they will bring a tear to your eye. Let’s take a moment to look at where we get this custom of erecting nativity scenes and how it developed over time.

The nativity scene is sometimes called a *crèche*. The word *crèche* is the French word for a *manger*, a feeding trough for animals in the stable. In Italy the word “Presepe” is used to describe the nativity scene. That is where the custom was reportedly first started, in the Italian hill town of Greccio, where **St. Francis of Assisi** is said to have set up the first outdoor manger scene in AD1223.

The setting was in a cave where he held Christmas services and a nativity pageant, where they acted out the story of Jesus’ birth at midnight by candlelight. Francis asked a nobleman friend of his to help by bringing two live animals, an ox and a donkey, along with a manger and some straw. Francis hoped that this would encourage people to remember the gift of God to men as the child born in a manger, and not just the materialistic gifts that were exchanged. It seems even then in Francis’ time, materialism was a problem. Anyway, Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion while preaching, that he couldn’t say “Jesus” without choking up with emotion.

From Greccio the custom spread. References to nativity scenes date to AD1272 in Rome, and AD1343 in Naples, with the practice spreading to other parts of Europe throughout the later Middle Ages. It was in the 16th century, during the Counter-Reformation, that the tradition took hold of the popular imagination, and nativity scenes began appearing in private homes. Up to this time, the nativity scene would consist of three figures, including the baby in the crib and two beasts who kept him warm. These were placed next to the altar where Mass was celebrated. By the end of the Middle Ages the figures of Mary and Joseph were introduced, and gradually the nativity scene became more complex by adding the shepherds, Magi and various animals. Nativity plays are featured in many schools and live nativity scenes are common again, perhaps trying to recapture the simplicity Saint Francis sought in that cave so long ago.

Of course where you find beauty and faith you will also find the forces of discord and confusion. In a letter I wrote some time ago I described the Satanic version of this ancient Christian custom, featuring a baby Baphomet in place of the infant Christ child. I will not take the time to go into it here, nor do I recommend spending much time on it other than noting the fact that Satan will always signal to you clearly that which he cannot abide, by attacking it through his minions.

Spend time rather meditating in front of your own nativity scene or the one in your church. Quiet your heart and shut out the world along with all of its noise. Ponder the beautiful simplicity before you, and let that become part of your Christmas experience. I have done so many times during my life, and have always been spiritually rewarded.

Yours in Christ
Brother Joseph

Men's Club - We are currently gathering information on fundraising and other activities for next year. Each member should have got an e-mail asking for input. Please take the time to respond as it will help our operations in the future.

Carpathian Kitchen - Thank you to all those who helped out this weekend during the pierogi production run. We will be taking advance orders after Liturgy today. They will be ready for pick up next Sunday, 21 December.

We had an excellent turn out on Saturday, 14 by my count. And with that we bagged 49 dozen potato and cheese pierogi yesterday. We’ve sold and/or put aside 10 dozen already. We will have them on sale this Sunday. You can also e-mail me, and I'll set your order aside for pick up... And so we close out another fruitful year. Many thanks to those who helped out with this production run, as well as those who were there throughout the year at our other events. It is a family affair you know.. The Steering Committee will meet in January to formulate next year's schedule, and I will pass that along once we have it. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Best Regards Lee

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

Church Cleaning: We have a very dedicated team at Ascension who cleans God's house weekly generally on Saturdays. However, sometimes schedules run thin and so we are in need of a few more helping hands. Please find it in your heart to help us with this very important ministry for only one hour a week. Thanks to all of you for your hard work and time. Betty Mae Hertz

Prayful Doves

Purchase a Dove for our Ascension Christmas Tree. Write your prayer intention on the Dove and it will be placed on the Tree. Fr. Alex will bless the Tree after all intentions are added. See Ann Merkley in the Gift Shop to purchase your Doves and she will see that they are added to the Tree. Cost per Dove is \$5.00 to donation each. Money from the purchases will be donated to Samaritan’s Purse Collection.

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.

Psalm 1

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

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

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

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

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

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

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Psalm 95

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 23

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 16

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 138

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

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

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

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

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

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

Your right hand saves me, O Lord.

Psalm 113

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 104

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 11

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

The just will gaze on your face, O Lord.

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

The just will gaze on your face, O Lord.

Psalm 103

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

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

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

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

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

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

The Lord has established his throne in heaven.

Psalm 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exodus 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalms 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.