

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 28 **SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS - DAVID, Joseph and James**

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

Tue. Dec 30 8:30 Liturgy For HGB Dr. Micheal and Linda Lechman by Fr. Alex

Wed. Dec 31 8:30 Thanksgiving Liturgy For the past 2025 by Fr. Alex

After - Thanksgiving Moleben to the Theotokos

I wish YOU Happy and Healthy 2026

Thu. Jan 1 Circumcision of our lord

8:30 Divine Liturgy For Our Parish, and for Peace in the Whole world by Fr. Alex

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

Sat. Jan 3 **1:00pm Church Cleaning Hours**

Sun. Jan 4 **SUNDAY BEFOR THEOPHANY**

2 Tim 4:5-8 Mk 1:1-8 Tone 5

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and For faithful who are need of special prayer by Fr. Alex

After – Hospitality – Put Luck

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 2026 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

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.

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.

“Lord, teach us to pray” Luke 11:1

True Praying involves knowing beforehand what to request from God. Praying is asking for something definite. The mind is given over entirely to God, thinking of him, of what is needed, and of what has been received in the past. The very first step in prayer is a mental step. We must be taught through our intellect. And only as far as the intellect is given over to God in prayer will be able to learn how to pray.

Lord Jesus, just like Your disciples long ago I ask of You today, “teach me (us) to pray.” Amen.

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 21, 2025

Monthly Dues –50.00; Offertory –1,926.23; Candles –85.00; St. Luke's Icon Guild- 80.00; Holyday Christmas-170.00; In –2,311.23; Out- 131.33

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 Gvckin 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.

Our Daily Bread – The Christmas Story of Arthur the Innkeeper

I’ve told this story many times over the years. It is loosely based on real characters and events. Each time it’s told, I’ve taken opportunity to bring out different aspects that had remained hidden from the reader, but the essentials remain the same. Enjoy..

It takes place long ago at a small catholic grade school at Saint Aloysius parish. It is about a young boy named Arthur. He was slower than his classmates, a daydreamer, a little emotional and often in trouble, many times for reason’s unknown. I guess you could say he did not fit in.

When time came around to hand out speaking roles for the school’s annual Christmas play, his name was never called. He was always assigned to work the props, hidden, out of the way, forgotten. It was OK by Arthur, his mind was normally elsewhere in a make-believe world.

The Pastor of Saint Aloysius, Father Schmidt, stopped by the principal’s office one day shortly after the first practice ended, and had a word with Sister De Monfort. “I watched the children this afternoon practicing their lines for the play.”

Sister replied, “Yes, we are all excited. Everyone is enthusiastic.”

“I noticed Arthur doesn’t have a speaking role again.”

“Well, Arthur is a lovely child but can be distracting to the others. We have him helping out with the props.”

“Sister, don’t you think we could give Arthur just a small speaking role? It would mean a lot to me.”

The two had known each other for many years. Each would give into the other when words along this line were used, so Sister De Monfort bowed her head slightly and assented, all the while wondering what role she could assign Arthur that would not disrupt the play. At evening prayer, it dawned on her. Arthur could play the Innkeeper! Perfect; there was only one short line, and he did not have to come fully on stage, just stand in the doorway.

So it was set. Everyday Arthur practiced his line. A young novice was assigned just to Arthur to make sure nothing went wrong. She would stand just out of view to whisper the line and ensure he would step back and slam the door shut on Mary and Joseph.

The big night came. Arthur’s parents were so proud of him. It was his day to shine. The hall was packed, but one seat was noticeably empty. It was the seat up in front assigned to the Pastor. He had not come. Everyone knew Father Schmidt had not been himself lately, distant, even moody, there were many whispers about his health. Father Schmidt had spent nearly his entire priesthood as Pastor of Saint Aloysius. Thirty-nine years as Pastor of a country parish. Being of age, and keeping it quiet from even his closest friends and assistants, he had put in for retirement, but was asked to stay on in his post by the new Bishop, who was nearly 20 years his junior. He felt forgotten and struggled mightily.

And so the play opened with two prayers, one for the parish family, and one for the beloved pastor that seemingly had always been there. His seat stood empty, and those in the hall felt it’s emptiness. But the show went on. Everything went well up to the time Joseph knocked on the Innkeeper’s door. Arthur answered and Joseph requested a room. Arthur looked at the couple, and suddenly his eyes were wide, his throat tightened and he started to breathe hard. There was a moment of silent struggle within the child. Sister De Monfort was anxious and the hall was tense. Arthur was tapped on the shoulder from behind, and reminded of his line by the novice. Arthur looked back at his coach, shook his head and said his line. “There is... There is no room at the Inn.” It was broken, and said without much conviction, but he had said it. The hall breathed a sigh of relief.

But as Joseph and Mary walked away the unexpected happened. Arthur did not slam the door shut, instead he ran across the stage after them. “Wait Joseph, wait Mary, don’t go! You can...” He hesitated, looked down at his shoes and then burst out, “You can have my room and sleep in my bed! I really don’t need it. You can use it. Really! I’ll sleep on the floor. Just please don’t go!”

A collective murmur that rose from the audience. Voices could be heard saying I told you so... I knew it would happen... can’t be trusted.... The word “retarded” was used once or twice. Arthur’s parents watched on in horror and

listened to what was being said. The play was paused as Sister De Monfort came out to escort Arthur off the stage. Then from somewhere in the back a voice called out.

“Wait Sister, let the child stay.” Father Schmidt walked up to the stage and slowly got down on his knee to look Arthur in the face. Speaking loud enough for all in the hall to hear. He said, “Arthur, I want to thank you. I was having a hard time getting myself into the Christmas Spirit this year. I had forgotten the reason for Christmas, and was consumed by my own selfishness. Tonight, you reminded me of the meaning of Christmas in the very best way possible. You reminded me to make room for the Holy Family.” He then stood up and looked at the audience. “We can learn from this child. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful Christmas if we all make room for the Holy Family. Come now Arthur, sit with me and we will watch the rest of the play together with your mom and dad.”

Make room for the Holy Family, in your heart and in your home. Not just during Christmas, but throughout the new year.

Love Dad

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.

Saint Nicholas Grant 2025 awarded to for Latisha's House. Congratulations to Latisha's House on receiving the 2025 Saint Nicholas Grant. Many thanks for those involved in carrying out this important charitable ministry, including members of the Carpathian Kitchen and Ascension's Men's Club.

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

Men's Club We wish all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 20 January at 6pm.

Carpathian Kitchen Christmas sales are running brisk, but we still have a good supply of pierogi for your holiday needs. We will be open for sales once again today after Sunday Liturgy.

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

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.