

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 Feb 1 **SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON**

1 Cor 6:12-20 Lk 15:11-32 Tone 1

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and For + Ronald Radda by Fr. Alex

After – Hospitality

Tue. Feb 3 8:30 Divine Liturgy For + Josephine & Joseph Horvath by Men's Club.

Wed. Feb 4 8:30 Divine Liturgy For HGB Emma Bernier by Fr. Alex

Thu. Feb 5 8:30 Divine Liturgy For + Betta & John Labanish by Fr. Alex

6:00pm– ROSARY: Prayer For Peace in Our Country & for Protection and Healing of all illnesses by Men’s Club

Sat. Feb 7 8:30 Divine Liturgy 1st All Souls Saturday

1:00pm Church Cleaning Hours

Sun. Feb 8 **SUNDAY OF MEAT FARE**

1 Cor 8:8-9:2 Mt 25:31-46 Tone 2

11:00 Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and For HGB Amber and Yaroslav by Fr. Alex

After – Hospitality

Happy FEBRUARY Birthdays

2nd Michelle Massie; 4th Dr. Angela Bross; 4th Dr. MaryJean Sotack; 9th Greg Pula; 16th Don Merkley; 17th Dr. Nadia Shockley; 17th Mike Olson; May God bless You all with a long and happy life!

Ascension prayer list - Kindly remember in your prayers our parishioners and friends who struggle with sickness, pain, hardship, or any special need:

Frank Janke; Mary Grace Dorsey; Betty May Hertz; Emma Bernier; Lolly Vinson; Myron Kotyk; Darren and June Ann Hall; Aurora & Jaime Daquilanea; Lary & Mary Ann Drumtra & their Family; Elaine Hampton; Dr. Micheal & Linda Lechman; Elisabeth Branden; Merly & Teresa Phillips; Mary Sullivan; Michael & Michaela Bross; Peter & Lisa Margan; Wayne Smith & his Family; Yaroslav Pankiv; Steve Olson: **If you would like to add your name or name of a loved one to this list, please contact Fr. Alex. Thank you.**

Advisory Bord: Fr. Alex (Pastor)-Security; Don Merkley & Michelle Massie - Trustees; David Efimizt – Fundraising; Dr. Micheal Lechman-Investment & Adult Bible Study; 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; Lisa Edwards-Children’s Christian Formation Director-Liturgical Committee; Ann Merkley-Bookstore Manager

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

Bible Study

Tuesday evening Bible study will resume on **Tuesday February 10** from 5:00 to 6:30 PM, The sessions will be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month for a total of ten (10) lessons. For questions, please text 757-880-5093. Respectfully submitted, Dr. Michael Lechman

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.

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

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.

Spiritual Warfare Scriptures for When You Face the Battle

3. *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* – 2 Cor 10:3-5

In [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#), we are reminded that as believers, our approach to spiritual warfare differs significantly from the ways of the world. While we live in the world, we do not engage in spiritual battles using worldly methods. Our weapons are not physical or conventional but possess divine power. These spiritual weapons are capable of tearing down strongholds, which can be understood as barriers or obstacles that hinder our relationship with God.

Our unique arsenal empowers us to confront and dismantle arguments, ideologies, and any form of resistance that opposes the knowledge of God. We are called to take captive every thought, bringing it under the authority of Christ. In essence, this passage emphasizes that our battles in the spiritual realm require a distinct approach, one rooted in the authority of God and His Word. Through prayer, faith, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have the ability to overcome strongholds and align our thoughts and actions with Christ, ultimately leading to victory in our spiritual warfare.

4 *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."* – 1 Pet 5:8-9

In [1 Peter 5:8-9](#), we are urged to exercise self-control and vigilance in our lives as followers of [Jesus Christ](#). The verse portrays our adversary, the devil, as a prowling, roaring lion, constantly seeking opportunities to devour and undermine our faith. To counter this threat, we are instructed to resist the devil steadfastly by standing firm in our faith.

This passage underscores the importance of spiritual awareness and self-discipline in the face of spiritual warfare. Just as a watchful sentinel scans the horizon for danger, we too must be alert to the schemes of the enemy. By maintaining self-control and grounding ourselves in faith, we can effectively withstand the devil's attacks. Our unwavering trust in God and His promises becomes a formidable defense against the enemy's attempts to weaken our faith. This verse serves as a call to remain vigilant, resolute, and unwavering in our commitment to Christ, ensuring that we do not fall prey to the tactics of the adversary.

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



JANUARY 25, 2026

Monthly Dues –0.00; Offertory –0.00; Candles -0.00; Holyday Theophany-0.00;
Envelopes-0.00 Hramoty-0.00; Religious Education-0; In –0; Out- 0

Candles for January

Sanctuary Lamp...For Our Parishioners
Tetrapod... For Our Parishioners
Theotokos & Child... For Our Parishioners
John Baptist... For Our Parishioners
St Nicholas... For Our Parishioners
Protection Theotokos... For Our Parishioners
Christ Teacher... For Our Parishioners

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.

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.

To Be a Saint - The Power of Reflection

Proverbs 4:26 – “Take heed to the paths for your feet, then all your ways will be sure.”

Most of us live a turbulent lifestyle at some time or another. Some seemingly can escape it, but not many. If you are young, striving to start a career, or if you have family with children (no matter the age) you are living a roller coaster life, a life of rapid-fire decisions and multitasking. Even if your older there are other stressful issues involving family, health, retirement, issues that can bring anxiety or sometimes downright upheaval in your world.

How do you navigate this and still maintain some type of sanity and peace? Well this is an age-old question, whose answer differs for each of us. For most the answer becomes some type of anchor. Family and faith are the most common anchors I’ve run across. Hard work ethic and moral values are other anchors that work well. A combination of all of the above seems to me to work the best. In addition to these anchors, there are other things; other traits that successful people develop to help them cope and manage this life. One of these traits is the ability to pause and reflect, and that is the subject we will touch upon in this letter.

Through self-reflection, we find calm amidst the chaos. It allows us to thoughtfully contemplate underlying issues and devise mindful resolutions. Self-reflection is like a mental sanctuary, engaging our logical minds when emotions threaten to overwhelm us. Yes, it might be painful at times; looking inward often is. But the clarity it brings is worth the discomfort. It's like cleaning a wound; it might sting initially, but ultimately it promotes healing.

Self-reflection isn't a one-time event. It's a continuous process, developed and practiced over time. It is a lifelong journey of understanding ourselves and our place in the world. It's about recognizing our strengths, acknowledging our weaknesses, and striving to become better, stronger, and more resilient.

Scripture speaks often concerning the need for self-reflection. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks to it clearly. *“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”* Mt 7:5. In this passage, Jesus stresses the need for self-reflection before judging others. By addressing our own faults, we gain clarity and self-awareness that helps us develop humility. From this we can build and strengthen personal relationships, including our relationship with God.

So, in the face of turbulence, when the world around you seems to be in chaos, remember that the answer may lie within. Do not lose sight of yourself. Instead, learn to turn inward, reflect, and emerge stronger, wiser, and more grounded. After all, true strength lies not in avoiding the storm, but in navigating through it with grace, courage, and conviction. It is within where you will come

to truly know yourself, and it is within where you will more often develop a meaningful relationship with God.

As lent approaches, might I challenge each of us to set aside a short period of time each day to reflect on the course of our life. Use this time to make an honest assessment of where you are at in your life and where you want to be. Use it to improve your level of self-awareness and emotional regulation. Identify those things that trigger your stress, and learn to manage them. Reframe negative thoughts into constructive insights, and act accordingly. Start with a short prayer to God. I would recommend Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked^d way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Yours in Christ
Brother Joseph

Men's Club. - We started the year with an excellent meeting on club activities and events. An additional meeting is scheduled now for 17 February to continue the discussion and move forward. All members should plan to attend. The meeting will start at 6pm in the church hall.

Pot Luck - Our next Pot luck will be 1 March. As we will be in Great Lent, our grillers will serve either smoked salmon or have a fish fry.. Stay tuned...

Carpathian Kitchen. Due to the projected weather on Saturday, the Pierogi production run scheduled for 30-31 January was moved to 6-7 February. We still have potato and cheese pierogi available 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.