

## 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. 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

#### Mon Jan 5 Vigil of Theophany

5:30pm VESPERS and Santification of WATER

#### Tue. Jan 6 THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

8:30 Divine Liturgy For Our Parish & + Betta Marie Labanish by Fr. Alex

Wed. Jan 7 8:30 Divine Liturgy For HGB Mary Ann Larry Dramtra by Fr. Alex

Thu. Jan 8 8:30 Divine Liturgy For HGB Christine Noonan by Fr. Alex

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

#### Sun. Jan 11 SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

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

**11:00** Divine Liturgy For Our Parishioners and For + Andre Hertz by Betty May Hertz  
After – Hospitality – Advisory Board Meeting

**Thank you all again for such a thoughtful gifts and thinking of me this Christmas. God bless you Fr. Alex**

**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.

**Advisory Bord:** Fr. Alex (Pastor)-Security; Don Merkley & Michelle Massie - Trustees; David Efimitz – Fundraising; Dr. Micheal Lechman-Investment & Adult Bible Study; Betty May Hertz-outreach; Michelle Massie- Property; St. 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

Happy JANUARY Birthdays  
23<sup>rd</sup> Lee Alexander;

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; 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: 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

#### 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](mailto:maclech@aol.com)

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.

**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.

**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.

Out of curiosity, I googled, "What's my purpose?" It's evident from the numerous pages of search results that this is a popular question. While I didn't expect a biblical response to be one of the top search results, it took me a bit of scrolling to find a Christian's response.

It's not surprising that the overarching solution to "Finding One's Purpose" is a result of looking inward. Asking ourselves, "What do I like to do?" "How do I want to define my life?" or "Whose life do you want to emulate?" I don't argue that it's not beneficial at times to evaluate our current circumstances.

Sometimes it is helpful to make a change to improve ourselves in some way. However, as Christians, we need to make sure we are using the right filter to find answers or solutions to our life's questions.

Let's go back to my original question, "What's my purpose?" When we look to Scripture to define our purpose and reasons for existing, we see that the answer lies not within ourselves, but in the One who created us. We see in [Genesis 1:27](#) that God created us in His image, both male and female, equally loved and equal standing under God's Authority. The fact that men and women were equals, to modern readers, doesn't seem that big of a deal. However, when Moses originally wrote Genesis around 1440-1430 BC, the idea of equality among the sexes was radical. Women weren't even considered members of society; in the social standings, they fell under enslaved people. The fact that Scripture explicitly states that God created man and woman in His image reveals God's love for all His creation.

God doesn't play favorites; we are all precious in His sight. God wasn't lonely; He didn't create humanity to entertain Him or for companionship. We were made out of Love to be in a relationship with God and to bring Him praise and honor. Therefore, the key to finding our purpose isn't found internally, and that's a good thing! We humans are fickle creatures – we change our minds, preferences, and ideas all the time. If we look to ourselves to define our purpose, we will make ourselves crazy, because the definition would constantly be changing.

Instead, when we remember the reason why God, the Creator of the Universe, who is unchanging, created us, we can be assured of our purpose. We don't have to scour the web or scroll through social media to define who we are. Instead, we are defined by who we belong to—the Lord. God created you to know Him intimately, to praise Him, to bring Him glory. How we do that is going to look different for everyone.

Because God created us with unique talents and attributes, our life stages will determine how they manifest differently. Still, we don't have to wonder about our purpose! We can be confident that God intentionally created us, and He wants us to know Him and make Him known.

#### **Let's Pray:**

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating us. You didn't have to make man and woman in Your image, yet You chose to invite us into a relationship with You. Thank you for loving us, even when we fall short. We know that Your love is never-ending. How grateful we are that Your love is not conditional on our words and actions.

**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

**Help support our church**

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To make a donation

December 25-28, 2025

Monthly Dues -70.00; Offertory -1,080.00; Candles -88.00; Holyday Christmas- 2,200.00; In -3,438.00; Out- 734.79

#### **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.

## To Be a Saint - I Ride a Gentle Wave

Comfort is what I crave. Comfort, predictability, no challenge, no change; that's it, that's the ticket, for I ride a gentle wave. Happy and content with that routine, why should I want to do more? Why should I add clutter to that scene?

Oh, I may think of an idea or two, something different, something new. But wait a moment, turn the page, that pesky feeling will slip away. Afterall, why should I want to change today?

I am young now don't you know; there's my life before me, and it's my show. I have learned very well to close my mind to whatever force might change it, whatever might bind. I ride a gentle wave so why should I get involved, why should I care to put myself through an unnecessary test, an inquisitive stare, or an unfriendly glare. Later will be my time when I'm retired and be so inclined. I'll have time aplenty on my hands, just watch me then, I'll know just what to do, I just could not tell you when.

Years pass and time flows; our wave rider now stars in the late show.

I am old now you know, past my prime. Life is beautiful and I have the time. But it is my time you see and all I have time for is me. After all riding the gentle wave is a job for just one, if I try something different my ride would be done. In my prime I was something to see, but now I ride that gentle wave of comfort and predictability, and I have my memories to console me.

But sometimes I wonder, sometimes I think, wouldn't it be nice to venture forth into something new? But what if, heaven forbid, I'm asked to do a chore or two? Some little responsibility comes my way? Well that wouldn't do, that wouldn't fit, for I ride a gentle wave and won't be thrown from it.

So I live my life looking inward not out, telling myself I have no doubts. I am entitled to my life such that it is with its comforting predictability; and upon that gentle wave my ride will fadeout.

\*\*\*\*\*

A sad piece to be sure but one that I see played out in many lives. But not your life.... A new year, a new start. Might I suggest getting involved in something that will bring you closer to God. Something that will enrich your life and deepen your relationship with our Creator. Look into what is happening within your own parish. Check into:

Bible Study groups

Rosary services and other prayer groups

Parish charitable outreach

Clubs and organizations

Church cleaning and weekly work and maintenance around the parish

Begin with reading through your parish bulletin to get an idea of what is happening. Most parish activities are listed there. Then seek out a point of contact, or simply approach the pastor who will guide you. As far

as I can tell there are no age limits, no restrictions of any kind. The only restrictions are those you put upon yourself.

We become comfortable with the wave we ride, never realizing that there may be a better, more rewarding ride. So, what kind of wave do you ride?

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.

**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 15

### 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.**

## 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.**

“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.**