



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ February 16th, 2025 + Sunday of the Prodigal Son + St. Nicholas, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Archbishop of Japan +



Hymns for Today

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father; and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou gavest me. And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal: "I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father; receive me as a penitent, and make me as one of Thy hired servants!"

Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

Epistle Reading - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Gospel Reading - Luke 15:11-32

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"



This Week's Schedule

DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, February 15th - The Prodigal Son

Orthodoxy 101 - NO CLASS this Weekend

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, February 16th - Please Welcome Fr. Bill Rusk

NO Matins, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School, Coffee Hour

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THIS WEEK

House Blessings Continue

WED @ 11 AM-1:30 PM - Church Open for Prayer

WED @ 6:30 PM - Akathist to the Mother of God,
Healer of Cancer

THURS @ 11 AM - Bible Study

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, February 22nd - The Last Judgment

Orthodoxy 101 @ 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, February 23rd

Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM,

Chrismation of Jalen Buchenski & Brett Edwards,
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School, Coffee Hour

Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM

"Do not say, 'I have sinned greatly, how can I be saved?' You are not so great a sinner as to surpass the great mercy of God."

St. John Chrysostom



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

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+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Thursdays at 11 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Acts of the Apostles with discussions.

ORTHODOXY 101 Saturdays @ 3:30 PM: Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith. 1 hour followed by Great Vespers.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is February 23rd.

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, February 15th @ 9 AM

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is SUN, February 23rd @ 11:30 AM

March 1st - Divine Liturgy @ Holy Resurrection Cathedral: Divine Liturgy will be served at Holy Resurrection Cathedral in St. Alexis Chapel at 9 AM, Saturday, March 1st. All are invited.

2024 Giving Statements: Anyone who wishes to receive a formal statement of giving for the year 2024 please provide your name on the sign-up sheet in the Church vestibule.

The Blessing of Homes continues for those who have rescheduled or by appointment. You can prepare for our visit by having an icon, candle, bowl for holy water, and list for living & departed. Check in with Fr. Innocent as to when there is availability for your visit. We will continue blessing homes up until Great Lent.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

February Birthdays: Mary Gurka (2/1), Cassandra Mahaffey (2/2), Amelia Stankiewicz (2/3), Subdeacon Thomas Donlick (2/5), Sebastian Neal (2/6), Emma Sofrenovic (2/7), Paul Tumavitch (2/9), Mitchell Rivera (2/14), David Mills (2/19), Jeremiah Haugh (2/21), Sandy Serafin (2/23), Alexanne Conklin (2/24), Andrew Rivera (2/28) **Anniversaries:** Brian & Kristi Benczkowski

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: David Mills (2/19), Jeremiah Haugh (2/21)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Sunday of The Prodigal Son

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to "come to ourselves" as

did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24).

After the Polyeleion at Matins, we first hear the lenten hymn "By the Waters of Babylon." It will be sung for the next two Sundays before Lent begins, and it serves to reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel.

Starting tomorrow, the weekday readings summarize the events of Holy Week. On Monday we read Saint Mark's account of the Entry into Jerusalem. On Tuesday we read how Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray the Lord. On the night before His death Christ tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him. He also predicts that they will desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times. On Wednesday the Gospel describes how Judas betrayed the Savior with a kiss. Thursday's Gospel tells how Jesus was questioned by Pilate. On Friday we read the narrative of Christ's crucifixion and death.

The Prodigal Son

From The Spiritual Psalter, by St. Ephraim the Syrian

It is time at last to recognize the enemy's deceit and to come to our senses. Take an interest, at last, in your salvation, O sinner. Seclude yourself, collect your thoughts and say to yourself: how much time have you spent feeding the lusts of your flesh and imagination, and what benefit has it brought you; what have you attained by doing this? Alas, my soul, what a state we have reached, what disorder!

Look—everyone around me is adorned with virtues and truly fears God; but I alone walk in darkness. Early in the morning do I repent of my deeds, yet a short while later I commit even worse errors. The Lord has given me strength and health and lo! I take this for granted and incur the wrath of my Creator.

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, Marsha, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Sonja **Sick & Suffering** - Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Tom & Joan Austin, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, Delores Voda, David Lezinsky, June, Myra, Bob Lutzick, Leann, Madison & Millie Nicholas, Gregory Krevko, Tom Vaskalis, David, Alice Liskowski, Delores Tressa, Sandra Condon, Hieromonk Gabriel **Departed:** Mat. Suzanne Senyo, Rachael Snopeck, Aleksandra, Olivia, Veronica, Evelyn Kozminksi, Mat. Eugenia

Why art thou so apathetic, O my soul? Why art thou so careless? After all, thou canst not stay here forever. When the end comes, the Lord will send His angel to get thee and thou wilt have to leave this place whether thou so want or not. What then?

Acknowledge at last your extreme wretchedness, O man, and stop contradicting Him Who created you and opposing His commands. Boldly say to the enemy who seduces you:

You, O devil, made me an object of shame for angels and men when I took your irreverent advice. You inspired me to think: for once I will satisfy my craving and lo! this small act became for me a great abyss and I gave myself up to your shameful desires. The water found a small crack and made of it a big crevice.

You have clouded my mind with impure thoughts and hurled me from sin to sin. You have annihilated my restraint on the pretext of bodily infirmity. You have alienated me from prayer and vigilance. You have implanted in me love for money, excusing this with the approaching long years of old age. You have dried up my tears. You have hardened my heart. You have made me stray from obedience to Christ. You have multiplied my distractions. You have made me insubordinate. I have reached the point where I fail to labor over needful things and occupy myself with vain endeavors instead. You have taught me envy and slander. You have made me haughty, irritable and wrathful. You have taught me gluttony, drunkenness and sensuality. You have trained my thoughts to scatter while I read and sing psalms; thus I pray and do not know for what; I read psalms and meanwhile I surrender my thoughts to unrestrained wanderings.

Having thus exposed the wiles of the enemy, tell him with conviction: I have had enough of you, O devil. And leave the evil one and join yourself to the man-befriending God. Are you wounded? Despair not. Have you fallen? Get up and say bravely: now I have begun. Fall down before your merciful Master and confess your sins.

Why art thou so apathetic, O my soul? Why art thou so careless? After all, thou canst not stay here forever. When the end comes, the Lord will send His angel to get thee and thou wilt have to leave this place whether thou so want or not. What then?

But before you say anything He will already know what you intend to say. Before you open your lips, He will see what is in your heart. You will not be able to say, "I have sinned," before you see Him stretch forth His hands to receive and embrace you.

Approach with faith and He will cleanse you straightway as He cleansed the leper, lift you from your bed as He lifted the paralytic, and raise you from the dead as He raised Lazarus.



The Treasury

"... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. + Jesus Christ

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305

Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840

Last Week's Collection (2/9/25): \$6,527