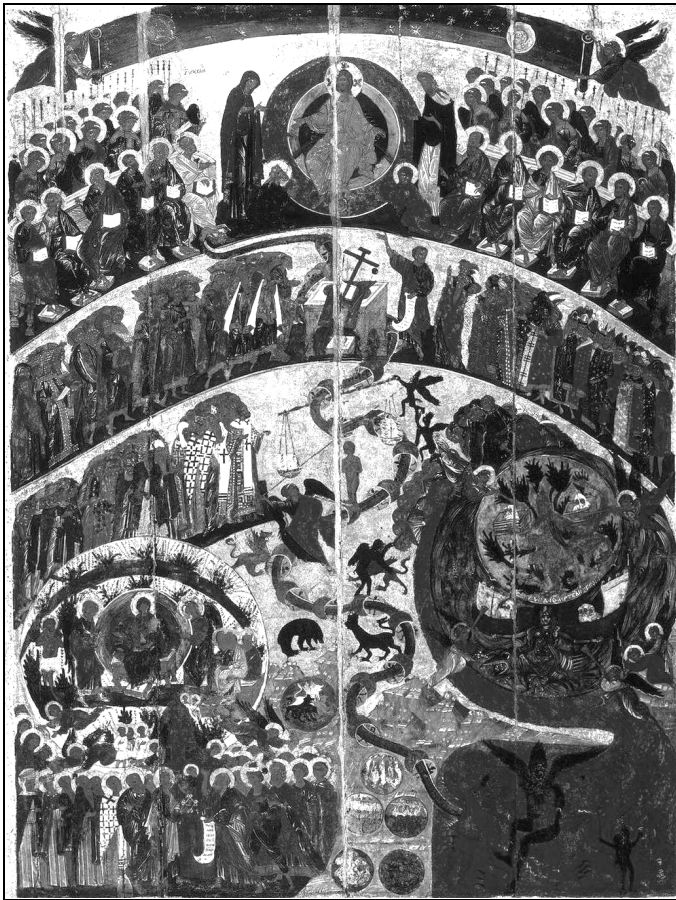




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ February 23rd, 2025 + Sunday of the Last Judgement + Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna +



Hymns for Today

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!"

When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory, all things shall tremble, and the river of fire shall flow before Thy judgment seat; the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed; then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O Righteous Judge!

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 8:8-9:2

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry

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!

and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."



This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND - Sunday of The Last Judgment

Saturday, February 22nd

Orthodoxy 101 @ 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, February 23rd - Meatfare Sunday

Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM,

Chrismation of Jalen Buchenski & Brett Edwards,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School,

Parish Council Meeting @11:30AM

Meatfare Potluck

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THIS WEEK

House Blessings Continue

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

WED @ 6:30 PM - Akathist *Glory to God for All Things*

THURS - **NO Bible Study**

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NEXT WEEKEND - Forgiveness Sunday

Saturday, March 1st

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM - Holy Resurrection Chapel

Orthodoxy 101 @ 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, March 2nd - Cheesefare Sunday

Resurrectional Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Forgiveness Sunday Vespers,

Cheesefare Coffee Hour



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 Meatfare Sunday February 23rd.

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, March 8th @ 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.

Sunday of Orthodoxy Mission Vespers: Sunday March 9th @ 4 PM Holy Trinity will host the deanery Mission Vespers for Sunday of Orthodoxy. Following Vespers we will host a Lenten meal for all the faithful attending. Anyone able to **volunteer to help** with the

meal and hospitality would be greatly appreciated. Please see Deborah Mills or Fr. Innocent.

The Blessing of Homes continues for those who have rescheduled or by appointment. Check in with Fr. Innocent as to when there is availability for your visit.

Appalachia Service Project: Last summer Ephraim Neal served the poor in West Virginia through the Appalachia Service Project mission trip. This year the trip will be held the last week of July and is open to all ages (teen-adult) who would be interested. These types of mission trips serving the poor have a great impact on the lives of those who participate, both young and old. **If you are interested in being a part of the team please speak with Fr. Innocent or Ephraim ASAP to learn more.** There is also a need for adult team leaders who are familiar with construction and can bring a truck.

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: Sandy Serafin (2/23), Alexanne Conklin (2/24), Andrew Rivera (2/28)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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Sunday of the Last Judgement

From oca.org

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply

because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

“When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor.”

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, “Who will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed. As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, Marsha, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice **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, Delores Tressa, Sandra Condon, Hieromonk Gabriel, Sylvia Dreater **Departed:** Mat. Suzanne Senyo, Rachael Snopeck, Aleksandra, Olivia, Veronica, Evelyn Kozminksi, Mat. Eugenia



Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.



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 (2/16/25) :

Treasures for Our Lenten Journey

Themes from the Preparatory Sundays of Great Lent

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The Sunday of Zacchaeus

Longing and love for God

Longing and love for God are the foundations of any spiritual journey. As we begin Great Lent, do those things that help you to increase your desire to know and love God.

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The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

Humility and Poverty of Spirit

Embarking on the spiritual journey requires humility and the heart's acknowledgment before God that He is the source of all goodness and spiritual progress.

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The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

A Vision of Knowing God's Goodness

Our journey back to God is strengthened by maintaining a vision, purpose, and goal of knowing Him and experiencing the goodness of Him in our daily lives.

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The Sunday of the Last Judgement

Acts of Mercy and Love

To know God means that we imitate Him by following His commandments. Performing acts of mercy and love is the evidence we belong to Him.

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Forgiveness Sunday

Forgiveness for Everyone

To know the God of love and forgiveness we begin by forgiving everyone that has offended us. Forgiveness brings freedom, peace and joy into our lives.