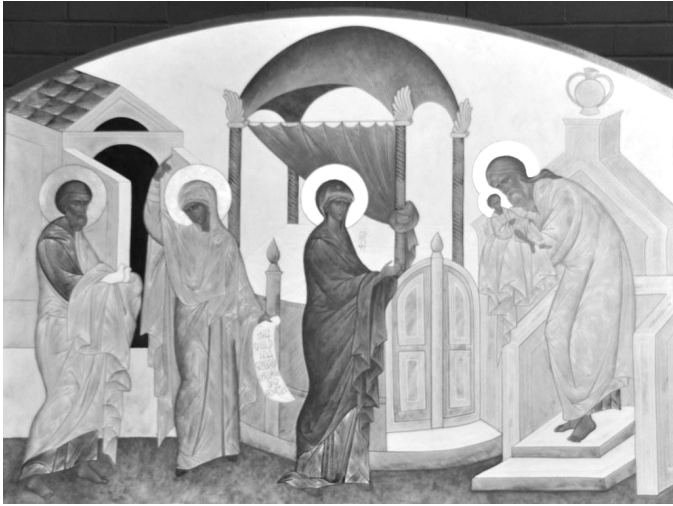




# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ February 2nd, 2025 + Sunday of Zacchaeus + The Meeting of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the Temple +



## Hymns for This Week

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace! From thee shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who sat in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder, thou didst accept in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection!

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The Savior has come to those in faith; enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb and didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

## Please Sing Along!

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

## Epistle Reading (for the Feast) - Hebrews 7:7-17

Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

## Gospel Reading (for the Feast) - Luke 2:22-40

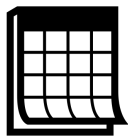
Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

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**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!

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And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.



## This Week's Schedule

### Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

#### **THIS WEEKEND**

#### **The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple**

**Saturday, February 1st**

Orthodoxy 101 - 3:30 PM

Vespers & Matins w/ Lity for the Feast @ 5 PM

*Confession available before or after Vigil*

**Sunday, February 2nd**

Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,

Church School, Coffee Hour

**Wedding of Santo Cerminaro & Mikayla Brown @ 2 PM**

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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 @ 11 AM - Bible Study

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#### **NEXT WEEKEND**

**Saturday, February 8th**

**Pre-Lenten Retreat @ 9 AM**

**w/ Dr. David Ford**

**Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour w/ Presentation**

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Orthodoxy 101 - NO CLASS due to Retreat

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

*Confession available before or after Vespers*

**Sunday, February 9th**

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

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Church School, Coffee Hour

Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM



## 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 9th @ 11:30 AM

**TODAY - Wedding of Santo Cerminaro & Mikayla Brown** Sunday, Feb 2nd at 2 PM the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony will be performed for Santo Cerminaro & Makayla Brown. The Holy Trinity community is invited to attend and bear witness to this most sacred union between Santo, Mikayla and Our Lord.

**Super Bowl Piggie Sale** will be on Saturday 8 February. Pre-order sheet in the vestibule. Prices are: 2 for \$7 or 4 for \$13. A volunteer sign up sheet for making and selling piggies is also in the vestibule. Please consider giving a few hours to help in making and selling or in ordering piggies. If you have any questions or suggestions contact Sandy @ 571-274-5846

**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.

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## PRE-LENTEN RETREAT

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Wilkes-Barre PA

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**Saturday, February 8th, 2025**

*The Life & Wisdom of St. John Chrysostom*

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Divine Liturgy at 9 AM

*Followed by a Presentation & Discussion  
with Dr. David Ford*

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## 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:** Cassandra Mahaffey (2/2), Amelia Stankiewicz (2/3), Subdeacon Thomas Donlick (2/5), Sebastian Neal (2/6), Emma Sofrenovic (2/7)

*"The aged Simeon, having spent his whole life in the shadow of the Law, now receives in his arms the Light of the world, and departing in peace, he hands over the old to the new."*

St. Gregory of Nyssa

*"The Mother of God did not seek honor or recognition, but in humility she offered all to God, teaching us that true offering is to give everything without expecting anything in return."*

St. Paisios the Athonite

*"The sword that pierced the Mother of God is the same one that must pierce our hearts—love that is willing to suffer, love that does not seek itself, love that is crucified."*

St. Theophan the Recluse

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## Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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### **The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord**

The Meeting of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is described in the third Gospel (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the Divine Child was brought to the Temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the

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**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:** Evelyn Kozminski

Temple for forty days. At the end of the time of her purification, the mother went to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb, two turtledoves, or pigeons to the Lord as a sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity. Out of humility, however, she fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he beheld the promised Messiah. By divine inspiration, Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Joseph had brought the Child Jesus to fulfill the Law.

Saint Simeon received the divine Child in his arms,<sup>1</sup> and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). Saint Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was an 84-year-old widow, Saint Anna the Prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day." She arrived just when Saint Simeon met the Divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, the righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous persons of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet Him in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons by the holy bishops Methodios of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokhios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+

400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the VI century.



## 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 (1/26/25) : \$3,005**

### Proportional Giving

Proportional giving is the practice of returning to the Lord a portion of the financial treasure He has blessed us with in this life. We offer our gifts in gratitude for His. This principle is found in both the Old and New Testament scriptures. Because it is proportional, what is returned to Him is different for each family and household. The giving chart below offers a starting point for giving based on a range of weekly incomes along with a range of giving levels beginning at 10%, the ideal for a Christian tithe if one is capable, down to 2%. Our goal as we journey through life is to offer increasingly more of what God has given us back to Him, just as we give more of our heart. *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also* (Matt 6:21). This, of course, is done freely and out of love for God and His Church, not in response to an outward rule (*Freely you have received, freely give* - Matt 10:8). May this chart be helpful for you in prayerfully determining your level of giving this coming new year, challenging yourself to return to God the good portion of His financial blessings.

Weekly Income	10%	5%	4%	2%
\$200	\$20	\$10	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$10
\$750	\$75	\$37	\$30	\$15
\$1000	\$100	\$50	\$40	\$20
\$1500	\$150	\$75	\$60	\$30
\$2000	\$200	\$100	\$80	\$40