The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ The 35th Sunday after Pentecost + February 8, 2026 + Sunday of the Prodigal Son + Afterfeast of the Meeting +

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!"

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!

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

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 - 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

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient tradition 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. Speak w/ Fr. Innocent if you would like to learn more!

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 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.'"

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?

This Week's Schedule

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, February 7th

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, February 8th - Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

Parastas, Coffee Hour, Church School

Parastas TODAY Sun, Feb 8th

In Memory of John Bures

Offered by The Stella & Zimich Families

In Memory of Marie Sokolovich

Deborah Sokolovich

In Memory of James, Eric, Janice, James

Submitted by Renee Spinghel

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Anyone may submit names of their departed loved ones for the Parastas (Memorial Service). Please write them on a piece of paper and give them to Fr. Innocent after Divine Liturgy.

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THIS WEEK

House Blessings Continue

No Classes or Services this Wednesday

Fr. Innocent will be at a Diocesan Clergy Pre-lenten Retreat

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, February 14th

Friends of the Poor @ 9 AM

Parish Game Day @ 1 PM - 5 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, February 15th - The Last Judgement/Meatfare

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM

Meatfare Potluck, Church School, Parish Council

Announcements

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study **Wednesdays at 10 AM**. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions.

ORTHODOXY 101 **Wednesdays @ 6:40 PM** following the Akathist Service (6 PM): Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **Sunday, February 15 (Meatfare)**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, February 14th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, February 15th**

WANTED: Coffee Hour Teams - Sponsor a Sunday Coffee Hour with a friend. Speak with Joanne Dutko or Fr. Innocent to learn more and sign up.

Meatfare & Cheesefare Potlucks: Sign up in the vestibule to bring a dish for these two special Sunday potlucks just before Great Lent.

GIVING ENVELOPES: The 2026 Giving Envelopes are available in the vestibule. If you would like envelopes and there is not a box in the back for you, OR if you received envelopes and would no longer like to receive them, please let them know today in the vestibule.

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: Birthdays: Paul Tumavitch (2/9), Mitchell Rivera (2/14) **Anniversaries:** N/A

Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

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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.

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

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PARISH PRAYER LIST // Homebound: Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice **// Sick & Suffering:** Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Sylvia Dreater, Pearl Tutko, Marie Dutko, Elaine & Forrest Hanson, Alexandra, Jody, Michael Noice, Paul Loftus, Santo, Susan Shiposki, Chari Slater, Dn Jerimiah, William, Alan, Tim, Ann **// Recently Departed:** Ray, Kyra, Marie, John, Marlene **// Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, Dejare, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa // **Inquirers:** James, Raven, Aaric, Tyler, Dom, Steve

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.

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 (2/1/25) :

PROPORTIONAL GIVING

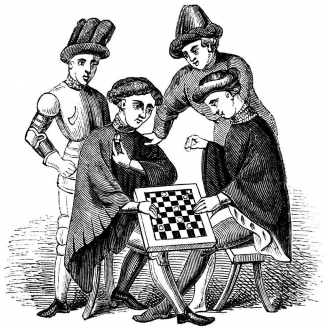
Assessing our personal giving for the coming new year.

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

+ FEBRUARY BOARD GAME DAY +

Board Games, Snacks, Fun



Saturday, February 14th, 1 PM-5 PM

Everyone is welcome for good ol' fashion Board Game fun. Bring your own board, card or RPG games or play ours. Bring a snack to share! Downstairs in the church hall.