



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ February 9th, 2025 + Sunday of the Publican & the Pharisee + The Leavetaking of the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord +



Hymns for Today

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, 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!

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee! Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears! Let us cry to our Savior: "Have mercy on us, O only merciful One!"

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 - 2 Timothy 3:10-15

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Reading - Luke 18:10-14

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

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!*



This Week's Schedule

Doly TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, February 8th - The Publican & the Pharisee

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

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THIS WEEK

FAST FREE WEEK

House Blessings Continue

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

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

THURS @ 11 AM - Bible Study

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NEXT 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

“Humility is the foundation of virtue. Without it, all other virtues are empty. The Publican’s few words, spoken from a contrite heart, outweighed the many words of the Pharisee, spoken in pride.”

St. Basil the Great



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

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.

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. 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.

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: Paul Tumavitch (2/9), Mitchell Rivera (2/14)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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What is the meaning of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee?

The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ found in Luke 18:10-14. This is the story of two men, one a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish sect known for its diligent observance of the Law, and the other a Publican, a government official charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes.

Both men enter the temple, and the Pharisee stands openly and prays, thanking God that he is not like other men, specifically extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, "or even this tax collector" (v. 11). He then begins to list his religious accomplishments by stating, "I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess" (v. 12).

In direct contrast to the pride of the Pharisee, the Publican goes to a place where he will not be noticed by others and beats his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (v. 13).

Having told this story, Jesus affirms that it was the Publican who returned home justified and forgiven rather than the Pharisee. He states, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (v. 14).

The theme of this parable is repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter Lent, the starting-point of the journey to Pascha. To repent signifies far more than self-pity or futile regret over things done in the past. The Greek term *metanoia* means "change of mind." To repent is to be renewed, to be transformed in our inward viewpoint, to attain a fresh way of looking at our relationship with God and with others. The fault of the Pharisee is that he has no desire to change his outlook; he is complacent, self-satisfied, and so he allows no place for God to act within him. The Gospel depicts him as a man that is pleased only with himself who thinks

that he has complied with all of the requirements of religion. But in his pride, he has falsified the meaning of true religion and faith. He has reduced these to external observations, measuring his piety by the amount of money he gives.

The Publican, on the other hand, truly longs for a "change of mind." He humbles himself, and his humility justifies him before God. He becomes, in the words of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3), "poor in spirit." He acknowledges that he is a sinner, and he knows that salvation is only found in the mercy of God. Here we find an example of true humility, an essential aspect of repentance. A "change of mind" and the transformation of our lives can only happen when we humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our willingness to turn from sin, and receive His grace into our lives.

Our preparation for Lent thus begins with a prayer for humility, the beginning of true repentance. Through repentance, we can find and return to the true order of things, a restoration of our spiritual vision that will guide us in a very difficult and challenging world. By entering Great Lent in humility and repentance, we can attain deeper communion with God as we receive His forgiveness and He blesses by guiding us to greater spiritual heights.

Icon of the Feast

The icon of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee shows both men in the manner in which they enter the temple to pray. The Pharisee goes to a very prominent place where others will see him. The positions of his hands indicate that he is addressing God by speaking of his stature and accomplishments. In contrast, the Publican enters and remains in a low place, far from the holiest parts of the temple. His posture shows his openness to God, his humility, and his petition for mercy.

The icon also shows the state of both men as they leave the temple. Following the words of Christ in Luke 18:14, the Publican has now been exalted in the kingdom of God because of his humility. He leaves the temple forgiven, and he shows that he remains open to the will of God. In contrast, the Pharisee leaves the temple unjustified, still in need of forgiveness. Because of his pride and lack of repentance, he will be humbled before God, the One who knows the condition of each person's soul and who will offer the gift of salvation to those who come to Him in true repentance.

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

Orthodox Christian Celebration of The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening. The hymns of the Triodion for this day are added to the usual prayers and hymns of the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. The naming of the Sunday is related to the reading of the story from the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy.

Scripture readings for the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee are: At the Orthros (Matins): The prescribed weekly Gospel reading. At the Divine Liturgy: II Timothy 3:10-15; Luke 18:10-14.

The week that follows the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee is designated by the Church as a non-fasting week. All foods are allowed on everyday of the week, including Wednesday and Friday. This dispensation from fasting is offered as a way of indicating that Great Lent and a more intense fasting period is approaching.

True fasting is not about food

An excerpt by St. John Chrysostom

“The value of fasting consists not only in avoiding certain foods, but in giving up of sinful practices. The person who limits his fast only to abstaining from meat is the one who especially lowers the value of it.

Do you fast? Prove it by doing good works. If you see someone in need, take pity on them. If you see a friend being honored, don't get jealous of him or her. For a true fast, you cannot fast only with your mouth. You must fast with your eyes, your ears, your feet, your hands, and all parts of your body.

You fast with your hands by keeping them pure from doing greedy things. You fast with your feet by not going to see forbidden shows or plays. You fast with your eyes by not letting them look upon impure pictures. Because if this is forbidden or unlawful, it mars your fast and threatens the safety of your soul. But if you look at things which are lawful and safe you increase your fast, for what you see with your eyes influences your conduct. It would be very stupid to

eliminate or give up meat and other foods because of the fast but feed with your eyes upon other things which are forbidden.

You don't eat meat, you say? But you allow yourself to listen to lewd things. You must fast with your ears, too. Another way of fasting with your ears is not to listen to those who speak evil or untrue things about others. "Thou shalt not receive an idle report." This is especially true of rumors, gossip, untruths which are spoken to harm another.

Besides fasting with your mouth by not eating certain foods, your mouth should also fast from foul language or telling lies about others. For what good is it if you don't eat meat or poultry, and yet you bite and devour your fellow man?"



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

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Last Week's Collection (2/2/25) : \$3,675</p>

“The Publican stood far off, not because God was distant from him, but because he felt himself unworthy. In contrast, the Pharisee, though he stood near in the Temple, was far from God in his heart.”

St. Theophylact of Ochrid
