The Sunday Messenger

+ Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre + Sept 13th, 2026 + Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Cross + 15th Sunday after Pentecost +

Hymns & Readings
For Today's Divine Liturgy

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

Thou hast revealed the beauty of the holy dwelling place of Thy glory on earth to be like the splendor of the heavenly firmament, O Lord. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, strengthen it for ever and ever and accept our supplication which we ceaselessly offer Thee therein, the life and resurrection of all!

We offer in supplication the life-creating Cross of Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast granted to us although we are unworthy. Through the Theotokos, save all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of man!

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Grant renewal of spirit in our hearts, and illumination to all that is within us, as we celebrate in faith the sacred dedication of Thy house, which Thou wast well pleased to have built in Thy divine Name, O Thou Who alone art glorified in the sanctuary.

Please Sing Along!
Singing throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

Epistle Reading - Galatians 6:11-18 *(Exaltation)*

See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Epistle Reading - 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 *(Resurrection)*

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

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!

Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Gospel Reading - John 3:13-17 *(Exaltation)*

No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 22:35-46 *(Resurrection)*

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

THIS WEEKEND
SAT, Sept 12th
Friends of the Poor @ 9 AM
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions
SUN, Sept 13th
Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

Orthodoxy 101 - 1 of 3 Sessions on Divine Liturgy
Pdn Sergei will walk through the entirety of the Divine Liturgy over 3 sessions. Anyone can attend!
Orthodoxy 101 (catechism) @ Noon.

THIS WEEK
The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
TODAY, Sun, Sept 13th following Liturgy - Great Vespers
Mon, Sept 14th @ 9 AM - Divine Liturgy
WED @ 10 AM - Bible Study
WED @ 11 AM - 1 PM - Church Open for Prayer
WED @ 6 PM - Akathist - The Precious & Life Giving Cross

NEXT WEEKEND
SAT, Sept 19th
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions
SUN, Sept 20th
Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

Sept 20th - Parastas / Memorial Service for Peter Holoviak and the Duda Family
Offered by Paula Holoviak and Family

Orthodoxy 101 - 2 of 3 Sessions on Divine Liturgy
Pdn Sergei will walk through the entirety of the Divine Liturgy over 3 sessions. Anyone can attend!
Orthodoxy 101 (catechism) @ Noon.

NOTE: The first day of Church School is being moved to September 28th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Study of the Gospel of St. John - Wed's @ 10 AM
ORTHODOXY 101 Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about our faith. Classes will be Sunday's @ noon.
Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is Sun, Sept 27th.
Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is Saturday, September 12th
Holy Trinity Parish Council: Sat, September 26th @ 3 PM.

Sept 19th - HTOC Pulled Pork Food Sale DETAILS: HTOC will have a Hickory Smoked Pulled Pork Dinner food sale on Sat. Sept 19th, from 11 AM to 4 PM. Pulled Pork Dinners will include Fr. Innocent's Pulled Pork Sandwich, Country Slaw, Baked Beans, Chips and a desert. ¼ Pound Pulled Pork Sandwiches can also be purchased separately. **HELP NEEDED:** If you would be willing to help in the preparation, sale and/or cleanup of the event please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule with the times/days you are available.

New Date - Sept 28th - Church School Begins - Please sign-up with your children's names and ages (Prek-12th Grade) in the Narthex. Church School is every Sunday following Divine Liturgy, unless otherwise noted for Feast Day's, etc. **You do not have to be Orthodox for your children to attend.**

B-DAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

September Birthdays: Eva Nealon (9/1), Jason King (9/1), Marianne Haugh (9/3), Pd. Sergei Kapral (9/5), William Gurka (9/8), Blaise Hoyt (9/8), Vladimir Dutko (9/13), Gregory Krevko (9/14), Jalen Buchinski (9/19), Kaleb Dutko (9/19), Tom Michalski (9/19), Brittany Marie Willis (9/20), Brian Hutz (9/21), Irene Kazmierowicz (9/27), Stephen Hutz (9/29), Alekzandria Dutko (9/30), Paul (Brett) Edwards (9/30) **September Anniversaries:** Jason & Coleen King (9/5), Dave & Diane Welgus (9/6), Brian & Beth Hutz (9/7) Steve & Joann Dutko (9/14), Martha & Paul Tumavitch (9/17)

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Vladimir Dutko (9/13), Gregory Krevko (9/14), Jalen Buchinski (9/19), Kaleb Dutko (9/19), Tom Michalski (9/19), Steve & Joann Dutko (9/14), Martha & Paul Tumavitch (9/17)

WISDOM

... of the Saints, Fathers & Teachers

Sermon on the Life-Giving Cross

+Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We have been keeping these days the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. There is a passage in the Gospel in which the Lord says to us, "No one has greater love than he who gives his life for his neighbor." And these words resolve the antinomy between the horror of the Cross and the glory of it, between death and the resurrection. There is nothing more glorious, more awe-inspiring and wonderful than to love and to be loved. And to be loved of God with all the life, with all the death of the Only-Begotten Son, and to love one another (as well) at the cost of all our life and, if necessary, of our death, (this) is both tragedy but mainly victory. In the Canon (Anaphora) of the Liturgy we say:

"Holy art Thou and all-holy, Thou and Thine only-begotten Son and Thy Holy Spirit! Holy art Thou and all-holy, and magnificent is Thy glory! Who hast so loved Thy world as to give Thine only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; who when He had come and had fulfilled all the dispensation for us, in the night in which He was given up — or rather, gave Himself up for the life of the world — took bread in His

holy, pure, and blameless hands; and when He had given thanks and blessed it, and hallowed it, and broken it, He gave it to His holy disciples and apostles....."

This is the divine love. At times one can give one's own life more easily than offer unto death the person whom one loves beyond all; and this is what God our Father has done. But it does not make less the sacrifice of Him who is sent unto death for the salvation of one person or of the whole world.

And so when we think of the Cross we must think of this strangely inter-twined mystery of tragedy and of victory. The Cross, an instrument of infamous death, of punitive death to which criminals were doomed — because Christ's death was that of an innocent, and because this death was a gift of self in an act of love — becomes victory.

This is why Saint Paul could say, "It is no longer I, it is Christ Who lives in me." Divine love filled him to the brim, and therefore there was no room for any other thought or feeling, any other approach to anyone apart from love, a love that gave itself unreservedly: love sacrificial, love crucified, but love exulting in the joy of life.

And when we are told in today's Gospel, "Turn away from yourself, take up your Cross, Follow Me" (Mark 8: 34) — we are not called to something dark and frightening; we are told by God: "Open yourself to love! Do not remain a prisoner of your own self-centeredness." Do not be, in the words of Theophane the Recluse, "like a shaving of wood which is rolled around its own emptiness." Open yourself up! Look — there is so much to love, there are so many to love! There is such an infinity of ways in which love can be experienced, and fulfilled and accomplished. Open yourself and love (others) — because this is the way of the Cross! Not the way which the two criminals trod together with Christ to be punished for their crimes; but the wonderful way in which giving oneself unreservedly, turning away from self, existing only for the other, loving with all one's being so that one exists only for the sake of the other — this is the Cross and the glory of the Cross.

So, when we venerate the Cross, when we think of Christ's crucifixion, when we hear the call of Christ to deny ourselves — and these words simply mean: turn away from yourself! Take up your cross! — we are called to open ourselves to the flood of Divine Love, love that is both death to ourselves and openness to God, as well as to each and to all.

In the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John we are told, "And the Word was with God"; in the Greek it says "Godwards." The Word, the Son, had no other love, no other thought, no other movement but towards the Beloved One, giving Himself to Him Who gave Himself perfectly to Him.

Let us learn the glory of crucified Love, of this sacrificial Love which is, in the words of the Old Testament, "stronger than death, stronger than hell," stronger than all things because it is Divine Life conquering us and poured through us onto all those who need to be loved in order to come to Life, to believe in Love, and themselves to become children of Love, children of Light, to inherit Life eternal. Amen.

"... 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 (9/6) : $2,319

Scan to make an online donation.

Thank you to **Lydia & Andy Dutko** for today's coffee hour and to those who helped clean up! Next Sunday our Parish **Catechumens** will sponsor coffee hour. Please reach out if you'd like to help. Even the most simple dish or snack!

Would you sponsor a coffee hour with a friend?
See Fr. Innocent, Mat. Melanie or Joann Dutko.