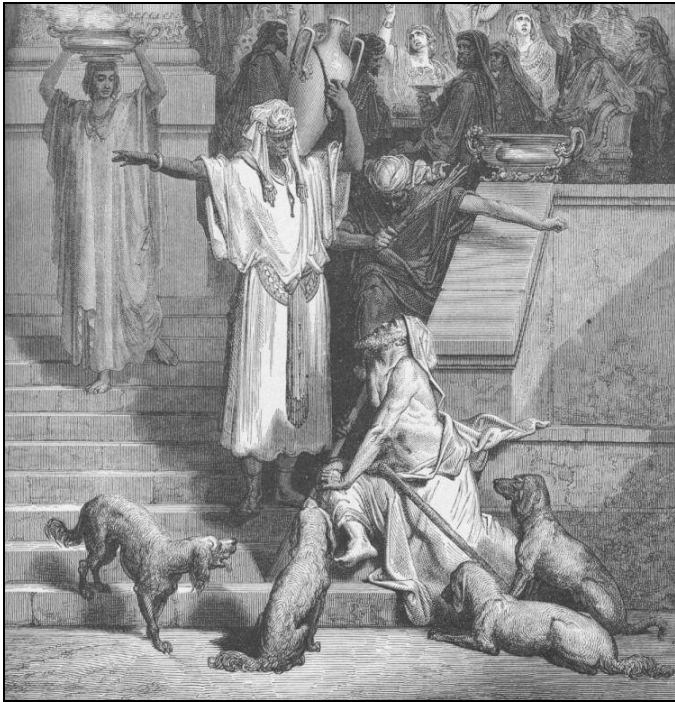




# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 20th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, October 22nd, 2023 + Saint Averkios the Wonderworker, The Holy Seven Sleepers



## Hymns for Today's Service

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy.

Thou didst emulate the zeal of the Apostles and shone forth like a morning star, and thy works showed thy God-given power: thou didst guide the erring to God, O hierarch Abercius.

Thy seven holy martyrs, O Lord, through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from Thee, our God. For having Thy strength, they laid low their adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons. Through their intercession, save our souls!

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

The whole Church honors thee as a great hierarch and as a companion to the Apostles. By thy prayers keep the Church unconquered and unshaken by heresy, O glorious Abercius.

The Seven Holy Youths renounced the perishing comforts of this world, preferring the eternal things of Heaven. They were incorrupt after death and rose from the dead and buried the snares of the devils! O faithful, let us then honor them, singing a hymn of praise to Christ!

### Please Sing Along!

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

## Epistle Reading - Galatians 1:11-19

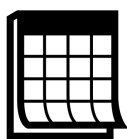
But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned

**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!

again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

### Gospel Reading - Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"



### This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

#### **THIS WEEKEND**

Saturday, October 21st

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

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Sunday, October 22nd

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,  
Coffee Hour, Church School

### **Parastas for Eva Lisowski**

*Offered by Joann Beck*

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#### **THIS WEEK**

WED 11 AM - 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church  
6:30 PM: Akathist: "Akathist to the Mother of God"

THURS 11 AM: Bible Study

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#### **NEXT WEEKEND**

Saturday, October 28th

5 PM: Vigil (Vespers & Matins), Confessions

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Sunday, October 29th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,  
Coffee Hour (Parish Potluck), Church School in the Nave

### **Oct 29th / 4-8 PM: Orthodox Youth of NEPA**

Potluck, Bonfire & Games at the Pavillion

Please sign up in the Narthex



### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & Upcoming Parish Events**

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**Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is one week early, November 5th.**

**PARISH POTLUCK:** Next Sunday, October 29th. Bring a dish to share!

**CEMETERY CLEAN-UP DAY October 28:** There will be a clean-up day for the Holy Resurrection Cemetery on William St in Plains, scheduled for Saturday October 28 2023, (rain date November 4 2023). The goal is to remove small trees along the fence line, trim back overgrown brush and to generally tidy up the Cemetery grounds. Start time is scheduled for 9:00am to 1:00pm. Items such as pruning shears, chainsaws, weed whackers, hedge trimmers, and rakes would be helpful. Light refreshments will be provided.

**ORTHODOX YOUTH OF NEPA** will host a bonfire and games at the Holy Trinity Pavillion on Sunday, October, 29th from 4-8 PM. We will do a potluck meal. Please RSVP on the signup sheet in the vestibule and comment

with what you can bring! We'll need food, drinks, paper goods (plates, forks, spoons, napkins), dessert (maybe s'mores?), and drinks. And if you have any ideas for games or can bring supplies, please let us know. We are also looking for a few volunteers to help with setup and the bonfire. Sign up in the Vestibule.

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## NOV 12th – ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

Dear Parish Family – Once again it is time for our annual Harvest Dinner, a Thanksgiving all-you-can-eat family style meal with Turkey and all the fixins! The dinner will be Sun, Nov 12th following coffee hour. Pavilion doors will open at 11:30 AM for cocktails with the feast beginning at Noon. Drinks include soda and water. BYOB for wine and beer.

The *recommended* donation per adult is \$25: under 7 years old – free; 7-12 years old – \$5. If you are not able to pay the recommended donation price, please donate what you can or see Fr. Innocent for a complimentary ticket. Anyone wishing to attend please sign up in the vestibule by Nov 4th OR or call Deborah Mills at 570-822-5975 between Oct 30 – Nov 4th. Payment can be left at the candle stand or sent to the rectory. Write “Harvest Dinner” and the number of people attending on the memo line.

In an effort to make this year's Harvest Dinner possible for everyone we have cut the ticket price to below cost and made it “*recommended*” so that everyone can attend this festive community meal. If you wish, you can help supplement the cost of this meal for others in three ways. 1) Give beyond the recommended donation 2) Sponsor a ticket for someone else – See Fr. Innocent 3) OR make a monetary donation to sponsor a food item – suggestions would include \$35 (Turkey), \$25 (Potatoes), \$25 (Yam Casserole), \$25 (Misc), \$20 (Veggies & Rolls) – See Diane or Sandy.

Don't miss this wonderful time together to give thanks!

## HAS GOD BLESSED YOU WITH A GOOD SINGING VOICE?

**THE HOLY TRINITY CHOIR** is seeking new members. If you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please call or text Greg Polk at (570)362-2642. Previous choral experience is helpful but not required. All ages are welcome.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**OCTOBER Birthdays:** Paula Holoviak (10/2), Barry Benczkowski (10/2), Tommy Donlick Jr. (10/5), Brian Benczkowski (10/5), Paul Andrew Tumavitch (10/6), Irene Zimich (10/6), John Zimich (10/11), Jason Stankiewicz (10/18), Amber King (10/20), Sarah Benczkowski (10/22), Rebecca Leonori (10/23), Mary Anya Haugh (10/27), Walter Shedlock (10/28), Marie Talpash (10/28) **Anniversaries:** William & Mary Gurka (10/15), Rebecca & Steve Leonori (10/23)

**This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries:** Sarah Benczkowski (10/22), Rebecca Leonori (10/23), Mary Anya Haugh (10/27), Walter Shedlock (10/28), Marie Talpash (10/28)

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## Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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### The Seven Holy Sleepers

The Seven Youths of Ephesus: Maximilian, Iamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus (Constantine) and Antoninus, lived in the third century. Saint Maximilian was the son of the Ephesus city administrator, and the other six youths were sons of illustrious citizens of Ephesus. The youths were friends from childhood, and all were in military service together.

When the emperor Decius (249-251) arrived in Ephesus, he commanded all the citizens to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Torture and death awaited anyone who disobeyed. The seven youths were denounced by informants, and were summoned to reply to the charges.

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Appearing before the emperor, the young men confessed their faith in Christ.

Their military belts and insignia were quickly taken from them. Decius permitted them to go free, however, hoping that they would change their minds while he was off on a military campaign. The youths fled from the city and hid in a cave on Mount Ochlon, where they passed their time in prayer, preparing for martyrdom.

The youngest of them, Saint Iamblicus, dressed as a beggar and went into the city to buy bread. On one of his excursions into the city, he heard that the emperor had returned and was looking for them. Saint Maximilian urged his companions to come out of the cave and present themselves for trial.

Learning where the young men were hidden, the emperor ordered that the entrance of the cave be sealed with stones so that the saints would perish from hunger and thirst. Two of the dignitaries at the blocked entrance to the cave were secret Christians. Desiring to preserve the memory of the saints, they placed in the cave a sealed container containing two metal plaques. On them were inscribed the names of the seven youths and the details of their suffering and death.

The Lord placed the youths into a miraculous sleep lasting almost two centuries. In the meantime, the persecutions against Christians had ceased. During the reign of the holy emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450) there were heretics who denied that there would be a general resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them said, "How can there be a resurrection of the dead when there will be neither soul nor body, since they are disintegrated?" Others affirmed, "The souls alone will have a restoration, since it would be impossible for bodies to arise and live after a thousand years, when even their dust would not remain." Therefore, the Lord revealed the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead and of the future life through His seven saints.

The owner of the land on which Mount Ochlon was situated, discovered the stone construction, and his workers opened up the entrance to the cave. The Lord had kept the youths alive, and they awoke from their sleep, unaware that almost two hundred years had passed. Their bodies and clothing were completely undecayed.

Preparing to accept torture, the youths once again asked Saint Iamblicus to buy bread for them in the city. Going toward the city, the youth was astonished to see a cross on the gates. Hearing the name of Jesus Christ freely spoken, he began to doubt that he was approaching his own city.

When he paid for the bread, Iamblicus gave the merchant coins with the image of the emperor Decius on it. He was detained, as someone who might be concealing a horde of old money. They took Saint Iamblicus to the city administrator, who also happened to be the Bishop of Ephesus. Hearing the bewildering answers of the young man, the bishop perceived that God was revealing some sort of mystery through him, and went with other people to the cave.

At the entrance to the cave the bishop found the sealed container and opened it. He read upon the metal plaques the names of the seven youths and the details of the sealing of the cave on the orders of the emperor Decius. Going into the cave and seeing the saints alive, everyone rejoiced and perceived that the Lord, by waking them from their long sleep, was demonstrating to the Church the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead.

Soon the emperor himself arrived in Ephesus and spoke with the young men in the cave. Then the holy youths, in sight of everyone, lay their heads upon the ground and fell asleep again, this time until the General Resurrection.

The emperor wanted to place each of the youths into a jeweled coffin, but they appeared to him in a dream and said that their bodies were to be left upon the ground in the cave. In the twelfth century the Russian pilgrim Igumen Daniel saw the holy relics of the seven youths in the cave.

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## 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."*

<b>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open:</b> \$12,305
<b>Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open:</b> \$2,840
<b>Collections last Sunday (10/25):</b> \$4,645
<b>Pulled Pork Fundraiser:</b> \$1,640