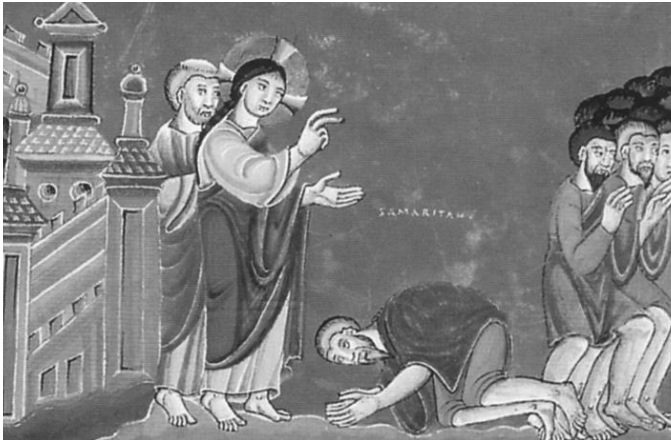




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 27th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, December 10th, 2023 + Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Euphrasius, of Alexandria



Hymns for Today's Service

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!"

Having slain the fiery ragings and fierce movements of the passions through their ascetic labors, the Martyrs of Christ, Menas, Hermogenes, and Euphrasius, received grace to dispel the afflictions of the infirm and to work wonders both while alive and after death. It is a truly great wonder that naked bones pour forth healing. Glory to our only God and Creator!

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee, and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Let us sing praise in honor of the glorious Menas, and of his companions, the holy Hermogenes and Euphrasius. For they have honored the Lord and fought for His glory. They are worthy of numbering with the Angels in heaven, and are bountiful in their miracles.

The Lord snatched thee from the temporal army, making thee a fellow inheritor of the eternal, O Menas; together with Hermogenes and Euphrasius with whom thou didst suffer, thou art granted an incorruptible crown.

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 6:10-17

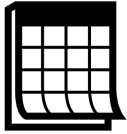
Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Gospel Reading - Luke 17:12-19

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered

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!

and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."



This Week's Schedule

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, December 9th

9 AM: Friends of the Poor

5 PM: 9th Hour (4:50), Great Vespers, Confession

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Sunday, December 10th

8:10 AM: Resurrectional Matins w/ Hours,

9 AM: Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour, Church School,

Adult Ed, Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM

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THIS WEEK

Nativity Fast continues thru December 25th

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WED 11 AM - 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church

6:30 PM: Akathist: "The Mother of God, Healer of Cancer"

THURS 11 AM: Bible Study

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, December 16th

5 PM: 9th Hour (4:50), Great Vespers, Confession

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Sunday, December 17th

8:10 AM: Resurrectional Matins w/ Hours

9 AM: Divine Liturgy,

Coffee Hour, Christmas Yolka

December 17th after Divine Liturgy

The Annual Church School

Christmas Yolka

"In point of fact, thanksgiving adds nothing to Him, but it brings us closer to Him. For if, when we recall the benefactions of men, we are the more warmed by affection for them; much more, when we continually bring to mind the benefits of the Master towards us, shall we be more earnest with regard to His commandments."

St. John Chrysostom



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is TODAY - **SUN, Dec 10th.**

Friends of the Poor is the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be **SAT, Dec 9th.**

Parish Potlucks are **usually** the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **December 31st.**

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS - \$15: As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation directly to Mary Ann Kudey or

Deborah Mills. Many thanks and may God Bless You for your donation!

Please Consider Donating to our Friends of the Poor Ministry

In the spirit of the Christmas/Nativity Season, please consider supporting our Parish's Friends of the Poor Ministry with a monetary donation. This donation will help us to target specific needs for individuals on the streets of Wilkes-Barre during the coldest time of the year with much needed winter clothing and supplies. **Check's should be made payable to "Friends of the Poor"**. Thank you and may God bless your sacrifice.

Nativity Fast Text Message Series: As we did last year during the Nativity Fast, Fr. Innocent will send a series of encouraging text messages to help keep you engaged in the spirit of the season. It's not too late to sign up in the vestibule!

Nativity Fast Adult Education – Topics on Spiritual Life: Fr. Innocent will offer brief presentations during coffee hour Sundays – Nov 26th, Dec 3rd and Dec 10th, during the Nativity (Advent) Fast. The goal of each presentation will be to enrich our understanding in areas of Orthodox spiritual life and strengthen our faith. Presentations will last 30 minutes followed by discussion and Q&A. Everyone is invited. **This week's class will complete our study on The Lord's Prayer. 11 AM.**

Confession During the Nativity Fast

Dear Parish Family – A reminder for those who regularly receive Holy Communion, and those receiving for Our Lord's Nativity that we go to confession at least once during each fasting period (and as needed). Preparation for Our Lord's Nativity is a spiritual work that is greatly supported by examining ourselves and confessing our sins and shortcomings. Don't miss out on this beautiful work that strengthens us and bring us closer to God. Receiving Holy Communion unites us to Jesus Christ who then remains present in us and brings us spiritual Joy. Everyone is invited and encouraged to engage and receive Christ – Born in us on Christmas Day!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratich (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21), Dolores Rilko (12/21), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31) **Anniversaries: N/A**

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratich (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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On the Virtue of Gratitude

From the book *The Orthodox Faith: Volume IV*

The spiritual person is the one who is grateful for everything. He is the one who receives everything with thanksgiving, and who knows that he has nothing except what he has received from God (cf. Jn 3.27).

And from His fullness have we all received, grace upon grace (Jn 1.16).

In the Old Testament, thanksgiving was central in the life of God's people. The temple liturgy offered sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, and psalms sang continually of thanksgiving to God.

Sing praises to the Lord, O you His saints, and give thanks to His Holy Name.

Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving. Let us enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name!

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High; to declare Thy steadfast love in the morning, and Thy faithfulness by night.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, for His mercy endures forever! (Pss 30.4, 95.2, 92.1, 107.1).

In the New Testament, thanksgiving is the very essence of the Church's life. The word eucharist means thanksgiving, and the very center of the Church's liturgical worship of God is when, in remembrance of all His saving acts in Christ, the faithful "lift up their hearts" and "give thanks unto the Lord."

The apostolic scriptures and the lives of the saints abound with thanksgiving to God for all things.

Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving ... always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father (Eph 5.4, 20).

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thess 5.16–18).

Rejoice always in the Lord; again I say, Rejoice! Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4.4–7).

The spiritual person has thanksgiving and gratitude in all circumstances, in everything and for everything. This thanksgiving is rooted in the firm conviction of God's merciful providence and care in all things, in the steadfast faith that "God works in everything for good with those who love Him" or, as the passage may also be rendered, "everything works together for good with those who love God" (Rom 8.28).

The spiritual teachers, especially Saint John Chrysostom (4th c), are very strict in this teaching. The spiritual man does not thank God only for what he considers to be good. Rather, he thanks God for everything, even for what appears to be bad, knowing that God's tender care is over all, and that the evil in this world—which is always present and inevitable (cf. Jn 17)—can itself be the vehicle for spiritual growth and salvation if rightly understood and overcome by the grace of God.

The opposite of gratitude is bitterness and complaining; it is bemoaning one's lot in life because of pride and covetousness. It is caused by the absence of humble trust in the Lord. It is rooted in an attitude of life which does not allow the person to exclaim with the righteous Job:

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1.21).

To thank God in everything and for everything is the result of faith and faithfulness in God. It is the result of absolute trust in the Lord who knows best what we need for our salvation and does all that He can within the evil conditions of the world to bring us to eternal life, to peace and to joy. It is the product of believing, with Isaiah, the Word of the Redeemer who says:

For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love will I have compassion on you.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts ...

And you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing ...

Keep justice and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come ... (Is 54.7–8, 55.8–9, 56.1).

A person is grateful to the extent that he trusts in the Lord and has love for God and man.

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Collections last Sunday (12/3): \$2,903</p>
