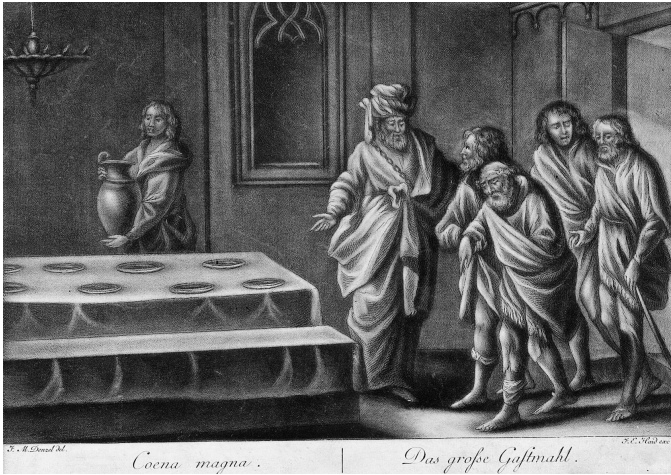




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 28th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, December 17th, 2023 + 2nd Sunday before Christmas + Sunday of the Forefathers



Epistle Reading - Colossians 3:4-11

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel Reading - Luke 14:16-24

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

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.

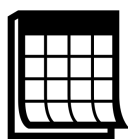
Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit: she who bore Thee without seed. So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, you were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying: "Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid, for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou dost will!"

Please Sing Along!

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

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

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS 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 followed by the

Christmas Yolka w/ Coffee Hour

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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"

THURS 11 AM: Bible Study

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, December 23rd

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

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Sunday, December 24th

8:10 AM: Resurrectional Matins w/ Hours

9 AM: Divine Liturgy, Compline & Matins for the Great
Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, Coffee Hour



Monday, December 25th

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

8:40 AM 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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Tuesday, December 26th - 2nd Day of the Nativity

Synaxis of the Mother of God

8:40 AM 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is TODAY - SUN, Jan 14th.

Friends of the Poor is the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, Jan 13th.

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

LAST DAY - 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 sign-up 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.

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: 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)

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!

Christmas Tree Decorating this Tuesday @ 2PM:

This Tuesday we will be going to cut our Christmas tree and bring it back to the church. If you are available, please come help decorate! Contact Deborah Mills: Home: 570-822-5975, Mobile: 570-239-4406, or Email: dmilz9@ptd.net so that we can coordinate and plan.



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

*The following is an excerpt from The Winter Pascha
by Fr. Thomas Hopko*

Two Sundays before the celebration of Christmas, the Orthodox Church rejoices in the festival of the Holy Forefathers of the Old Covenant, including those who came before the giving of the Law. The foretold the coming of the Messiah and are redeemed by his saving Pascha. Together with the Canon of the Nativity of Christ, the following hymns are sung at the services of the day.

*Let us offer praise to the fathers
Who shone forth before and during the Law;
With righteous minds they served the Lord and Master
Who shone forth from the Virgin,
And now they delight in the unending Light.*

*Let us honor Adam, the first-formed man and forefather of
us all,
Who was honored by the hands of the creator.
He rests in the heavenly mansions with all the elect.*

*With his whole mouth, tongue and heart,
The wondrous Enoch hoped that in the Spirit
He might call with godly mind upon God, the Master of all.
Having lived on earth in a well-pleasing manner,
He has been taken up in glory.*

*Let us hear the divine words of those who cry aloud,
Telling of the coming of Christ.
For behold, He is born in a cave of an unwedded Maiden,
And his awesome birth is foretold to the Wise Men
By the suddenly appearing star.*



There is a great difference between existing and living.
Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Holoviak Family, Evelyn Kosmiski, Mat. Elizabeth, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Vladimir & Marie Dutko, Tom & Joan Austin, David, Elizabeth, Lydia, Melanie Bishop, Delores Voda, Nicole Hapeman, David Goobic, David Lezinsky, Mat Melanie **Departed:** Al Horiak, Rosalie, Mary Ann Lepa, Mary Homick, Stanley Cramton

seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live" (Ps 69:32, LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

"See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut 30:15-20)

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For "Christ who is our life" has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have "beheld His glory" (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the "form of a slave" (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who "have loved His appearing" and "live in Him" (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

*You shone as heaven's lights upon the earth
Enkindling the light of piety.
You called forth the choir of all creation
As you sang to the Master who saves all from temptation,
"Bless Him, O children! Exalt Him, O priests!
Praise Christ, all people, throughout all the ages!"*



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

Collections last Sunday (12/10): **\$3,616**

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