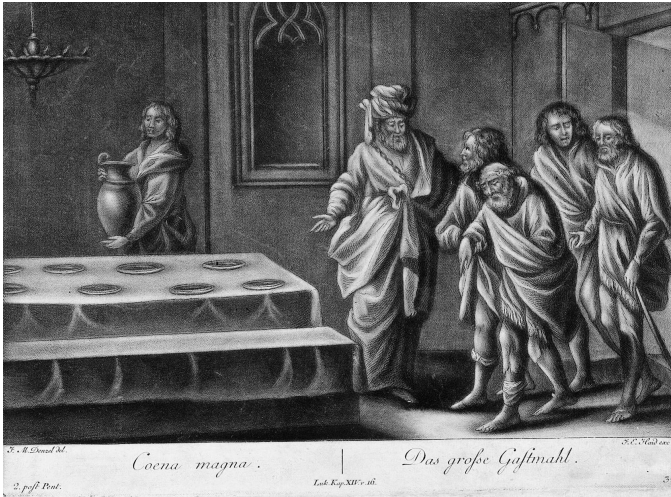




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

December 14th, 2025 + 27th Sunday after Pentecost + Tone 2 + Sunday of the Forefathers



Hymns for This Week

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!"

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!

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.'"

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient tradition 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. Speak w/ Fr. Innocent if you would like to learn more!



This Week's Schedule

DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Dec 13th

Friends of the Poor @ 9 AM
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Dec 14th

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,
Coffee Hour, Church School, Parish Council Meeting

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THIS WEEK

Wednesday, Dec 17th

Wed @ 10 AM: Bible Study - Epistle to the Romans
Wed @ 11 AM to 1 PM: Church Open for Prayer
Wed @ 6 PM: Akathist - The Mother of God
Wed @ 6:40 PM: Orthodoxy 101

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NEXT WEEKEND

Parish Nativity Retreat - The Book of Revelation

Saturday, Dec 20th

Divine Liturgy - 9 AM
Brunch - 10:30 AM
Presentation on the Book of Revelation - 11 AM to Noon
Followed by Q & A

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Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Dec 21st

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,
Coffee Hour, Church School, Church School Christmas Play

December 21st after Divine Liturgy

The Annual Church School Christmas Play (Yolka)

And Church School Cookie Sale

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord



Wednesday, December 24th

8:30 AM, Royal Hours
6:30 PM, Compline & Matins w/ Lity

Thursday, December 25th

Feast of Nativity - Christmas Day

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

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Friday, December 26th

Synaxis of the Mother of God

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

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions.

ORTHODOXY 101 Wednesdays @ 6:40 PM following the Akathist Service (6 PM): Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **Sunday, December 28th**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, December 13th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, December 14th.**

WANTED: Coffee Hour Teams - Sponsor a Sunday Coffee Hour with a friend. Speak with Joanne Dutko to learn more and sign up.

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS: 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 to Mary Ann Kudey or Deborah Mills. You may also leave your donation at the candle stand with your list of names marked "Nativity Poinsettias". Many thanks and may God bless you for your donation!

Sunday School Christmas Cookie Sale: The Sunday School will hold a Christmas cookie sale on Sunday, December 21st. The annual Christmas Play / Yolka will also take place on Sunday, December 21st immediately following Divine Liturgy. Expect a visit from St. Nicholas as well.

DEC 28 - SPECIAL PARISH MEETING: HTOC Parish Council is seeking your approval to fund the expansion of the roofing project to include the Pavillion and Rectory in addition to the Church building. The project would be completed in the spring of 2026. A presentation of the plan followed by your vote will take place immediately following Divine Liturgy on December 28th, 2025.

NATIVITY FAST SEASON GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:

B&B Food Pantry operating out of Noxen Health Center provides food for residents of Wyoming county. This year we will be collecting food for them throughout the Nativity fast until Sunday, December 28th. Please bring the following and place them in the boxes on the Narthex / Vestibule: Canned veggies, cereal, pasta, pasta sauce, instant potatoes, ramen, stuffing, mac and cheese, toiletries such as toothpaste, deodorant, denture cleaner, shampoo. No extra large containers please. If you have any questions please see Joanne Dutko.

Donations for Friends of the Poor: Each year during the Nativity Fast our own Friends of the Poor ministry makes an appeal for monetary donations to help sustain the program throughout the next year. If you would like to make a donation please leave it at the candlestand marked for Friends of the Poor through Sunday, Dec. 28th. Checks can be made out directly to "Friends of the Poor".

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratick (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Sam Ostipick (12/13), Renee Spinghel (12/17), 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) **Anniversaries:** Dan & Lisa Brisk (12/26)

This Week: Birthdays - Renee Spinghel (12/17), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19)

Parish Nativity Fast Retreat

The Book of

REVELATION

AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

BY FR. MICHAEL AZAR

Professor of Biblical Studies Scranton University

Saturday, December 20th

Divine Liturgy at 9 AM

Followed by Lenten Meal & Presentation on the Book of Revelation

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 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. All Orthodox Christians are invited and encouraged to engage and receive Christ - Born in us on Christmas Day!

PARISH PRAYER LIST // Homebound: Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice // **Sick & Suffering:** Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Sylvia Dreater, Pearl Tutko, Marie Dutko, Elaine & Forrest Hanson, Alexandra, Jody, Michael Noice, Paul Loftus, Santo, Susan Shiposki, Chari Slater // **Recently Departed:** // **Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, Dejure, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa // **Inquirers:** James, Raven, Aaric, Tyler, Dom



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 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).



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
Last Week's Collection (12/7/25) : \$3,212.50