



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ The Sunday after the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ + December 31st, 2023 + Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord.



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!"

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshiped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, to David, the ancestor of God; thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; and thou didst give glory with the shepherds; thou didst worship with the Magi, and didst receive the news from the Angel. Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Today godly David is filled with joy; Joseph and James offer praise. The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy. They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth, and they cry out: "O Compassionate One, save those who honor Thee!"

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels with shepherds glorify Him! The Wise Men journey with the star, since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

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 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 - Matthew 2:13-23

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

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!*

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."



This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND - Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Saturday, December 28th

Orthodoxy 101 - No Class Today

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, December 29th

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, No Church School

Parish Potluck

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THIS WEEK

The Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord /

St. Basil the Great

Tuesday, December 31st

6 PM: Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

NOTE: Prepare to receive communion for this *evening Liturgy* by fasting from food and drink from lunch on - except for those with special dietary needs or who need to take medications. See Fr. Innocent if you have any questions.

THIS WEEK

WED, Jan 1st - New Years Day - Happy New Year!

No Open Church or Akathist today

Enjoy the Feast!

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THURS 11 AM: Bible Study / Book of Acts

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, January 4th

Liturgy at Holy Resurrection St. Alexis Chapel - 9 AM

Orthodoxy 101 - 3:30 PM

Great Vespers @ 5 PM

Confession available before or after Vespers

Sunday, January 5th

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

Compline & Matins for the Feast of Theophany @ 11:45

The Great Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Sunday, January 5th

11:45 AM: Compline & Matins for Theophany

Monday, January 6th

9 AM: Divine Liturgy for the Feast w/ Blessing of Water



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

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+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Thursdays at 11 AM. Everyone is welcome. We are reading through the Acts of the Apostles with discussions.

ORTHODOXY 101 Saturdays @ 3:30 PM: Orthodoxy 101 is for visitors, inquirers, catechumens or anyone interested in learning more about the foundations of our faith. 1 hour followed by Great Vespers.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is December 29th.

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be SAT, January 11th @ 9 AM

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is SUN, Jan 12th @ 11:30 AM

Annual Parish Council Meeting/ Nominations for Office

- Sunday, January 26th, 2024 following Divine Liturgy, all members are asked to attend our annual parish meeting. **Election for church council officers will be conducted.** Qualification for election into office per HTOC bylaws requires that one be at least 21 years of age; a voting member of the parish for at least one year for trustees and two years for officers (*NOTE: New members from the Cathedral will be eligible to become a trustee this year*); an active communicant of the sacraments (confession / communion); meet all canonical requirements of the faith; and a person of the church in conduct and speech. HTOC officers at trustees serve for a maximum of 6 yrs at a time. If you would like to serve on the Parish Council please contact one of the members of this year's nominating committee - Andy Kondratick, Donna Stankeiwicz, Christ Yanovich, or Fr. Innocent.

GIVING ENVELOPES: The 2025 Giving Envelopes will be available in the back of the church NEXT Sunday Jan. 5th. If you would like envelopes and there is not a box in the back for you, OR if you received envelopes and would no longer like to receive them, please see Paula Holoviak or Deborah Mills.

2025 Parish Calendars are here!

A very special thank you to David and Patricia Yeosock and the Yeosock Funeral Home for sponsoring this year's beautiful calendar published by St. Tikhon's Monastery. Pick up your free calendar at the candle stand. One calendar per family.

2025 HOME BLESSINGS

PLEASE READ FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Blessing of Homes will begin **Tuesday, January 7th**. The order in which homes are blessed will follow the normal pattern. Please see the schedule below. You can prepare for our visit by having an icon, candle, bowl for holy water, and list for living & departed. If you do not want your home blessed this year (but normally do) please indicate so on the signup sheet in the vestibule.

NEW PARISH MEMBERS OR NEW TO THE COMMUNITY, please signup in the vestibule and indicate

if the scheduled day for your area works and if you have any time restrictions when you're not available. If you live outside the areas listed below see Fr. Innocent. It would be wonderful to bless all of your homes. Fr. Innocent and the boys look forward to this joyful time with each one of you!

Home Blessing Schedule

Tues, Jan 7th: Miners Mill, Parsons, Plains (11 AM-5 PM)

Wed, Jan 8th: Plains, Hudson, Laflin, Pittston, Moosic Area, Old Forge, Bald Mountain (11 AM - 5 PM)

Thurs, Jan 9th: Mountaintop, Hanover Twp, Nanticoke Area (11 AM - 5 PM)

Tues, Jan 14th: Wilkes Barre City & Township, Kingston & Westside, and homes missed earlier (11 AM - 5 PM)

By Appointment: Back Mountain, Outside of Area

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840
Last Week's Collection (12/22/24) : \$4,267

Birthdays & Anniversaries

January Birthdays: Coleen King (1/1), Mary Krill (1/1), Greg Polk (1/4), Melissa Donlick (1/5), Sonja Kay (1/5), Margaret Krout (1/7), Jerry Stankiewicz (1/8), David Welgus (1/11), Amanda Benczkowski (1/17), Matthias Haugh (1/22), Josie Bisset (1/31), Amanda Benczkowski, Matthias Haugh **Anniversaries:** N/A

This Week's Birthdays: Coleen King (1/1), Mary Krill (1/1), Greg Polk (1/4)

“Even in flight and danger, God’s providence shines forth. The Holy Family’s journey reminds us that God allows trials not to destroy us but to guide us to where we need to be for our salvation.”

St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Homebound - Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, Marsha, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Evelyn, Joan, Irene, Sonja **Sick & Suffering** - Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Tom & Joan Austin, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, Delores Voda, David Lezinsky, June, Myra, Bob Lutzick, Leann, Madison & Millie Nicholas, Gregory Krevko, Steve Rilowski, Tom Vaskalis, David, Alice Liskowski, Delores Tressa, Sandra Condon **Departed:** Michael Kondratick, Monk Michael Juk, Mary Ann Klapatch, Mary Jo, Christine, Carol, Kristyna



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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UPCOMING MAJOR FEAST - Jan 6th **Feast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**



Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by Saint John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine “those who sat in darkness,” and “in the region of the shadow of death” (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third-century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. Saint John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but “to bury human sin by water,” to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify “the nature of water” and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Undivided. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms. The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

*“Theophany is the feast of light and life,
where the Holy Trinity is revealed as the
foundation of our salvation. In this
moment, we are reminded that our faith
is not merely an intellectual exercise but
an encounter with the living God.”*

Met Kallistos Ware
