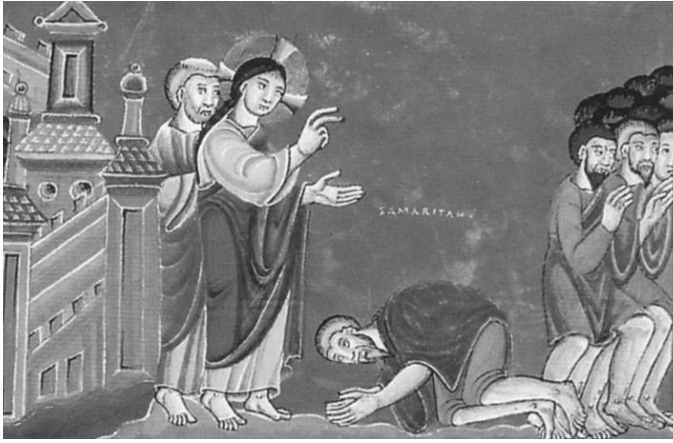




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

December 7th, 2025 + 26th Sunday after Pentecost + St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan



Hymns for This Week

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

In truth thou wast revealed to thy flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; thy humility exalted thee; and thy poverty enriched thee. O Hierarch Father Ambrose, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved!

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself. Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee: "Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!"

Thou didst shine forth with divine doctrine, eclipsing the deception of Arius, O shepherd and initiate of the mysteries, Ambrose. Thou didst work miracles through the power of the Spirit, healing various passions; righteous Father, entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 5:9-19

(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

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 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."

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

The Church's Nativity Fast is

November 15th-December 25th after Liturgy

See Fr. Innocent if you have questions concerning the fast or to discuss your particular circumstance.

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Dec 6th

Feast of St. Nicholas of Myra

Deanery Retreat at St. Nicholas in Olyphant, PA @ 9:30 AM

HTOC: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Dec 7th

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

Food Program Fundraising Meeting

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THIS WEEK

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

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

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), 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: N/A

This Week: Birthdays - Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratick (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13)



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, November 30th**

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 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".

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.

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

December 21st after Divine Liturgy

The Annual Church School Christmas Play (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

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!



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).

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, Tonia, Damian

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.



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 (11/30/25) : \$1,790