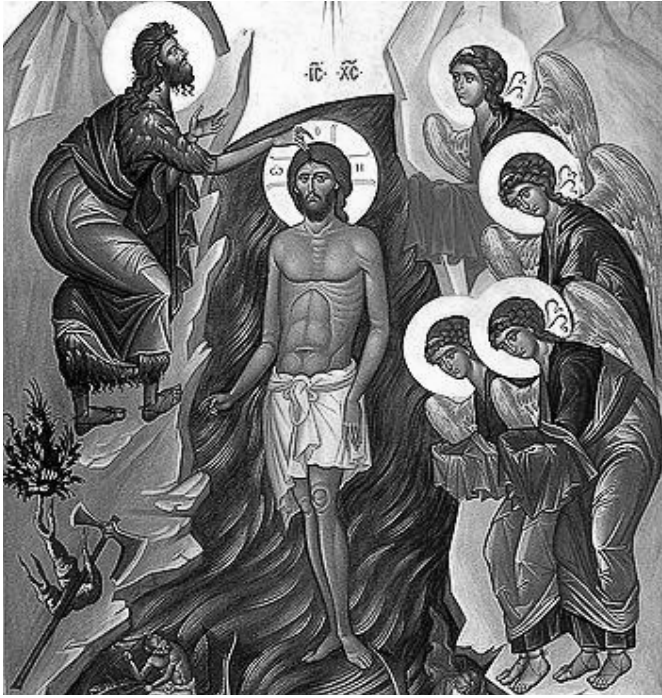




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ + January 11th, 2026 + Ven. Theodosius the Great +



Hymns for This Week

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

By a flood of tears thou didst make the desert fertile, and thy longing for God brought forth fruits in abundance. By the radiance of miracles thou didst illumine the whole

universe. Our Father Theodosius, pray to Christ God to save our souls!

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Planted in the courts of thy Lord, thou didst blossom beautifully with virtue, and didst increase thy children in the desert, showering them with streams of thy tears, O chief shepherd of the divine flock of God. Therefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Father Theodosius!

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord, and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us. Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises: "Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O unapproachable Light."

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - Ephesians 4:7-13

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended" – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

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!

Gospel Reading - Matthew 4:12-17

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."



This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Jan 10th

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

Sunday, Jan 11th

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM,
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour
Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM
Church School Back in Session

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THIS WEEK

House Blessings Continue *(see schedule below)*

WED @ 10 AM - Bible Study
WED @ 11 AM - Church Open for Prayer
WED @ 6 PM - Akathist Service
WED @ 6:45 PM - Orthodoxy 101

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, Jan 17th

Trip to St. Tikhon's - Depart @ 12:45 PM
Readers Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Jan 18th

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions. **BACK THIS WEEK!**

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. **BACK THIS WEEK!**

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is **Sunday, January 25th**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, January 10th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, January 11th.**

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

Saturday Jan 17th, Trip to St. Tikhon's Monastery:

Everyone is welcome to join us for a trip to St. Tikhon's Monastery on January 17th, departing at 12:45 PM. At 2 PM we will be given a tour of the monastery and enjoy the monastery bookstore. At 4 PM we will attend Vigil with the Monastery and Seminary communities. We will meet at the HTOC Church at 12:30 PM and carpool to the Monastery. Signup sheet in the vestibule. Questions? Ask Fr. Innocent.

Annual Parish Council Meeting/ Nominations for Office

- Sunday, January 25th, 2026 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; 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 Kondratik, Donna Stankeiwicz, Chris Yanovich, or Fr. Innocent.

GIVING ENVELOPES: The 2026 Giving Envelopes will be available in the vestibule today after Divine Liturgy. 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 let them know today in the vestibule.

2026 HOME BLESSINGS

PLEASE READ FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Blessing of Homes began **Wednesday, January 7th**. The order in which homes are blessed will follow the normal pattern. You can prepare for our visit by having an icon, candle, bowl for holy water, and list for living & departed. **NEW PARISH MEMBERS OR NEW TO THE COMMUNITY**, please sign up in the vestibule. Catechumens and Inquirers are welcome to sign up. Fr. Innocent and the boys look forward to this joyful time with each one of you!

House Blessing Schedule

Tues, Jan 13th: Bald Mountain, Mountaintop, Hanover Twp, Nanticoke Area (11 AM - 6 PM)

Thurs, Jan 15th: Wilkes Barre City & Township, Kingston & Westside, and homes missed earlier (11 AM - 6 PM)

Friday, Jan 16 & beyond by Appointment: Rescheduled visits, new signups, and houses outside of the area.

New to the Community? Sign up and speak with Fr. Innocent about getting on the schedule.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January Birthdays: Colleen King (1/1), Mary Krill (1/1), Greg Polk (1/4), Melissa Donlick (1/5), Susan Shiposki (1/5), Sonja Kay (1/6), Margaret Krout (1/7), Jerry Stankiewicz (1/8), Gabrielle Kenzakoski (1/10), David Welgus (1/11), Amanda Benczkowski (1/17), Margaret Pregman (1/17), Stephen Odin Rivera (1/18), Deborah Zbegner (1/21), Ray Sofrenovic (1/21), Matthias Haugh (1/22), Josie Bisset (1/31) **Anniversaries:** Warren & Nadine Breisch (1/13)

This Week: Birthdays: David Welgus (1/11), Amanda Benczkowski (1/17), Margaret Pregman (1/17)
Anniversaries: N/A



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

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Petitions from the Great Blessing of Water

The following petitions are taken from the Great Blessing of Water performed on the Feast of Theophany. These beautiful petitions make clear what is being asked of God and the use and purpose of blessing water. Upon reading these words we discover that Holy Water is a very powerful means of receiving God's grace into our everyday life. Holy Water can be for each of us a source of strength in serving God, protection, physical healing, spiritual healing, remission of sins when used in conjunction with a life of repentance, and more. Be encouraged then after reading these petitions to keep Holy Water in your home and use it appropriately and as needs arise regularly and throughout the year. If you run out at any time during the course of the year, the church keeps a supply in the altar and is happy to offer a refill!

That these waters may be sanctified by the power, and effectual operation, and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may descend upon these waters the cleansing operation of the super-substantial Trinity, let us pray to the Lord.

That he will endue them with the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan, the might, and operation, and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That Satan may speedily be crushed under our feet, and that every evil counsel directed against us may be brought to naught, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Lord our God will free us from every attack and temptation of the enemy, and make us worthy of the good things which he hath promised, let us pray to the Lord.

That he will illumine us with the light of understanding and of piety, and with the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Lord our God will send down the blessing of Jordan, and sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

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, Dn Jerimiah, William, Alan, Tim // **Recently Departed:** Ray, Kyra, Marie, John, Marlene // **Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, Dejare, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa // **Inquirers:** James, Raven, Aaric, Tyler, Dom

That this water may be unto the bestowing of sanctification; unto the remission of sins; unto the healing of soul and body; and unto every expedient service, let us pray to the Lord.

That this water may be a fountain welling forth unto life eternal, let us pray to the Lord.

That it may manifest itself effectual unto the averting of every machination of our foes, whether visible or invisible, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who shall draw of it and take of it unto the sanctification of their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

That it may be for the purification of the souls and bodies of all those who, with faith, shall draw and partake of it, let us pray to the Lord.

That he will graciously enable us to perfect sanctification by participation in these waters, through the invisible manifestation of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Saint Theodosius the Great lived during the fifth-sixth centuries, and was the founder of cenobitic monasticism. He was born in Cappadocia of pious parents. Endowed with a splendid voice, he zealously toiled at church reading and singing. Saint Theodosius prayed fervently that the Lord would guide him on the way to salvation. In his early years he visited the Holy Land and met with Saint Simeon the Stylite (September 1), who blessed him and predicted future pastoral service for him.

Yearning for the solitary life, Saint Theodosius settled in Palestine into a desolate cave, in which, according to Tradition, the three Magi had spent the night, having come to worship the Savior after His Nativity. He lived there for thirty years in great abstinence and unceasing prayer. People flocked to the ascetic, wishing to live under his guidance. When the cave could no longer hold all the monks, Saint Theodosius prayed that the Lord Himself would indicate a place for the monks. Taking a censer with cold charcoal and incense, the monk started walking into the desert.

At a certain spot the charcoal ignited by itself and the incense smoke began to rise. Here the monk established the first cenobitic monastery, or Lavra (meaning “broad” or “populous”). Soon the Lavra of Saint Theodosius became renowned, and up to 700 monks gathered at it. According to the final testament of Saint Theodosius, the Lavra

rendered service to neighbor, giving aid to the poor and providing shelter for wanderers.

Saint Theodosius was extremely compassionate. Once, when there was a famine in Palestine and a multitude of people gathered at the monastery, the monk gave orders to allow everyone into the monastery enclosure. His disciples were annoyed, knowing that the monastery did not have the means to feed all those who had come. But when they went into the bakery, they saw that through the prayers of the abba, it was filled with bread. This miracle was repeated every time Saint Theodosius wanted to help the destitute.

At the monastery, Saint Theodosius built a home for taking in strangers, separate infirmaries for monks and laymen, and also a shelter for the dying. Seeing that people from various lands gathered at the Lavra, the saint arranged for services in the various languages: Greek, Georgian and Armenian. All gathered to receive the Holy Mysteries in the large church, where divine services were chanted in Greek.

During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491-518) there arose the heresy of Eutychius and Severus, which recognized neither the sacraments nor the clergy. The emperor accepted the false teaching, and the Orthodox began to suffer persecution. Saint Theodosius stood firmly in defense of Orthodoxy and wrote a letter to the emperor on behalf of the monks, in which they denounced him and refuted the heresy with the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils. He affirmed moreover, that the desert-dwellers and monks would firmly support the Orthodox teaching. The emperor showed restraint for a short while, but then he renewed his persecution of the Orthodox. The holy Elder then showed great zeal for the truth. Leaving the monastery, he came to Jerusalem and in the church, he stood at the high place and cried out for all to hear: “Whoever does not honor the four Ecumenical Councils, let him be anathema!” For this bold deed the monk was sent to prison, but soon returned after the death of the emperor.

Saint Theodosius accomplished many healings and other miracles during his life, coming to the aid of the needy. Through his prayers he once destroyed the locusts devastating the fields in Palestine. Also by his intercession, soldiers were saved from death, and he also saved those perishing in shipwrecks and those lost in the desert.

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Last Week's Collection (1/4/25) :</p>
