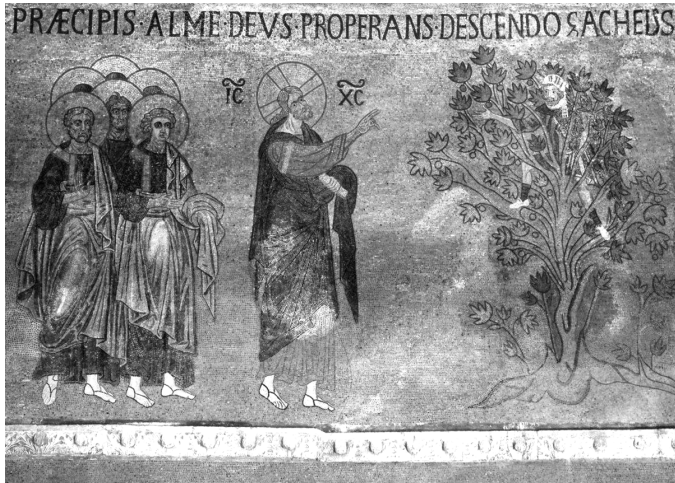




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ The 33rd Sunday after Pentecost + January 25th, 2026 + Sunday of Zacchaeus + St. Gregory the Theologian +



Hymns for Today

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

The sweet-sounding shepherd's pipe of thy theology overpowered the trumpeting of the orators; for eloquence was also bestowed on thee as on one searching the depths of the Spirit. Pray to Christ our God, O Father Gregory, that our souls may be saved!

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

By words of theology thou didst unravel the complex webs of the orators, O glorious Gregory, and didst adorn the Church with the robe of Orthodoxy woven from on high. Wearing it, she cries out with us, her children: "Rejoice, O Father, supreme mind of theology!"

Please Sing Along!

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

Gospel Reading - 1 Timothy 4:9-15

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

Gospel Reading - Luke 19:1-10

Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

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 Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, Jan 24th

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Jan 25th

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

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM,

Parish Potluck Coffee Hour

Jan 25th - Annual Parish Meeting

(Weather Permitting)

All Members are asked to attend.

Bring a dish to share for our Potluck!

PLEASE NOTE: If a quorum (35% of the parishes voting membership) is not met at the Annual Meeting or it is cancelled due to weather, it will be held next Sunday, February 1st, immediately following Divine Liturgy.

THIS WEEK

House Blessings Continue

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 31st

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Feb 1st

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.

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, January 25th**

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, February 14th**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, February 15th**

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.

TODAY - Annual Parish Council Meeting/

Nominations for Office

- Sunday, January 25th, 2026 following Divine Liturgy, all members are asked to attend our annual parish meeting. The meeting will include reports from all of our Parish Ministries and Committees. Be informed on the state of the parish and how YOU can get involved! At the end of the meeting elections for church council officers will be conducted. **PLEASE NOTE: If a quorum (35% of the parishes voting membership) is not present or the meeting is cancelled it will be held next Sunday, February 1st, immediately following Divine Liturgy.**

GIVING ENVELOPES:

The 2026 Giving Envelopes are available in the vestibule. 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.

THE BLESSING OF HOMES:

There is still time to schedule yours! Please prepare by having an icon, candle, bowl for holy water, and list for living & departed. New parish members or those new to the community, please sign up in the vestibule. Catechumens and Inquirers are also welcome to sign up.

Help Needed for the 2026 Diocesan Assembly,

Jan 29 & 30 at St. Michael's, Old Forge, PA. This year the Wilkes-Barre Deanery is hosting the Diocese of Eastern PA's Diocesan Assembly. We are looking for volunteers to help. If you would like to be a volunteer, please see Fr. Innocent as soon as possible.

MYASOPUSNA 2026 A UKRAINIAN CULTURAL

CELEBRATION: Sunday Feb. 8th, 2026, Noon to 4 PM at Transfiguration of Our Lord Church Hall Bliss & Center Street, Hanover Section of Nanticoke. There will be Ukrainian Dance & Music, Kazka Ukrainian Folk Ensemble,

St. Mary's Ukrainian Dancers, The Englot Sisters, Handcrafted Ukrainian Items, Pysanky Demonstration, Gerdany (Beadwork) Embroidery, gift items, Basket Raffle and a Homemade Ukrainian Dinner. Tickets \$25, children (12 & under) \$12. **Advance purchase only. No tickets will be sold at the door.** Doors open at 12 noon; Dinner service begins at 12:30pm, served to 2:00pm, with entertainment beginning at 1:30pm. For tickets, call 570-735-4654 or leave a message at 570-735-1901.

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 Odín 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: Josie Bisset (1/31) **Anniversaries:** N/A

In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of morbidity and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification.



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Pre-Lenten Season

By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is itself preceded by its own liturgical preparation. The first sign of the approach of Great Lent

comes five Sundays before its beginning. On this Sunday the Gospel reading is about Zacchaeus the tax-collector. It tells how Christ brought salvation to the sinful man and how his life was greatly changed simply because he “sought to see who Jesus was” (Lk 19.3). The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through lent towards Easter. It is the first movement of salvation.

The following Sunday is that of the Publican and the Pharisee. The focus here is on the two men who went to the Temple to pray—one a pharisee who was a very decent and righteous man of religion, the other a publican who was a truly sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. The first, although genuinely righteous, boasted before God and was condemned, according to Christ. The second, although genuinely sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God (Lk 18.9). The meditation here is that we have neither the religious piety of the Pharisee nor the repentance of the publican by which alone we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, and to beg for mercy.

The next Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Hearing the parable of Christ about God's loving forgiveness, we are called to “come to ourselves” as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being “in a far country” far from the Father's house, and to make the movement of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that the Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only “arise and go,” confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that “home” where we truly belong (Lk 15.11–24).

The next Sunday is called Meatfare Sunday since it is officially the last day before Easter for eating meat. It commemorates Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25.31–46). We are reminded this day that it is not enough for us to see Jesus, to see ourselves as we are, and to come home to God as his prodigal sons. We must also be his sons by following Christ, his only-begotten divine Son, and by seeing Christ in every man and by serving Christ through them. Our salvation and final judgment will depend upon our deeds, not merely on our intentions or even on the mercies of God devoid of our own personal cooperation and obedience.

... for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I

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

was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and in prison and you visited Me. For truly I say to you, if you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me (Mt 25).

We are saved not merely by prayer and fasting, not by “religious exercises” alone. We are saved by serving Christ through his people, the goal toward which all piety and prayer is ultimately directed.

Finally, on the eve of Great Lent, the day called Cheesefare Sunday and Forgiveness Sunday, we sing of Adam’s exile from paradise. We identify ourselves with Adam, lamenting our loss of the beauty, dignity and delight of our original creation, mourning our corruption in sin. We also hear on this day the Lord’s teaching about fasting and forgiveness, and we enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive us. If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses (Mt 6.14–18).



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 (1/18/25) : \$2,165

PROPORTIONAL GIVING

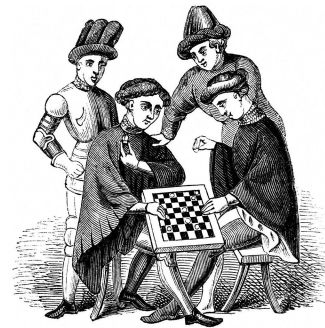
Assessing our personal giving for the coming new year.

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 |

+ FEBRUARY BOARD GAME DAY + Board Games, Snacks, Fun



Saturday, February 14th, 1 PM-5 PM

Everyone is welcome for good ol’ fashion Board Game fun. Bring your own board, card or RPG games or play ours. Bring a snack to share! Downstairs in the church hall.