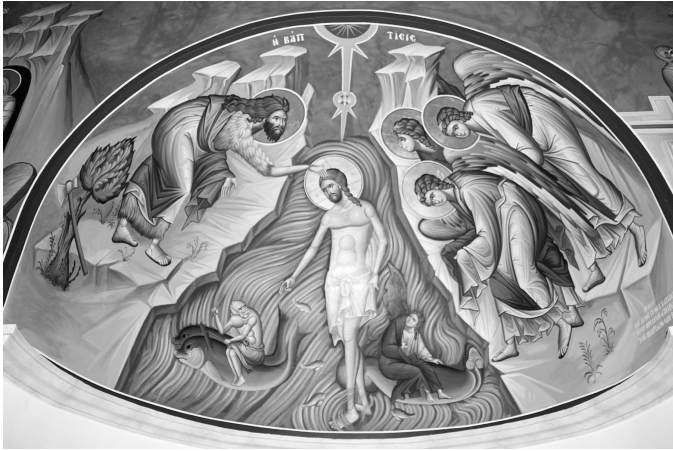




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ The Sunday Before the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ + January 4th, 2026 + Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles



Hymns for This Week

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn thyself, O Naphtali! River Jordan, cease flowing, and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized! Adam, rejoice with our first Mother, and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment. Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

Holy Apostles of the Seventy entreat the merciful God to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, and we cry to Thee: "O Lord, save us!"

O faithful, let us praise with hymns the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ. They have taught us all to worship the undivided Trinity, for they are divine lamps of the faith.

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John: "Do not be afraid to baptize Me. For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - 2 Timothy 4:5-8

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Gospel Reading - Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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 - Happy New Year!

Saturday, Jan 3rd

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Jan 4th

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

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

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THIS WEEK

The Great Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Monday, January 5th

6:30 PM: Compline & Matins w/ Lity

Great Blessing of the Waters

Tuesday, January 6th

9 AM: Divine Liturgy for the Feast, (Hours @ 8:40 AM)

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House Blessings *(see schedule below)*

WED - House Blessings (No Classes or Services)

THURS - Funeral for Marie Sokolovich

FRIDAY - House Blessings

NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, Jan 10th

Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, Jan 11th

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

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

Church School Back in Session



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions. **ON BREAK until 1/14**

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. **ON BREAK until 1/14**

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.

Bible Study & Orthodoxy 101 on Break for the next 3 weeks to return on Wed, January 14th, God willing!

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 back of the church **NEXT Sunday Jan. 11th** *(we apologize for the delay)*. 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.

2026 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.

2026 HOME BLESSINGS

PLEASE READ FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Blessing of Homes will begin **Wednesday, 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. You do not have to be Orthodox to have your house blessed. 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

Wed, Jan 7th: Miners Mill, Parsons, Plains (11 PM-6 PM)

Thurs, Jan 8th: No House Blessing due to Funeral

Friday, Jan 9th: Plains, Hudson, Laflin, Pittston, Moosic Area, Old Forge, Bald Mountain (1 PM - 5 PM)

Tues, Jan 13th: 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: 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) **Anniversaries:** N/A



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

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MAJOR FEAST - Jan 6th

Feast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



Homily for the Eve of Theophany

by Met Anthony Bloom

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The day of the Theophany is the day when the whole world is being renewed and becomes a partaker of the sanctity of God. But at the same time, it is the day when Christ enters on the way to Calvary.

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 // **Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, Dejure, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa // **Inquirers:** James, Raven, Aaric, Tyler, Dom

He came to John the Baptist at the Jordan not in order to be cleansed, because he was free of sin—both as God and in His humanity made pure throughout the history of Israel by those ancestors who had given their lives to God and whose sanctity culminated in the all-purity of the Mother of God, who was so pure, so stainless that She could be brought into the Holy of Holies, which even the High Priest dared not enter except once a year, and only after a special sanctification.

Christ did not need cleansing. But these waters, into which all the sinners who had come to John the Baptist confessing the evil of their lives had washed themselves, were as it were heavy with the sinfulness and therefore the mortality of mankind. They had become waters of death, and it is in these waters that the Lord Jesus Christ immersed Himself on that day, taking upon Himself the mortality resulting from the sin of man.

He comes, immortal in His humanity and His divinity, and at the same time He vests Himself with the mortality of the sinful world. This is the beginning of the way to Calvary. This is a day when we marvel at the infinite love of God. But as on every other occasion, man had to participate completely in the ways of salvation that God had provided. And this is why Christ comes and becomes partaker of our mortality, to save us. The culminating point will come on Calvary when He will say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? It will be a moment when God as He was in His humanity will have lost communion with the Father by partaking of the destiny of mankind. This is the ultimate act of divine love.

Let us therefore today wonder and marvel, and worship this love of God, and learn from Him; because He said in the Gospel, I have given you an example. Follow it. We are called, within the limits of our sinfulness and humanity, to bear one another's burdens, unto life and unto death. Let us learn from this. We find it so difficult to bear the burdens of even those whom we love—and practically impossible to shoulder the burdens of those whom we do not love with a natural, direct tenderness. Let us learn, because otherwise we will not have learned the first lesson that Christ gives us when He enters upon His ministry. Amen.

“A Christian must always ask: What fruit am I bearing? Does my faith bring life to others or only to myself?”

St. Maria of Paris

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“God’s justice is not like human justice. It is always tempered with mercy and love, for He desires not the death of a sinner but that he turns and lives.”

St. Justin Popovich

Below is the 2026 schedule for HTOC Fundraisers. Perfect for cutting out and putting on your refrigerator or bulletin board :).

HTOC Fundraisers - 2026

7	Feb	Super Bowl Piggy Sale
20	Feb	Potato Pancake Sale
6	Mar	Potato Pancake Sale
13	Mar	Potato Pancake Sale
20	Mar	Potato Pancake Sale
30/31	Mar	Pierogi Sale
19	May	Election Day
22/23	Jun	Pierogi Sale
?	Jul	Little League Fundraiser
14	Aug	Shrimp Boil
19	Sept	Pulled Pork
26/27	Oct	Pierogi Sale
3	Nov	Election Day

Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840
Last Week’s Collection (12/28/25) : \$5,284
