



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

The Sunday of St. John Climacus (of the Ladder) + March 22nd, 2026 + The 4th Sunday of Great Lent



Hymns for Today's Service

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!

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body, thou wast a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father John. Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer, healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to thee by faith. Glory to Him Who gave thee strength! Glory to Him Who granted thee a crown! Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

The Lord truly set thee on the heights of abstinence, to be a guiding star, showing the way to the universe, O our father and teacher John.

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading - Hebrews 6:13-20

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel Reading - Mark 9:17-31

Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"

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!

Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.



This Week's Schedule

DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND - Saturday, March 21st

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, March 22nd - St. John of the Ladder

Please welcome Fr. John Armstrong

NO Matins, Hours @ 8:40 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

CHURCH SCHOOL - The youth will be making Psanky eggs today (and next Sunday) following Divine Liturgy.

Lenten Adult Ed Series @ 11:30 AM

Join us at Coffee Hour for a 3-part series continuing this week on Icons and their meaning w/ Iconographer Susan Shiposky. *Presentations will last approx. 30-mins*

Orthodoxy 101 @ Noon

Upstairs in the Church (Nave)

w/ Dn Eugene

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THIS WEEK

THIS WEEK - 5th Week of Great Lent

Tues @ 4:00 PM: Small Compline

Wed @ 10:00 AM: Bible Study (Study of Passion Week)

Wed @ 11-1:00: Open Church

Wed @ 6:00 PM: Feast of the Annunciation

Vesperal Divine Liturgy w/ Lenten Potluck

Thurs @ 6:30 PM: Great Compline / Canon of St. Andrew
w/ Life of Mary of Egypt

Fri @ 6:30 PM: Akathist Hymn w/ Lity for departed

Sat @ 9 AM: Divine Liturgy

NEXT WEEKEND - Saturday, March 28th

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, March 29th - St. Mary of Egypt

Matins @ 8 AM, Hours @ 8:40 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour

CHURCH SCHOOL - The youth will be making Psanky eggs today following Divine Liturgy.

Lenten Adult Ed Series @ 11:30 AM

Join us at Coffee Hour for a 3-part series beginning March 15th on Saints & Icons w/ Iconographer Susan Shiposky.

Presentations will last approx. 30-mins

Orthodoxy 101 @ Noon

Upstairs in the Church (Nave)

Note New Day & Time

Our April 1st Presanctified Liturgy will be at St. Mary's Antiochian Church. Please bring a dish to share.



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 Sundays @ Noon. 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 TBD.

Friends of the Poor is usually the second Saturday of each month. The next FOP is **Saturday, May 9th (no April FOP)**

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is TBD.

Great Lent Mission Vespers Schedule:

Sunday of Mary of Egypt (March 29 @ 4 PM)

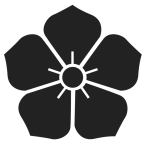
- St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Olyphant PA

Palm Sunday Willow Watch! Please be on watch for Pussy Willows in preparation for Palm Sunday! Anyone willing to harvest Pussy Willows from your yard or community area, when they are ready to be cut, can bring them to the church before Palm Sunday. Thanks so much in advance for sharing your willow harvest to enhance our Lenten journey to Palm Sunday and Great and Holy Pascha!

April 4th, Lazarus Saturday: Parish Clean up, Willow and Palm Bundling for Palm Sunday!

Calling the HTOC Community! Lazarus Saturday we will conduct our annual Holy Week & Pascha Parish Cleanup detail immediately following Divine Liturgy. Please come and offer whatever amount of time you have! We'll also be bundling palms and pussy willows which will be blessed Palm Sunday morning before the start of Divine Liturgy. It's a beautiful offering - The blessed bundles you create will be given to all to hold during Liturgy, reaffirming our union with Christ and readiness to follow him. These blessed bundles are traditionally brought home and placed in our icon corners, often lasting for years! To our "bundlers": Please bring garden clippers if you have them. Contact Alexanne Conklin with any questions and thank you everyone for your help!

Archbishop Mark Visit: Our Diocesan Bishop, His Eminence Archbishop Mark, will make his annual Lenten visit on Holy Saturday, for Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. Please plan to attend this important Holy Week service to welcome our Archbishop.



**LENTEN & PASCHAL
FLOWER DONATIONS**

Donations towards adorning the church this Lenten season and Pascha are being collected so that our parish will be beautifully adorned for all of the feasts. General donations for flowers during lent are being accepted and will be used for the Feast of the Cross (flowers will adorn the cross), Palm Sunday and Holy Week icons. Donations may be left at the candle stand, attention Deborah Mills. Please write "Flowers for Lent" in the memo. We will also continue our tradition of **Paschal Flower Donations** in memory and for the health of loved ones. We will adorn the grave of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Good Friday with fresh Spring flowers as a reflection of our love. These flowers will also adorn the Church on Holy Pascha and throughout Bright Week. On Saint Thomas Sunday, those who donated flowers will be welcome to bring these flowers home to loved ones and shut-ins to brighten their day. If you would like to honor a loved one by making a donation for Holy Pascha flowers "In Memory of" or "For the Health of" a loved one, please sign up in the Church Vestibule/Narthex.

Please leave donations at the candle stand or mail them to the Church. The names of your loved ones will be listed in the Holy Pascha Church Bulletin and remembered in prayer. If you wish to have your offering listed in the Holy Pascha Bulletin, your loved ones name(s) and donation must be received by Palm Sunday.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

March Birthdays: Alex Reznik (3/2), Emma Lynn DiBatista (3/3), Abby Harvey (3/4), Lisa Marie Harvey (3/7), Isabela Sofrenovic (3/9), Dara Soljaga (3/11), Vera Krainanski (3/11), Michael Polk (3/12) Nadine Breisch (3/13), Vera Hoats (3/13), Sergei Kapral Jr. (3/17), Rdr. Gregory Kurtz (3/17), Mat. Victoria Kapral (3/21), Joshua Leonori (3/22), Nina Soto (3/25), Jacob Zbegner (3/27) Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27), Jean Ann Hutz (3/31) Delores Voda (3/31)

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries: Joshua Leonori (3/22), Nina Soto (3/25), Jacob Zbegner (3/27) Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27)



**Words of Wisdom
From the Saints & Teachers**

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Sunday of St. John of the Ladder

from antiochian.org.au

This Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, also known as the Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder (in reference to his most well-known work "The Ladder of Divine Ascent"). The Holy Church has allocated the fourth and fifth Sundays of lent to the Saints John Climacus and Mary of Egypt; two shining examples of the pillars of this holy season: fasting, prayer, and repentance.

The celebration of St John on this day arose from the custom prevalent in the honorable monasteries of starting Great Lent with the reading of his book. St John likens the method of elevating the soul to God to ascending a ladder. He teaches those who seek salvation how to lay a firm foundation for struggles, how to detect and fight every passion, how to avoid demonic snares, and how to rise

PARISH PRAYER LIST // Homebound: Evelyn, Vladimir, Jeri, David, Paul, Archpriest Theodore, Mat. Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Barbara, Jeri, Joan, Irene, Alice, Sylvia, Paul // **Sick & Suffering:** Cynthia Dulsky, Nadine Breisch, Elizabeth Hutz, Mary Hutz, David Lezinsky, Tom Vaskalis, Tom O'Brian, David, Delores Tressa, Pearl Tutko, Marie Dutko, Elaine & Forrest Hanson, Alexandra, Jody, Michael Noice, Paul Loftus, Santo, Susan Shuposki, Dn Jerimiah, William, Alan, Tim, Ann, Paul, Ruth, Bill, Linda, Betty, Jim, George, Ali, Athansios // **Recently Departed:** Eva, Jonathon // **Pray for our Catechumens:** Tom, Gail, Jaqueline, DeJare, Eric, John, Adrienne, Michelle, Jesse, Katie, Lisa, // **Inquirers:** Aaric, Tyler, Dom, David, Steve, Ashley, Jessica

from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility.

The biblical reading on this Sunday is from Mark 9:17-31, and begins with a man approaching Jesus, prostrating and asking Him to heal his son, who has a “dumb spirit” within him. This father describes the symptoms that have plagued his son as the same of being possessed by Satan. To us, reading of these specific symptoms like “falling unconscious, foaming and grinding of teeth, and becoming stiff” it would be completely plausible to assume the boy was suffering from epilepsy or the results of a mental illness such as insanity. But according to Christ, there was no doubt that the son was possessed by an “unclean spirit”. He was not in control of his body and its movements, but was subjected to external power, the power of the “evil one”. This “dumb and deaf spirit”, the enemy of “all that is good”, was hurting the boy, “as it often threw him in the fire, and in the water to perish him.”

This incident was evidence of Satan’s existence. Satan or “evil spirit” are not just illusions or mere symbolic ideas, but a true being in existence. The Lord Jesus himself declared to the disciples: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

Jesus rebuked the “unclean spirit” within the boy, saying: “I command you to get out of him and not to interfere with him,” proving His dominion over evil spirits, which was one of the signs of the approaching Kingdom of Heaven.

The Gospel says that when Jesus asked his disciples to bring the boy to him, and when he saw Him “immediately the spirit overcame him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and frothing”. At that moment, the “wicked spirit” realised that he stood before the Lord of the Hosts with His glory and took to flopping; he realised that his end was close, and he acted as a predatory monster with a fatal injury, and by flopping about, he tried one final attempt to attack and hurt the boy.

It seems clear that lack of faith was the reason why the Disciples were unable to cast out this “unclean spirit.” For this reason, the Lord Jesus tells the father of the boy, “If you can believe, everything is possible for the believer”. The attitude of the father is one of the most beautiful examples of humility and faith. He answered Christ with warm tears: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief”. With another word, he said: I believe, O Lord, but perhaps my faith has been shaken on some occasions by the horror of the trials

and their difficulty, but thou strengthen my faith and shore it on the rock of confessing Thee.

The Disciples asked their Master, “why couldn’t we get him out?” He said, “This kind can only come out with prayer and fasting.” It appears from this teaching that prayer and fasting are necessary conditions for overcoming the war against Satan, they are essential in spiritual life and faith and not as superfluous or added value to our spiritual struggles. Fasting and praying are not exclusive to monks and nuns, but to everyone, even though the way and level of practice differ between laypeople and monks. The Lord Jesus Himself fasted forty days before His trials and it is stated in the Gospels that He was always parting from the Apostles to pray (Luke 22:39) and (Mark 1:35). Amen! + Met Basilios

“He who truly loves the Lord has first loved his brother, because the second is a proof of the first.”

St. John of the Ladder



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

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Last Week’s Collection (3/15/26) : \$3,651 Potato Pancake Sale: \$1,800</p>
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ATTENTION: Please, No Parking or Driving on the Grass: It’s that time of year again when the ground is especially soft. Our maintenance and grounds team asks that we all please refrain from parking or driving on the grass as it is easily damaged. We also do not want anyone to get stuck. Thank you!