



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

The Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas + March 8th, 2026 + The 2nd Sunday of Great Lent



Hymns for Today

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.

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, together we sing thy praises, O God-inspired Gregory. Since thou now standest before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father, so that we may sing to thee: "Rejoice, preacher of grace!"

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction

and crying: "Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all, so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!"

Please Sing Along!

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

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Gospel Reading: Mark 2:1-12

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their

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!

hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

+ SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT +
Fern Knoll Cemetery is now open!



This Week's Schedule

Doly TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

THIS WEEKEND - Parish Lenten Retreat **Saturday, March 7th**

Divine Liturgy @ **8 AM** (*Note time change for this week*)
Brunch & Lenten Retreat @ 9:30 AM
Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

Sunday, March 8th - Sunday of Gregory Palamas

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

Orthodoxy 101 @ Noon

Upstairs in the Church (Nave)
Note New Day & Time
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THIS WEEK

THIS WEEK - 3rd Week of Great Lent

Tues @ 4:00 PM: Small Compline
Wed @ 10:00 AM: Bible Study
Wed @ 11-1:00: Open Church
Wed @ 6:00 PM: Presanctified Divine Liturgy
w/ Lenten Potluck
Fri @ 6:30 PM: Akathist Hymn w/ Lity for departed
Sat @ 9 AM: Divine Liturgy

NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, March 14th

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

Sunday, March 15th - Sunday of the Precious Cross

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

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

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Mission Vespers @ 4 PM, St. Michael's in Jermyn, PA

Parish Special Meeting March 15th

A Parish Special Meeting is being called for Sunday, March 15th. The meeting will be held immediately following Divine Liturgy. The purpose of the meeting is to vote to accept / approve a newly submitted nominee for the position of Treasurer. We currently have one nominee. Additional nominations will be considered thru Sat, March 14th. See Andy Kondratick or Fr. Innocent. Our current Treasurer is retiring from the position. We are so grateful to Paula for her hard work and dedication to the church!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

& Upcoming Parish Events

+++ Weekly / Monthly +++

Bible Study Wednesdays at 10 AM. We are reading through the Epistle to the Romans with discussions.

NEW DAY & TIME - 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 **Sun, March 29th**

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

Holy Trinity Parish Council is usually the second Sunday of each month. The next Parish Council is **Sunday, March 8th**

2025 Giving Statements: Anyone who wishes to receive a formal statement of giving for the year 2024 please provide your name on the signup sheet in the Church vestibule.

Great Lent Mission Vespers Schedule:

Sunday of the Cross (March 15 @ 4 PM)

- St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Jermyn PA

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!

Upcoming Parastas March 15: A Parastas will be offered Sunday March 15th. Please bring names of your departed loved ones to the service and give them to Fr. Innocent.



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 Reznec (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 Kraynanski (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)

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Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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The Sunday St. Gregory Palamas

from ww1.antiocian.org

On this second Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate St. Gregory of Palamas' successful defense of the Orthodox belief that humans can both know and experience God. He asserted that we can know with our minds that God exists, and we can also experience Him through His uncreated energies. This flew in the face of the teachings of Barlaam, a critic of St. Gregory's and of Hesychasm in general.

St. Gregory was born in 1296 to a prominent family in Constantinople. His father died when Gregory was still young. The youth was so bright and hardworking that the emperor himself took interest in Gregory, helping to raise and educate him in the hopes that he would one day hold a high government position.

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, Steve, Ashley

But Gregory left all of the glamour of Constantinople's elite behind when he departed for Mount Athos at age 20 to become a monk. (And he was not the only member of his family to do this. Shortly thereafter, his mother and sisters also became monastics.) As a monk on Mt. Athos, Gregory learned about "Hesychasm," a very calm, still way to pray. He mastered this prayer of the heart, and thus we know him as a "hesychast."

In 1326, Gregory went to Thessalonica and was ordained to the priesthood. He lived the life of a hermit on weekdays, silently praying alone and away from the world. On the weekends, he would celebrate the holy services in his parish and he would preach so beautifully that his sermons brought his listeners to tears.

"He who is rich in virtues is richer than he who possesses the whole world, for the latter must leave his wealth behind, but the former carries his spiritual treasure into eternity." - St. Gregory Palamas

When Barlaam, a bright and studious monk, came to Mt. Athos and heard about hesychasm, he proclaimed it to be heresy. He insisted that it is not possible for humans to know God's essence or to experience His energies such as uncreated light. His dissent caused quite a stir, and Gregory was called to debate with Barlaam about this. Gregory's studies in the world and his experience as a hesychast put him in the perfect position for this debate.

Gregory first tried to speak to Barlaam about all of this, but speaking did not seem to make any progress, so he began to write prolifically about the prayer of the heart and its validity. Although Gregory was writing a lot, they continued to meet and debate in person as well. One of these debates was before the 1341 Council of Constantinople, which took place in Hagia Sophia. This time, they were arguing about the Transfiguration. Gregory stood by the Orthodox belief that God revealed Himself to the disciples on Mt. Tabor, by using His Divine Energies. Barlaam said theirs was not an actual experience of God: just a helpful gift to the disciples, who couldn't really experience God because they are humans. The members of the Council upheld Gregory's position as the truly Orthodox position. They agreed that God, Whose Essence

we cannot approach, chooses to reveal Himself through His Energies. Humans can see those Energies, such as the light that the disciples could see on Mt. Tabor. After the Council ruled that Barlaam's teachings were heresy, Barlaam fled to Calabria.

In spite of the ruling, some people still argued against Gregory, even locking him up in prison for 4 years at one point. However, the very next patriarch released him and made him Archbishop of Thessalonica. In his later years, God gave Gregory the gift to perform miracles, including healing the sick, and he was granted a vision of St. John Chrysostom on the night before he died. His last words were, "To the heights! To the heights!"

Thanks to St. Gregory Palamas, the Church has maintained the truth that we humans are able to experience God through His uncreated energies. St. Gregory's life of dedication to God and His Church, as well as his willingness to stand for truth set him apart as a wonderful example to all of us. Sometimes people refer to the Sunday of St. Gregory of Palamas as "The Sunday of Orthodoxy Part Two," since his defense saved the Orthodox Church when it was under a second major attack.

The Gospel reading for this second Sunday of Lent is the story of the paralytic whose four friends lowered him through the roof of the place where Christ was so that he could be healed by Him. Our Lord not only healed his legs, making him able to walk again, but also healed his sins, telling him, "Your sins are forgiven you." How beautiful it is for us to be reminded, right here near the beginning of Great Lent, that the truth of our Faith is worth standing up for, as did St. Gregory; at the same time receiving the reassurance that Christ is waiting for us to come to Him so that He can heal both our soul and our body.



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 (3/1/26) : \$10,706</p>
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