



# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 15th Sun after Pentecost + Sun, September 17th, 2023 + Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross



## Hymns for Today's Service

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 Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance! Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation!

Thou didst blossom in the courts of the Lord as a fruitful olive tree, O holy martyr Sophia; in thy contest thou didst offer to Christ the sweet fruit of thy womb, thy daughters Faith, Hope, and Love.// Together with them intercede for us all!

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.

The holy branches of noble Sophia, Faith, Hope, and Love, confounded Greek sophistry through Grace. They struggled and won the victory and have been granted an incorruptible crown by Christ the Master of all.

As Thou wast voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name, O Christ God; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace!

### Please Sing Along!

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

## Epistle Reading - 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6-15

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

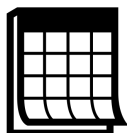
**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

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## Gospel Reading - Matthew 22:35-46

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

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## This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

### **THIS WEEKEND**

Saturday, September 16th

2 PM: Wedding Of Anela Saracina & Gregory Kurtz

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

Sunday, September 17th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,  
Parastas, Coffee Hour

### **Parastas Sept 17th following Divine Liturgy**

**1 Year Anniversary of the Repose of Peter Holoviak**  
and the Duda family - Andrew, Mary, John, Andrew,

Michael, Peter, Joseph and Joseph Jr.

*offered by the Holoviak & Duda Families*

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### **THIS WEEK**

WED 11 AM - 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church

WED 6:30 PM: Akathist to the Precious Cross

THURS 11 AM: Bible Study

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### **NEXT WEEKEND**

Saturday, September 23rd

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

Sunday, September 24th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy, Special  
Parish Meeting, Parish Potluck

## **Special Parish Meeting - Sept 24th**

**All Members are requested to attend**

**Approval of changes to the Bylaws** (*enclosed*)

*PLUS, Parish Potluck - Please bring a dish to share*

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **& Upcoming Parish Events**

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### **NEXT SUNDAY - SUN, SEPT 24th - SPECIAL**

**PARISH MEETING:** Attention all Parish Members. The Parish Council is calling a special meeting that requires the attention of all HTOC members. The meeting is being held to vote on changing our Annual Parish Meeting date from October to January, as well as the wording and guidelines for Parish Council size and requirements. The specific changes will be distributed beforehand. It's crucial that we have as many parishioners there as possible so please save the date and plan to attend. Thank you. Please note, the date was previously Sept 17th but has been changed to the 24th.

*Note: Please see enclosed proposed changes.*

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## **HAS GOD BLESSED YOU WITH A GOOD SINGING VOICE?**

**THE HOLY TRINITY CHOIR** is seeking new members. If you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please call or text Greg Polk at (570)362-2642. Previous choral experience is helpful but not required. All ages are welcome.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**September Birthdays:** Eva Nealon, (9/1), Jason King (9/1), Marianne Haugh (9/3), William Gurka (9/8), Vladimir Dutko (9/13), Kaleb Dutko (9/19), Tom Michalski (9/19), Brittany Marie Willis (9/20), Irene Kazmierowicz (9/27), Stephen Hutz (9/29), Alekzandria Dutko (9/30) **September Anniversaries:** Jason & Coleen King (9/5), Dave & Diane Welgus (9/6), Martha & Paul Tumavitch (9/17)

**This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries:** Martha & Paul Tumavitch (9/17), Kaleb Dutko (9/19), Tom Michalski (9/19), Brittany Marie Willis (9/20)

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## Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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### The Greatest Virtue is Love

#### *Love of Neighbor*

*By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko*

After the love of God, the greatest commandment is the love of one's neighbor.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets (Mt 22.37–40, Mk 12.30–31, Lk 10.27, Lev 19.18).

There is no commandment greater than these (Mk 12.31).

Love of neighbor necessarily follows from the love of God, and there can be no true love of God without it.

He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light and in him there is no cause of stumbling. He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going for the darkness has blinded his eyes.

If any one says "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has

seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God, should love his brother also (1 Jn 2.9–11, 4.20–21).

The love of the neighbor and the brother does not mean the love of only those who love us and are good to us. The neighbor and the brother mean anyone near at hand, everyone made by God, all "for whom Christ has died" (Rom 14.15). The neighbor and the brother include also the enemies. This is the point of Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10.29–37). It is also the Lord's specific teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the heathen do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5.44–48).

But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you . . . If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and selfish (Lk 6.27–35).

This teaching of Jesus is conveyed also in the writings of the apostles.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection . . . Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them . . . No, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink . . . Owe one another nothing, but to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and any other commandment are summed up

in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 12.9-10, 14-20; 13.8-10; cf. Mt 25.31-46).

Genuine love is expressed in deeds, and not in words alone. It is expressed through what one actually does in one's life. It is manifested in concern for others through kindly speech and generosity with one's earthly possessions given by God. It is revealed in one's works of faith in keeping all of God's commandments.

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that Christ laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth (1 Jn 3.14-18; cf. Jas 2.8-17).

The love of neighbor "as oneself" is sometimes misunderstood. One should, of course, love oneself in the sense that one is faithful to God and grateful for his life. And certainly one should love oneself in the sense that he sees himself as uniquely important in the eyes of God and the object of God's own unfailing love and mercy. One should not hate oneself in the sense that he despises the life given to him by God, rejecting his own talents and gifts because he is envious of others. Neither should one hate oneself for being a sinner, since, as the masters teach, such a self-hate is only the subtle form of a more grandiose price which vaunts a person to stature of judgment greater than that of God Himself, who is merciful, loving and forgiving (cf. Father Alexander Elchaninoff, 20th c. Diary of a Russian Priest; Father John of Kronstadt, 20th c. My Life in Christ).

One should certainly "hate himself," however, in the sense that he despises and crucifies his "old self" corrupted by sin in order to "put off the old nature with its evil practices" and to "put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its Creator" (Rom 6.6, Col 3.10).

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal 2.20; cf. 5.24, 6.14).

This is also what Christ undoubtedly meant when He spoke those most violent and terrifying words in the Gospel.

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple (Lk 14.26).

This is the extreme and terrifying warning against all passionate attachments stronger and more powerful than one's passionate attachment to Christ alone. And the greatest passion of all which keeps one from the love of God and the love of one's neighbor is the sinful passion for oneself. Sinful self-love, says Saint Maximus the Confessor, is the "mother of all evils," and the "original sin" of man's heart.

One must "hate oneself" in this sense, even as he must hate his family and friends. He must hate them as objects of his sinful self-love, that he might love them, and himself most truly in Christ.

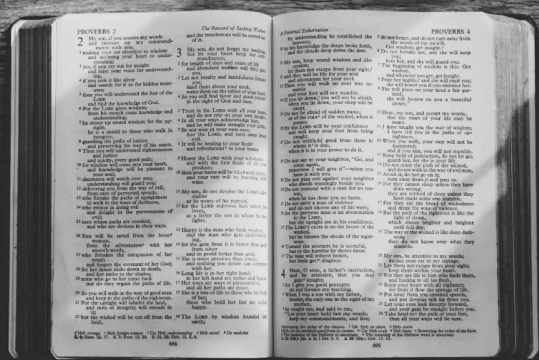
## The Treasury

*"... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*

**Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305**  
**Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840**  
**Collections last Sunday (9/10): \$1,449**

Please join us for our weekly

# BIBLE STUDY



**Thursdays, 11 AM - Noon**  
**Bring a Bible. Everyone is Welcome.**  
Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, 401 East Main Street - Downstairs in the Church