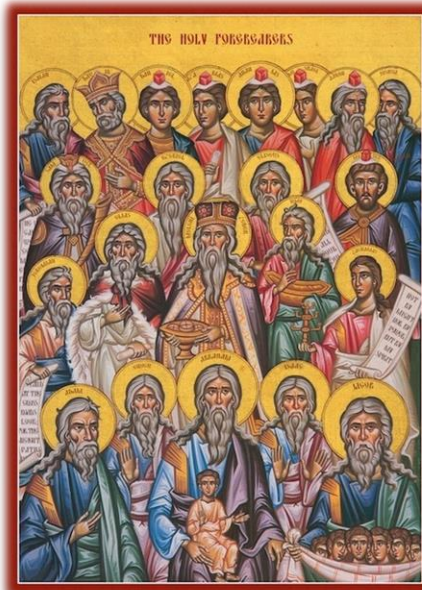


Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



*Sunday of the Holy
Forefathers*

25th Sunday After Pentecost

December 12th, 2021

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

1725 Holy Cross Ln
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-2749
www.holycrosswilliamsport.org

Rev. Fr. Seraphim Reynolds, Pastor
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Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11
Gospel: St. Luke 14:16-24

A very warm welcome to everyone, and especially to our visitors this morning! Please join us for some fellowship after in the Parish Hall!

Services, Events & Announcements

- + *Compline/Bible Study* - Wednesday Dec 15th @ 5:30pm
- + *Great Vespers* – Saturday Dec 18th @ 5pm
- + *Divine Liturgy* - Sunday December 19th @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40),
fellowship following in the Hall

Our Giving – December 5th, 2021

Tithes/Offerings - \$3,974.00 / Online Giving - \$125.00
Candle Offerings – \$81.00 / Love Offerings - \$50.00

Regarding Holy Communion: Only those faithful who are Orthodox Christians and have **properly prepared themselves** by **fasting, prayer [i.e., Prayers Before Communion], recent confession**, and who were at least present for the reading of the Epistle and Gospel should approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. *We should all be at peace with everyone too.* If you have any questions about Communion, please see Fr. Seraphim. 😊

Ascetic Struggle

Living Our Lives in Total Commitment

Christianity is a religion of asceticism, instructing us to store up our treasures in heaven, where the benefits have eternal value. Throughout the New Testament we read of the importance of struggle, where focus on the acquisition of a humble and contrite heart is paramount to what it means to be a Christian. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us that if we are to be worthy of Him, we must be willing to take up our cross and follow Him. We are to be a people whose true homeland is Christ's Kingdom, which is within. Christ Himself calls us to holiness, and this change of heart can only be brought about through struggle.

Our world places a great deal of emphasis on being comfortable, and we tend to avoid anything that does not bring pleasure. If being open about our Christian faith invites ridicule, we remain silent. If keeping the fasting rules of the Church prevents us from enjoying evenings out with our friends, we ignore the fast. If voicing disapproval when hearing our Christian faith being trashed makes us appear less cool, we choose to go the route of the politically correct. Is it any wonder we are therefore unprepared to stand firm when faced with real trials that come our way, having avoided the very things that would transform us into strong, committed Christians?

If we embrace Christianity with dedication of heart and mind, we will receive the power to live in this world, filled as it is, with temptations and disappointments, yet remaining true to our vocation as a holy people. Committing ourselves to being full time Christians, empowers us to live our lives in such a way that we give glory and witness to the very Christ Whom we worship.

If, however, we avoid ascetic struggle, and choose to keep our Christian faith sidelined, and reject real commitment, we will ultimately have become Christian in name only. For those who, out of laziness or personal selfishness, choose to relegate fasting, private prayer, and even church attendance, as something done only when we feel “in the mood”, we will stand before the Throne of God, in the end, with a darkened heart that cannot withstand the power of God, and eternity will be for us, a lake of fire.

Love in Christ,

Abbot Tryphon

All Merciful Saviour Monastery, Vashon Island, WA.

Prayers For the Health and Salvation of those in need: Many Years!

Priestmonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel & Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Subdeacon Anthony (Affsprung), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Helen Maybo, Paul Beard, Evelyn Chabal, Phoebe Davis, Michael Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Phillip Paxos, Newly Illumined Matrona (Evick) & Her Godmother Judy Beard

Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal!

Archpriest John Larson +11/25

Archpriest Peter Tutko +11/5

Matushka Anne Pawlush +12/7

Looking for a unique gift or need to buy groceries (or maybe gas)? See Mat. Mary and pick up some Giant gift cards! Our Parish receives 5% of the sales of these cards, and it’s a simple way to generate a little income for our Parish. Available in denominations of \$25, \$50, or \$100. Stocking stuffers??

