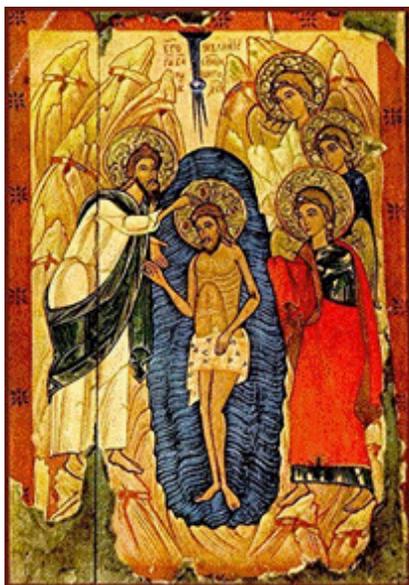


Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



Sunday Before Theophany of  
Our Lord Jesus Christ  
30<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost  
January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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## *Today's Scripture Readings:*

*Epistle:* 2 Timothy 4:5-8

*Gospel:* St. Mark 1:1-8

*Welcome to everyone, and especially our visitors and guests this morning! Please join us for some fellowship after in the Parish Hall!*

## Services, Events & Announcements

### **\*\*Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord\*\***

**Great Vespers w/Blessing of Water – Tuesday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm**

**Divine Liturgy – Wednesday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

**\*NO Compline/Adult Ed. - Wednesday Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>**

**\*Great Vespers – Saturday, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm**

**\*Divine Liturgy – Sunday, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40am)**

**Fellowship After in the Hall**

### **Our Giving – December 24-27, 2020**

Tithes/Christmas Offerings - \$2,031.00

Candle Offerings – \$96.10

Love Offerings - \$40.00

Memorial Gift - \$50.00

### ***From Your Pastor . . .***

*A Blessed New Year to everyone! As we enter this new year, let us be mindful of things that we need to change as we follow Christ. Things that we should not be doing, let us stop. Things that we should be doing, let us start the year doing them. How is our prayer life? Are we reading the Scriptures and lives of the Saints daily? Are we praying for each other? How do we treat each other? Let us ask our Heavenly Father to reveal to us the things we need to change. The New Year is not only about tweaking our physical bodies, but more importantly, our hearts.*

*With Love and God's Blessing,*

*+ Fr. Seraphim*

**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 each other too.* If you have any questions about this, please see Fr. Seraphim.**



### ***“We Rejoice Even in Tribulation” An Encyclical of Hope***

We do not know what the coming year will bring, but we know that Christ is in our midst — He is, and ever shall be! It is precisely in these times of tribulation that we exclaim this with greater conviction than ever. As St. Paul writes to the Romans, “we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been

poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom 5:3-5). Let us not be downcast by our tribulations, but take courage and find in them our hope of the Resurrection.

### ***OUR TROUBLED WORLD***

Let us not be surprised, however, if hope is not what the world feels when it looks back upon the year 2020 and into the New Year of 2021. By many people, the year 2020 will be remembered as one of calamity: the year of the covid-19 pandemic; of violence perpetrated upon the weak by the strong; of civil unrest and rioting; of political polarization and turmoil; of fires, storms, and floods. In addition to all of this, many of us grappled with personal tragedy throughout the year, with the loss of loved ones, chronic and acute illnesses, financial ruin, accidents, abuse, addiction, and every other temptation and challenge. In the New Year, these troubles may well continue, or new ones may come.

Beloved in Christ, we see all of this as well. The Church does not look away from pain, suffering, and death — not our own, not that of our neighbor. But while those around us may see suffering and death as evidence of meaninglessness and chaos, we acknowledge this pain as an inescapable element of our broken world. The brokenness of the natural world, of our minds and hearts, of our relationships, and of our societies — all of this stems from the rebellion of human beings against God. Our attempts to live without Him have separated us and our world from the loving wholeness of life in the Holy Trinity.

*Excerpt from “We Rejoice even in Tribulation” An Encyclical of Hope, by the OCA Holy Synod of Bishops, Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020*