

DIocese of EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA + WILKES-BARRE DEALENSY

**ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS  
ORTHODOX CHURCH  
WILLIAMSPORT, PA.**



**VENERABLE PATERIUS OF THEBES  
HOLY 362 MARTYRS OF AFRICA  
DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**

# ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

1725 Holy Cross Ln  
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701-2749

Rev. Fr. Seraphim Reynolds, Pastor  
Office: 570.322.3020  
(c) 717.576.3503  
priestserafim@gmail.com

Mr. Michael (Cory) Chelko, Parish President  
Mr. Dan Thetford, Vice President

## *Today's Scripture Readings:*

*Epistle:* Ephesians 4:1-6

*Gospel:* St. Luke 17:12-19

*Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning! Please, come over to the Hall after Liturgy for some food & fellowship!!*

## Services, Events & Announcements

**++Wed. Dec 11<sup>th</sup> – Daily Vespers @ 6pm (Adult Ed.)**

**++Sat. Dec 14<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers @ 5pm (Confessions)**

**++Sun. Dec 15<sup>th</sup> – Divine Liturgy @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40)**

**\*\*Tues. Dec 10<sup>th</sup> – Baklava Baking (See the bulletin board, and pickup is on Fri Dec 13<sup>th</sup>)**

**\*\*Thurs. Dec 12<sup>th</sup> – Parish Council Meeting @ 6pm**

**\*\*Sun. Dec 15<sup>th</sup> – Parish Bake Sale during Fellowship Hour!!**

**++Sun. Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> – Baptism of Azariah Keegan Federoff**

**\*\*Sun. Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> – St. Tikhon's Bookstore is coming!!**

**++The Nativity of Our Lord God & Saviour Jesus Christ++**

**++Holy Supper – Tues. Dec 24<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm++**

**\*\*Please see the sign up in the Hall, and stay tuned for more details\*\***

**++Vigil for the Nativity – Tues. Dec 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm++**

**++Nativity of Our Lord – Weds Dec 25<sup>th</sup> @ 10am++**

**LAST SUNDAY – Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Attendance 36 - Regular Offering - \$1118.00**

**Candles - \$56.00 / Love Offering - \$5.00**

**Memorial - \$100.00**

**NEXT SUNDAY – Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading of the Epistle – Herman A.**

*From Your Pastor . . .*

*During this Advent season, let us look deep into our hearts. The times of fasting that the Church offers is an excellent time to visit Our Lord in confession. I am available for confession often, so let me know if you have a specific time and day. We have heard that this is a time of preparation, a time to prepare the “cave of our hearts” as we await the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us prepare and be ready for His arrival!*

**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.* ☺**

### ***Mary the Mother of God***

The Holy Virgin is a stumbling block for many protestants looking into Orthodoxy. The idea that this woman described in the Gospels in such humble terms could be called the Mother of God seems unbiblical to them. She was never called Mother of God in the Bible, they say, so why would she be given such an exalted title? She was, they think, simply the mother of Jesus.

The very first icon was painted depicting Mary holding the child Jesus by none other than the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke. The

Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God was painted on a board from the table at which the Savior ate together with His All-Pure Mother and Righteous Joseph. The Mother of God, upon seeing this image, exclaimed, "Henceforth, all generations shall call Me blessed. The grace of both My Son and Me shall be with this icon." She was thus recognized by the Church for her pivotal role with the title Theotokos, which means God-bearer.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to announce to the Virgin the birth of the Saviour: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." (Luke 1:28) This angelic salutation forms a part of the hymn of the Church most frequently sung in her honor, in imitation of the words of this angelic messenger of God. Elizabeth, the Virgin's cousin, considered it an honor for the Mother of her Lord to visit her. "And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43) There is no difference between saying "Mother of God" and "Mother of the Lord". Surely, God is the Lord! (Psalm 118:27) During her visit to Elizabeth, the Blessed Virgin spoke the words that form the principal hymn sung in her honor at the Matins service.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden, for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luke 1: 47-48)

Elizabeth, having been "filled with the Holy Spirit", cried out: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." (Luke 1:41, 42) This honor given the Theotokos by her cousin is exactly what all generations of the Church do when they call her blessed. When Jesus beheld His mother and His disciple John standing by the cross, He entrusted him with her care, but He also established a new spiritual relationship between them in saying to the disciple: "Behold thy Mother!" (John 19:27) In making this declaration our Lord made His Mother the Mother of all Christians!

*With Love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon*

*All Merciful Saviour Monastery, Vashon Island, WA.*