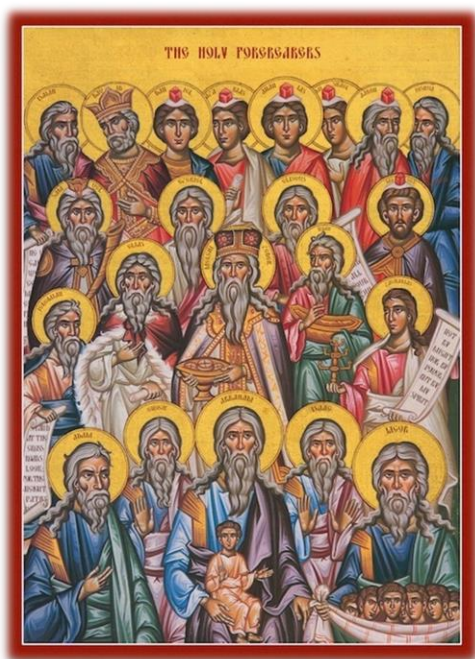


Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Elevation of the Holy Cross

Orthodox Church

Williamsport, PA.



Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Prophet Daniel & the Three Holy Youths

December 17th, 2023

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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

Rev. Fr. Seraphim Reynolds, *Pastor*
Office: 570.322.3020
(c) 717.576.3503
Email: priestseraphim@protonmail.com

Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: St. Luke 14:16-24

A warm Advent welcome to EVERYONE this morning!!

Services & Announcements

+ Church **OPEN** for prayer Tuesday & Thursday 7:30 – 9:30am

+ *Compline/Bible Study* – Wednesday December 20th at 5:30

+ *Great Vespers* – Saturday December 23rd at 5

+ *Hours, Divine Liturgy* – Sunday December 24th at 9:40 –
Fellowship following in the Hall.

+ FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF LORD JESUS CHRIST +

Holy Supper/Carol Sing - Sunday December 24th at 4pm

Nativity Vigil - Sunday December 24th at 6pm

Feast of the Nativity – Hours/Divine Liturgy - Monday December
25th at 9:40

+ *Food items (non-perishable) being collected for the St. Ann Food
Pantry through Advent. You can leave them in the Hall.*

+ Benevolence for December: - *Diocesan Seminarian Fr. Dn.
Kirill & Mat. Olivia Zawatski*

+ ***THANK YOU*** to all who helped with preparing, cooking, serving,
and cleanup at the free community luncheon yesterday . . . we served
30 meals!!!

Our Giving – December 10th, 2023

Tithes/Offerings - \$2,435.00 / Online Giving - \$200.00

Candle Offerings – \$53.00 / Christmas Flowers - \$120.00

Christmas Offerings - \$120.00 / Memorial - \$120.00

Thank you all for your generosity!

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 must be at peace with everyone too.* If you have any questions, please see Fr. Seraphim. 😊

**** Please remain (quietly) for the Prayers of Thanksgiving after the Liturgy, before going over to the Hall for Fellowship.**

The Sins of Others – The Morning Offering

When we take our eyes off our own failings, shortcomings, and sins, we notice the failings of others. As the sins of others get our attention, our focus turns away from our own struggles with the passions, and we begin to fall further into sin, our eyes having turned away from the Lord. When our focus is no longer turned towards the conquering of our own passions, our hearts become vulnerable, and we begin to expend our energy on picking apart our neighbor. Their sins become the hot topic with our gossiping friends, and we fall further into the rottenness of our own sins. At this stage, Abba Sisoës asks, “*How can we guard the heart if the tongue leaves the door of the fortress open?*”

If we are to take ourselves out of the mire of sin, and with Christ’s help, be transformed and made whole, our eyes must never look to the sins of others, “For a person cannot be disquieted or concerned about other people’s affairs if he is satisfied with concentrating on the work of his own hands (St. John Cassian).”

As we continue the Nativity Fast, let us refocus ourselves, and prepare for the struggle ahead. Let us make this Fast the most profitable of all, with the goal of acquiring a humble and contrite heart. If we focus on our own failings, only, we will find this Lenten season will be the most profitable of all, and we will be lifted up by God, and our celebration of the Nativity of Christ will be the most glorious of them all.

Remember, the Nativity Fast was created for us as a time for repentance, renewal, and the restoration of heart, mind, and body. Let us keep our spiritual eyes on Christ and be open to the healing of our soul that comes for us through this very Christ Jesus, Whom we worship and adore.

With 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), Archpriest Moses (Berry), Archpriest Michael (Evans), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Pres. Rosy (Tanveer), Mat. Mary Lynn (Henry), Mat. Deborah (Belonick), Mat. Barbara (Matusiak), Mat. Nancy Chuta, Mat. Daria Pelesh, Xenia Crews, Anastasia Linnehan & the children to be born of them, Paul Beard, Evelyn Chabal, Michael Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Elias Ciaccio, Elizabeth Wadsworth, Sebastian Fillar, Anna Conrad, Isaac Bannister, Christine Perrin, Agnes Andreanoff, Michael Lazorchak, Edward Hojnicky, Brian Gunter, Vladimir Kerkendall, Alec Litchard & those suffering from the wars in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East

Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal!

Archpriest Michael Oleksa +11/29, Archpriest Sergius Clark +11/22
Archpriest William Clark +11/14, Archpriest Michael Lupu +12/5, Priest Antony Gori +11/13 Protodeacon Nicholas Jannakos +11/18, Prifteresha Elisabeth Bouteneff +11/25, Phoebe Davis +11/9, Jason Brown +11/10
& Those who have lost their lives in the wars in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East