

Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

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



## Sunday of the Last Judgment

36<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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

Very Rev. Fr. Seraphim Reynolds, Pastor/Rector  
office: 570.322.3020  
(c) 717.576.3503  
email: archpriestserafim@gmail.com

## ***Today's Scripture Readings:***

***Epistle:*** 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

***Gospel:*** St. Matthew 25:31-46

***A warm welcome to ALL this morning! Everyone is invited to join us for some fellowship after the Liturgy in the Parish Hall!***

## **This Week at Holy Cross**

- + Church is open** on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7-9:30am for private prayer, quiet time and/or Confession.
- + *Compline / Bible Study*** – Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm
- \*\* *Community Luncheon*** – Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> at 10-11:30am
- + *Great Vespers*** – Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> at 5pm
- + *Hours, Divine Liturgy*** – Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:40am – ***Cheesefare Potluck Fellowship*** following in the Hall . . . signup coming!
- + *Great Vespers w/Rite of Forgiveness***– Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1pm
- \*\* *February Benevolence*** – *St. Olga's Closet*, to help seminarian families at St. Tikhon's. **www.stolgas closet.org**

## **Our Giving – February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Tithes/Offerings - \$2,167.00 / Online Giving - \$351.00  
Candle Offerings - \$35.00 / Benevolence - \$250.00  
Luncheon Donations - \$210.00

***Thank you all for your generosity to Our Parish!***

**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. 😊

## † ***Sunday of the Last Judgment / Meatfare – February 15<sup>th</sup>***

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

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“Go to Church, weep over your sins, await together with Her, with great fear, the day of judgment. The Church continually thinks about the judgment: morning, day, and night; every day, early and late, the Church reminds Her children of this great day, which will decide the fate of the entire human race; and yet Her children are busy with thoughts of how pleasant it is for them to turn their heads for a few minutes, to cheer their hearts with the joys of earthly passions. The Lord, the Truth, the Life thunders with His voice about how His Judgment will be accomplished without fail, and commands us to *watch and pray* always in spirit (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36), in order that we may avoid the terrible fate of the condemned; the Apostles assure us that *the Judge is standing at the door* (Jas 5:9) ... and we act as if we don't even want to hear any of this. Others think and even say: what a terrible judgment! The Lord is merciful, He will have compassion; we are sinners more due to our weaknesses, not because we are evil or callous.... And they do not think about how only the merciful *shall obtain mercy* (Matt 5:7). *For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy* (Jas 2:13). Where are your deeds of mercy, when it is evident that you care only about yourselves?” St John of Kronstadt

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

His Eminence Archbishop Alexander, Hieroschemamonk Ambrose (Young), Abbot Tryphon, Mitred-Archpriest Nicholas (Harris), Mitred-Archpriest Daniel (Kovalak), Archpriest George, Fr Dcn John Wesner, Mat. Myra (Kovalak), Pres. Eva (Koutroulelis), Madison Race & the child to be born of her, Catharine Mann, Paul Beard, Harry Hiras, Evelyn Chabal, Amelia Kuzmiak, Juliana Matusiak, Isaac Bannister, Michael Lazorchak, Brian Gunter, Elizabeth Larson, Joanna Bohlander, John Dykes, Alexis Gross, Mary Fish, John Sam, Innocent Sam, Chris Gehret, Bridget Youmans, Jennifer Updegrove, Stephanie Raptis, Steven Reynolds & those suffering from the wars and unrest in Ukraine, Russia, & the Middle East. ***Our Catechumens:*** Melissa Czock, Jiselle Macari, Spencer Leoutsakos, Benjamin Zachariah (Military), Garette, Morgan, Charlotte & Nathaniel Fallon, Rick Lucas, Dean Johnson, Jennifer Benick, Joseph Fazio, Dallas Compton, Jonathan, Madison, Felicity & Edmund Race, Mason Hall

### **Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal**

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist) +2/7, Archpriest Andrew Moulton +1/9, Archpriest Stephen Plumlee +1/14, Archpriest John Pawelchak +1/17, Mat. Julia Romanchak +1/11 and All those who have lost their lives in the wars & unrest in Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East and around the world.