

Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church Williamsport, PA.



Forgiveness Sunday
Cheesefare Sunday

37th Sunday After Pentecost

February 22nd, 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: Romans 13:11-14:4

Gospel: St. Matthew 6:14-21

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

+ ***Forgiveness Vespers w/Rite of Forgiveness*** – TODAY Feb 22nd * 1pm

+ ***Great Canon of St Andrew*** – Monday Feb 23 through Thursday Feb 26 * 5:30pm each evening

+ Church is **open** on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7-9:30am for private prayer, quiet time and/or Confession.

+ ***9th Hour, Presanctified Liturgy*** – Friday Feb 27th * 5:30pm

+ ***Great Vespers*** – Saturday February 28th * 5pm

+ ***Hours, Divine Liturgy w/procession*** – **Sunday of Orthodoxy** March 1st * 9:40am

** ***February Benevolence*** – ***St. Olga's Closet***, to help seminarian families at St. Tikhon's. **www.stolgas closet.org**

Our Giving – February 15th, 2026

Tithes/Offerings - \$1,640.00 / Online Giving - \$436.00

Candle Offerings - \$53.00 / Benevolence - \$5.00

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 Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise***

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit..." (oca.org)

“ . . . fasting, to be sure, is not intended to be a "straight-jacket" for Orthodox believers, nor a source of pharisaical pride for anyone who keeps the letter of the Church's law. It is rather the rule, the standard, against which each is to measure his own practice, and towards which one must always strive, according to one's strength and circumstances. Whenever, for sickness or any other reason, one falls short of the rule, he applies to himself the spiritual medicine of self-reproach and strives to enter more fully into the spirit and discipline of fasting, which is indeed of great spiritual benefit to those who sincerely strive to follow it.” *Bl Fr Seraphim Rose of Platina*

"The Saviour began the work of our salvation with fasting. In the same way, all those who follow in the footsteps of the Saviour build on this foundation the beginning of their endeavor, since fasting is a weapon established by God. Who will escape blame if he neglects this? If the Lawgiver Himself fasts, how can any of those who have to obey the law be exempt from fasting? This is why the human race knew no victory before fasting, and the devil was never defeated by our nature as it is: but this weapon has indeed deprived the devil of strength from the outset. Our Lord was the Leader and the first example of this victory, in order to place the first crown of victory on the head of our nature. As soon as the devil sees someone possessed of this weapon, fear straightway falls on this adversary and tormentor of ours, who remembers and thinks of his defeat by the Saviour in the wilderness; his strength is at once destroyed and the sight of the weapon given us by our Supreme Leader burns him up. A man armed with the weapon of fasting is always afire with zeal. He who remains therein, keeps his mind steadfast and ready to meet and repel all violent passions." *St. Isaac the Syrian*

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 Den 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, Archimandrite Luke (Majoros) +2/12, Archpriest Stephen Plumlee +1/14, Archpriest John Pawelchak +1/17, and All those who have lost their lives in the wars & unrest in Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East and around the world.