

Orthodox Church in America + Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Elevation of the Holy Cross
Orthodox Church
Williamsport, PA.



Sunday of the Prodigal Son
35th Sunday After Pentecost
February 8th, 2026

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel: St. Luke 15:11-32

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

This Week at Holy Cross

- + No Compline / Bible Study** this week (Clergy Retreat)
- + Church is open** only on Thursday morning from 7-9:30am for private prayer, quiet time and/or Confession.
- + Great Vespers** – Saturday February 14th at 5pm
- + Hours, Divine Liturgy** – Sunday February 15th at 9:40am – **Meatfare Potluck Fellowship** following in the Hall . . . signup coming!
- ** February Benevolence** – *St. Olga's Closet*, to help seminarian families at St. Tikhon's. **www.stolgas closet.org**

Our Giving – February 1st, 2026

Tithes/Offerings - \$3,848.25 / Online Giving - \$481.00

Candle Offerings - \$89.00 / Benevolence - \$25.00

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. 😊

† *The Parable of the Prodigal Son – February 8th*

When a monk was asked what his life was like, he replied, "Falling and rising. Falling and rising." Each fall is an opportunity to rise and return. We must not despair over our falls. Instead, we must rise and go to our Father who will embrace us and care for us just as he did his Prodigal Son. The falls are not what matters. It is the return that matters.

The Holy Fathers knew well what it takes to heal and transform a soul. They knew from personal experience, all of them, to the last man and woman, what it takes to become a new creation. They all experienced the power of repentance and the unconditional compassion of God.

St. Peter of Damascus must have been a truly enlightened pastor well acquainted with the realities of human life in this fallen world. He wrote these hopeful words for those who find repentance difficult, "But if repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even if you don't want to, show humility like the publican (Luke 18:13): this is enough to ensure your salvation." Furthermore, he tells us that the one who does not despair and condemn himself for having sinned is "pure in heart." Pure in heart for being able to show himself the same kind of love God shows those who fall.

(Fr Antony Hughes)

† *A few words from His Eminence, Met. TIKHON*

We should note that, just as at the beginning of the parable, the father is silent, which shows that even now, he is leaving his son free, and his love for his son is expressed, not in his words, but in his action of speaking to the servants and calling for a great feast. The Holy Fathers have seen in this feast and image of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, through which we, who are prodigals in so many ways, can return with peace and with joy to the house of the Father and participate in his very life. But in order to do this, we must freely come to that banquet, we must recognize that we are prodigal sons, and in that recognition, in that repentance which takes place in our heart, we will draw closer to God.

This is the opposite of what took place with the elder son who was angry because of the way the father was treating the wayward son. The older son does not realize that he himself is a prodigal son, even though he physically remained all this time with his father. But his heart is darkened to this reality and, unlike the younger son, he is angry and will not go in. And this shows that, even though he never left the father's house, the older son was never really there. He cannot go into his father's house to rejoice over the return of his own brother, and even justifies himself before the father by boasting about what he perceives to be his own faithfulness and virtue. He says to the Father, "I have never transgressed your commandment" but his actions reveal that he is not humble and that, in fact, he has transgressed his Father's commandment, not by doing anything wrong, but by not receiving the father's love and by not seeing that this love extends to both of his sons equally. And so the hell inside his heart is greater than the hell that the younger son endured in the foreign land.

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

Prayers for the Newly Departed: Memory Eternal

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Sigris) +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.