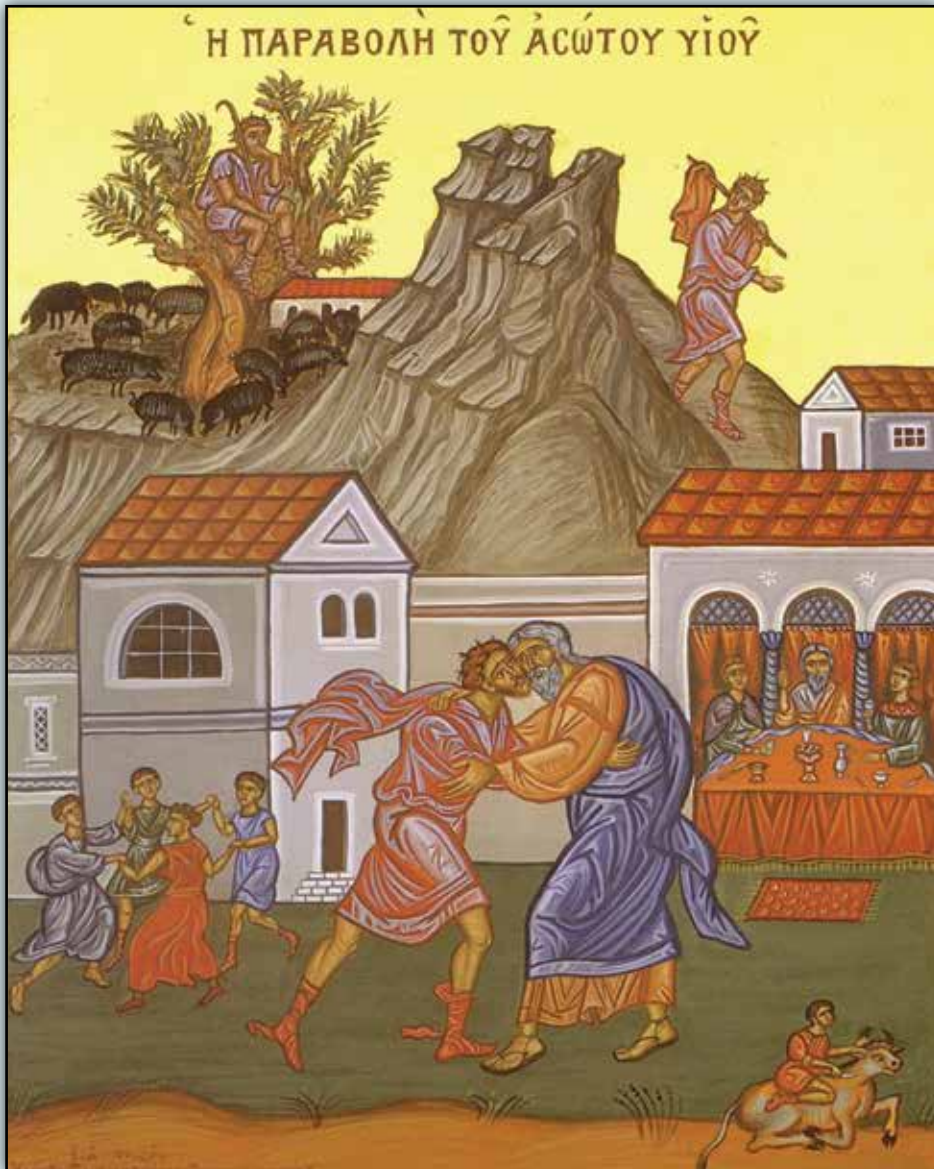


SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



Icon of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

February 1, 2026: Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Epistle: 1 Cor. 6: 12-20

Gospel: Lk. 15: 11-32

This Weekend 4:00 pm + Frank Cole, Jr. (Carol)
10:30 For Our Parishioners

Mon., February 2 **Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon (Solemn Holy Day)**
9:00 Health of Dr. Val Pilarek (St. Cyril's Fund-Raising
Committee); Blessing of Candles

Tues., February 3 9:00 + Angela Colombo (Tom & Rebecca Comerford)

Wed., February 4 9:00 + Jacob, Ann & Karen Jablonski (Gloria Jablonski)

Thurs., February 5 9:00 + Julia Repecki (Granddaughter, Gina)

Fri., February 6 9:00 + George Danylak (Shirley Jacobs)

Sat., February 7 **No Morning Divine Liturgy**
2:00 pm Confessions
4:00 pm + Loretta Kovaleski (Rosemarie Sember)

Sun., February 8 10:30 For Our Parishioners

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Introduction

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son is the second Sunday of a three-week period prior to the commencement of Great Lent. As with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the theme of this Sunday is repentance, and the focus on the parable of the Prodigal Son leads us to contemplate the necessity of repentance in our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Biblical Story

The name for this Sunday is taken from the parable of our Lord Jesus Christ found in Luke 15:11-32. The parable is the story of a man and his two sons. The youngest of the sons asks his father to give him his inheritance. The father does this, and soon after the son leaves and journeys to a distant country.

After the younger son arrives, he squanders all of his possessions with "prodigal" living. Within a short period

of time, he wastes everything. A severe famine comes, but he has nothing and falls into great need (vv. 13-14).

He is able to find work feeding swine, but this does not improve his situation. The Scriptures say, "He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, but no one gave him anything" (vv. 15-16).

The parable says that in the midst of his dire conditions, he came to himself. He realized that his father's hired servants have enough to eat and food to spare, while he perishes with hunger. He says, "I will arise and go to my father and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants'" (vv. 17-19).

He arose and returned to his father. But as he approached, his father saw him at a great distance. The father had compassion on his son, ran to meet him, embraced him, and kissed him. The son admitted his sinfulness and his unworthiness to be called a son, but in his joy at the return of his son, the father called his servants to bring the best robe, a ring for his son's finger, and sandals for his feet. He also called for the fatted calf to be killed for a feast. He exclaimed, "For this my son

was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (vv. 20-24).

While they were feasting and celebrating the return of the prodigal son, the older son comes and inquires about what is happening. He is told that his brother had returned and that his father has received him with a feast. The older brother becomes angry and will not go in to the feast. The father comes out and pleads with him, but the older son answers by saying he has been faithful to his father for many years and yet the father never gave him the opportunity for such feasting. He expresses his anger and jealousy over his brother who was received in such a manner after he squandered his inheritance (vv. 25-30).

The father responds by telling his oldest son, "You are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found" (vv. 31-32).

The parable of the Prodigal Son forms an exact icon of repentance at its different stages. Sin is exile, enslavement to strangers, hunger. Repentance is the return from exile to our true home; it is to receive back our inheritance and freedom in the

Father's house. But repentance implies action: "I will rise up and go..." (v. 18). To repent is not just to feel dissatisfied, but to make a decision and to act upon it.

In the words of our Lord, we also learn of three things through this parable: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The reading of this parable follows the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own sinful condition, we might come to our senses and return to God through repentance. For those who have fallen into great despair over their sins thinking that there is no forgiveness, this parable offers hope. The Heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly waiting for our return. There is no sin that can overcome His love for us.

Finally, this parable offers us insight into the world in which we live. It is a world where the activities of people are disconnected and not ordered toward the fulfillment of God's divine purpose for life. It is a world of incoherent pursuits, of illusory strivings, of craving for foods and drinks that do not satisfy, a world where nothing ultimately makes sense,

and a world engulfed in untruth, deceit and sin. It is the exact opposite of the world as created by God and potentially recreated by his Son and Spirit. There is no cure for the evils of our age unless we return to God. The world in which we live is not a normal world, but a wasteland. This is why in the Slavic tradition of the Eastern Church the reading of Psalm 137 is added to the Matins service for this and the the following two Sundays. This nostalgic lament of the Hebrew exiles states: "By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion. On the willows we hung our harps, for how could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalm 137).

Here we can see the challenge of life in this world and the alienation from God that can happen when sin reigns in our lives. As a result of sin in our lives, we lose the joy of communion with God, we defile and lose our spiritual beauty, and we find ourselves far away from our real home, our real life. In true repentance, we realize this, and we express a deep desire to return, to recover what has been lost. On this day the Church reminds us of what we have abandoned and lost, and beckons us to find the desire and power to return. Our Heavenly Father

is waiting and ready to receive us with His loving forgiveness and His saving embrace.

ON WINTER CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Winter sometimes brings stormy weather. We kindly ask our parishioners to use good judgment and common sense by not driving when conditions are dangerous. As weather varies from place to place, it may be that services will be held as scheduled, despite the fact that conditions in your area are difficult. Please prioritize your safety and that of others by assessing the situation before venturing out.

Also, wintertime is cold and flu

season. If you are truly sick, please stay home. Refrain from attending services to avoid the risk of infecting your fellow parishioners with your illness. Rest assured, God will understand your need to take care of your health and the well-being of the community.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in these matters. Let us all do our part to ensure a safe and healthy winter season.

BINGO AT THE MANOR ON MAIN

The snowstorm last Sunday caused major problems in our area. No one showed up for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Also, we were forced to reschedule the Cash Bingo at the Manor on Main to Sunday, February 15th. If you did not make it to Church last weekend, we ask that you make up

your donation this weekend. With this bitterly cold weather, our boiler has to work overtime. Our maintenance men had lots of snow removal and plowing to take care of. We look forward to our Cash Bingo at the Manor on Main on Sunday, February 15th.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS OVER

Volunteers are needed! Again, special thanks to the Parishioners who decorated the Church for Christmas. We received so many comments as to

how beautifully the Church was decorated.

Taking down the decorations is much easier. Everything is double

checked to see that it is marked with a ribbon for its proper location for next Christmas. Lights are wound, everything is stored in bins, etc. and stored in the Church basement. We need the men of the Parish to help with the

manger itself, the larger trees, ladders, etc.

Lend us a hand on Sunday, February 1st immediately after the 10:30 Divine Liturgy. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

LIVELITURGY.COM

If you can't make it to Church and want to stream the Divine Liturgy, liveliturgy.com is a good site to

visit. They have 397 listings across 16 countries in North America and Europe.

COLLECTION FOR THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Our Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States participates in a Special Collection which supports the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Communism in this region fell more than 30 years ago, but the Church still struggles to rebuild after decades of oppressive rule. Under communism, religion and religious practices were openly persecuted, and atheism was actively propagated and enforced.

Your support of this collection aids those affected by the war in Ukraine and renews vital aspects of Church life throughout the region. You support Seminary programs, promote ministries and education for children and families, rebuild Churches, and renew community life. Please be generous and prayerfully consider how you can support this collection.

MYASOPUSNA 2026 A Ukrainian Cultural Celebration

Join us for a vibrant celebration of Ukrainian culture at MYASOPUSNA 2026! Experience an afternoon filled with traditional dance, music, and au-

thentic cuisine on Sunday, February 8, 2026, from noon to 4:00 PM at the Transfiguration of Our Lord Church Hall, located at Bliss & Center Street

in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke.

Event Highlights

- Live performances featuring the Kazka Ukrainian Folk Ensemble, St. Mary's Ukrainian Dancers, and The Englot Sisters
- Handcrafted Ukrainian items for sale, including a Pysanky (Easter egg) demonstration, embroidery, and a variety of gift items
- Exciting basket raffle

Homemade Ukrainian Dinner

Savor a delicious homemade Ukrainian dinner, including Halubtsi, ham, kobasa, kapusta, varenyky, black bread, beverage, and dessert. Ukrainian beverages will also be available

for purchase.

Dinner tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for children (12 & under). Please note: advance purchase only—no tickets will be sold at the door.

Doors open at 12:00 PM, with dinner service from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM. Entertainment begins at 1:30 PM.

Ticket Information

To purchase tickets, call 570-735-4654 or leave a message at 570-735-1901. Don't miss this opportunity to immerse yourself in Ukrainian heritage and celebrate with the community!

PYSANKY CLASSES

Learn the art of making Ukrainian Easter Eggs. Classes are February 22nd and March 1st, with two times to choose from: 12:00 and 3:00. Fee of \$25 includes all supplies. Location:

St. Cyril's Parish Hall, 207 River Street, Olyphant. For reservations call: Tammy 570-766-1919. Class sizes are limited and fill up fast.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM

The Collection Processing Team is Team #2: Eugene Zinsky, John for the month of February 2026 Turko, Jr., and Michael Shumek.

Sunday Collection for January 24, 2026: \$

Sincere thanks to all of you for your kindness and generosity.

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451

Web Site: stcyrils.weconnect.com

E-Mail: olyphant@ukrcatholic.org

Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Mercy and Forgiveness

All that God looks for from us is the slightest opening and He forgives a multitude of sins. ... There were two brothers: they divided their father's goods between them and one stayed home, while the other went away to a foreign country, wasted all he had been given, and then could not bear the shame of his poverty. The son who went away represents those who fall after baptism. This is clear from the fact that he is called a son, since no one is called a son unless he is baptized. Also, he lived in his father's house and took a share of all his father's goods. Before baptism no one receives the Father's goods or enters upon the inheritance. We can therefore take all this as signifying the state of believers.

What does he say after falling into the depths of evil? I will return to my father. The reason the father let him go and did not prevent his departure for a foreign land was so that he might learn well by experience what good things are enjoyed by the one who stays at home. For when words would

not convince us God often leaves us to learn from the things that happen to us. When the dissolute returned after going to a foreign country and finding out by experience what a great sin it is to leave the father's house, the father did not remember past injuries but welcomed him with open arms. Why? Because he was a father and not a judge. And there were dances and festivities and banquets and the whole house was full of joy and gladness.

Are you asking: "Is this what he gets for his wickedness?" Not for his wickedness, but for his return home; not for sin, but for repentance; not for evil, but for being converted. What is more, when the elder son was angry at this the father gently won him over, saying: You were always with me, but he was lost and has been found; he was dead and has come back to life. "When someone who was lost has to be saved," says the father, "it is not the time for passing judgment or making minute inquiries, but only for mercy and forgiveness."