

# St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

## Scripture Readings

Romans 15:1-7

Matthew 9:27-35

## Commemorations

Martyrs Trophimus, Theophilus, and 13 others in Lycia (4th c.).  
Hieromartyr Apollinaris, Bishop of Ravenna (ca. 75).

Commemoration of the Miraculous Appearance of the POCHAEV Icon of the Mother of God, which saved the Monastery from the assault of the Tatars and Turks (1675).  
Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, "THE JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW"

## Information

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## Welcome to our Guests

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy and services. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to participate in our prayers and hymns and to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Please sign our guest card and join us for refreshments and fellowship after the services.

Feel free to ask questions before or after the services. Any member of our Council or Congregation are glad to assist you. Literature about the Orthodox faith and this parish can be found in the narthex (back of the Church).

Our Parish Council Representatives are:

- President - Susan Hayes
- Vice President - Deborah Bray
- Secretary - SubDeacon Joseph Brubaker
- Treasurer - Susan Egan
- Member at Large - James Pepitone
- Member at Large - Demetra Tolis

There are three things, my brethren, by which Faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are prayer, fasting, and mercy. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy, and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other.

Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others you open God's ear to yourself.

When you fast, see the fasting of others. If you want God to know that you are hungry, know that another is hungry. If you hope for mercy, show mercy. If you look for kindness, show kindness. If you want to receive, give. If you ask for yourself what you deny to others, your asking is a mockery.

Let this be the pattern for all men when they practice mercy: show mercy to others in the same way, with the same generosity, with the same promptness, as you want others to show mercy to you.

Therefore, let prayer, mercy, and fasting be one single plea to God on our behalf, one speech in our defense, a threefold united prayer in our favor.

Let us use fasting to make up for what we have lost by despising others, Let us offer our souls in sacrifice by means of fasting. There is nothing more pleasing that we can offer to God, as the Psalmist said in prophecy, "A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God does not despise a bruised and humbled heart."

Offer your soul to God, make Him an offering of your fasting, so that your soul may be a pure offering, a holy sacrifice, a living victim, remaining your own and at the same time made over to God. Whoever fails to give this to God will not be excused, for if you are to give Him yourself you are never without the means of giving.

To make these acceptable, mercy must be added. Fasting bears no fruit unless it is watered by mercy. Fasting dries up when mercy dries up. Mercy is to fasting as rain is to the earth. However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, sow virtues; if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit.

When you fast, if your mercy is thin your harvest will be thin; when you fast, what you pour out in mercy overflows into your barn. Therefore, do not lose by saving, but gather in by scattering. Give to the poor, and you give to yourself. You will not be allowed to keep what you have refused to give to others.

Through the prayers of the holy hierarch Peter, O Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.



*This week's services and events*

Tuesday, July 25, 2017  
8:30a - Daily Matins  
followed by Study - *The Sacrament*

Wednesday, July 26, 2017  
4:30p - Open Doors  
6:30p - Akathist to St Jacob Netsvetov

Thursday, July 27, 2017  
8:30a - Akathist to St Panteleimon  
7:00p - Study of *The Sacraments*

Saturday, July 29, 2017  
5:30p - Reader's Vespers

Sunday, July 30, 2017  
9:30a - Divine Liturgy  
Fr Sergei Bouteneff, celebrant

*Announcements*

During the of July 31st, Anne and I will be away on vacation in Maine. There will be no daily services or study this week. Should you need the services of a priest while I'm gone, please contact the CT Dean, Fr John Hopko (860-582-3631 : [terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com](mailto:terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com)). Fr Sergei Bouteneff will be the celebrant for the Liturgies.

**Please continue to pray for...**

Please continue to pray for...

Deborah, Robert, Ann, Daria, Dori, John, Evelyn, June, Nina, Joan, John, Alex, Alan, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Glenn, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Dionysian, Elena, Jevon, Ivan and Joscean. And for...John, Jennifer, Nicholas, Isabel, Elizabeth, John, Jordan, Michael, Lee, Eva, Neil, Gina, Joey, Michael, Madelyn, Sofie, Katrina, Olena, and Valeriy.

Memory Eternal to Ann Shillo

**This week we celebrate:**

Glenn PenkofLedbeck who celebrates his birthday and all who take Christine as their Name's Saint.

# The Outer Signs are Only to Remind Us of the Inner Things

Department of **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dcea.oca.org>.



The words in this article's title were written by the Nun Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth. On Tuesday of last week we remember her martyrdom and that of her companion, Nun Barbara.

Because Saint Elizabeth was born into Western European royalty and raised as a Protestant, she struggled to explain her conversion to Orthodoxy to her relatives, among them Queen Victoria. Some of them believed that her Russian husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, had compelled her to convert. Others, apparently, thought that she had been dazzled by the splendor of Orthodox worship. It was to them that she wrote, according to Ludmila Koehler's book "Saint Elisabeth the New Martyr", these words: "You tell me that the outer brilliance of the church charmed me...in that you are mistaken - nothing in the outer signs attracted me. The outer signs are only to remind us of the inner things."

Many people do not understand why churches, vestments and sacred vessels should be beautiful. They consider these things to be unnecessary "trappings." Yet God Himself gave instructions for the building of a richly-furnished tabernacle, and vestments for the "glorious adornment" of the priests, in Exodus 25.

Jesus reproved the disciples when they questioned the "waste" of costly oil used by a woman to anoint Him. They complained that it could have been sold for a good deal of money which would help the poor. But He said, in Matthew 26:11, "For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me." The Church understands from this that when we have the privilege of being with the Lord in church everything from the choir's singing to the well-polished candlestands should be as beautiful as we can make it. Near the end of every Liturgy we ask God to "sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house."

But beautiful things are not ends in themselves. They are there to "remind us of the inner things" as Saint Elizabeth wrote. We are not meant to get caught up in beautiful externals, but we are meant always to remember the glory of the Kingdom of God, toward which the beauty of those externals points us.

Saint Elizabeth understood that, and she also understood what Jesus meant by saying, "For you always have the poor with you." Creating beauty in the church doesn't exempt us from taking care of those in need; we are supposed to do both. The women's monastery founded by Saint Elizabeth served some of the most destitute people in Moscow while at the same time holding services in a beautifully-appointed chapel.

**Troparion - Tone 4**  
Emulating the Lord's self-abasement on the earth,  
You gave up royal mansions to serve the poor and distained,  
Overflowing with compassion for the suffering  
And taking up a martyr's cross,  
In your meekness  
You perfected the Saviour's image within yourself,  
Therefore, with Barbara, entreat Him to save us all, O wise Elizabeth.

We should always be able to answer critics of the "fancy trappings" of Orthodox worship by truthfully saying that we do serve and care for our needy sisters and brothers, but that we also make the church a beautiful place so as to "remind" worshippers of the "inner things." Saint Elizabeth shows us how to do both.