

## Help Me to Fast Joyfully

Blessed is the one whose strength is in you, my God, and in whose heart are your ways. May that strength be mine, yet not mine, but yours perfected in my weakness. May my heart be strong to hope, to love, and to endure.

With fasting and glad my hoping you, my Lord, who are to come again. Fasting hastens my preparation for Your coming, the sole expectation of my days and nights. Fasting makes my body thinner, so that what remains can more easily shine with the spirit. While waiting for You, I wish neither to nourish myself with blood nor to take life - so that the animals may sense the joy of my expectation. But truly, abstaining from food will not save me. Even if I were to eat only the sand from the lake, You would not come to me, unless the fasting penetrated deeper into my soul.

I have come to know through my prayers, that bodily fasting is more a symbol of true fasting, very beneficial for someone who has only just begun to hope in You, and nevertheless very difficult for someone merely practices at. Therefore I have brought fasting and my soul to purge her of many impudent suitors to prepare her for You like a Virgin.

And I have brought fasting into my mind, to expel from it all daydreams about worldly matters and to demolish all the air castles, fabricated from those daydreams. I have brought fasting into my mind, so that you might jettison the world and prepared to receive your wisdom. And I have brought fasting into my heart, so that by means of it my heart might quell all passions and world selfishness. I have brought fasting into my heart, so that heavenly peace might ineffably reign over my heart, when You're stormy spirit encounters it. I prescribed fasting for my tongue, to break itself of the habit of idle chatter and to speak reservedly only those words that clear the way for You to come. And I have imposed fasting on my worries so that it may blow them all away before itself like the wind that blows away the mist, lest they stand like dense fog between me and You, and lest they turned my gaze back to the world. And fasting has brought into my soul tranquility in the face of uncreated and created realms, and humility towards men and creatures. And it has instilled in me courage, the likes of which I never knew when I was armed with every sort of worldly weapon.

What was my hope before I began to fast except merely another story told by others, which passed from mouth to mouth? The story told by others about salvation through prayer and fasting became my own. False fasting accompanies false hope, just as no fasting accompanies hopelessness. But just as a wheel follows behind a wheel, so true fasting follows true hope.

Help me to fast joyfully and to hope joyfully, for You, my most joyful feast, or drawing near to me with Your radiant smile.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, "Prayers by the Lake."



# St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church

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## Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, December 02, 2018

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## Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians

we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God.

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatian 3:28)

## Weekly Services

Tuesdays at 8:30a - Daily Matins  
Wednesdays at 6:00p - Daily Vespers (The Church is open at 4:30p for "Open Doors" - confession, meditation and reflection).  
Thursday at 8:30a - Daily Matins  
Saturday at 5:30p - Great Vespers  
Sunday at 9:30a - Divine Liturgy

**Members of our Parish Council are:**

*Susan Hayes - Council President*

*Susan Egan - Council Treasurer*

*Greg Jankura - Member at Large*

*Glenn PenkoffLedbeck - Council Secretary*

*James Pepitone - Council Vice President*

*Vincent Melesko - Member at Large*

**Pastoral Care - General Information**

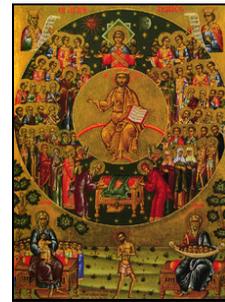
- *Emergency Sick Calls* can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.
- *Anointing in Sickness*: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.
- *Marriages and Baptisms* require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!
- *Funerals* are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

**Announcements**

The parish is hosting the Soup Kitchen this Wednesday, the 5th at 4:30. Please considering offering your help.

Great Vespers with Litya for the Feast of St Nicholas will be held at 6pm at the parish of St Nicholas in Norwich.

On Friday, December 7th, the Kuziak's are hosting a potluck dinner at their home. Dinner will begin at 6pm. Bring your favorite "lenten" dish!

**Saints and Feasts****December 02****Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia**

Saint Porphyrios (Bairaktaris) was born in 1907 with the name Evangelos in Evoia, Greece, in the small village of *Agios Ioannis*

(Saint John). As a child he tended to the sheep in the hills, and it is there that he first read the life of Saint John the Hut-Dweller (Commemorated January 15th) which planted the desire of monasticism in his heart. The spark lit by Saint John was fanned when at the age of seven he overheard a conversation about the divine beauty of the Holy Mountain. Eventually he stowed away on a boat to Thessalonica, hoping from there to reach Mount Athos.

On the evening after his arrival, a group of monks gathered at the harbor to take the boat to Mount Athos. One of them noticed the young Porphyrios and asked him where



*FORCC joins with the Romanian community in Connecticut to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the great unification of the Romanian provinces forming one single country, Romania.*

**On Sunday, December 9, 2018**

**Time: 11:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.**

**At Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church  
285 Alden Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06515**

**Dr. Dragos Hau will present a talk titled  
"The United States support to the  
Great Romania Union on December 1st 1918"**

Dr. Hau is a member of Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in New Haven. He earned a B.S. degree in Physics at University of Iasi, Romania and a Ph.D. degree in Nuclear Engineering at The University of California, Berkeley. He has worked as a health physicist in the nuclear industry in Romania, as a researcher at two U.S. national laboratories and in the nuclear industry in the U.S.

Currently he is working in radiation safety at Yale University, where he interacts with professors, researchers and students for safer use of radiation to advance scientific knowledge. He teaches physics and medical radiation physics classes as an adjunct faculty member at local colleges. He also teaches church school at Holy Transfiguration, and has recently translated Romanian Christmas Carols into English.

SAINT BARBARA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
480 RACEBROOK ROAD - ORANGE, CONNECTICUT

# CHRISTMAS CONCERT

DECEMBER 15, 2018  
7:00 P.M.

FREE ADMISSION  
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

IN CELEBRATION OF THE PARISH'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

FEATURING:

SAINT BARBARA CHOIR  
SAINT BARBARA YOUTH CHOIR

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF STACEY SCHINAS GRIMALDI  
HRANT SHAHINYAN, ACCOMPANIST

JOIN US FOR AN INSPIRING AND BEAUTIFUL EVENING OF SONG AND CELEBRATION

ALL ARE WELCOME

he was going. Porphyrios told the monk that he was going to the Holy Mountain, but lied about the reason as to why. The monk, seeing through this, told Porphyrios to tell any inquirers that he was his nephew and that his mother had passed away, for otherwise he would not be allowed on the mountain since he was still a child.

The monk, whose name was Panteleimon, became his spiritual father and brought him to Kavsoalyvia, a small skete where Panteleimon lived with his brother, the Priest Ioannikos, as fellow monastics. The young Porphyrios loved to carry out the virtue of obedience to his elders, at times being tested by them without even knowing it. When he was fourteen, his elder asked Porphyrios what he was planning to do with his life. The young man told him that he wished to stay on the Mountain. Two or three years later, Porphyrios was tonsured with the name Nikitas.

Once, being obedient to one of his elders against the wishes of the other, Porphyrios went out on a rainy day to collect snails. After hours of filling his sack, and burdened by the wind and cold, Porphyrios found himself suddenly caught in a rockslide and was buried up to his knees. Crying out to the Theotokos he was miraculously delivered, but having suffered badly he developed pleurisy and had to leave Mount Athos to seek medical treatment. The elder who told him to collect the snails profusely apologized, and personally saw Porphyrios off of Mount Athos, kissing him on the forehead in tears.

Porphyrios returned to the village of *Agios Ioannis* in Evoia where he reunited with

his family. He stayed at the monastery of Saint Haralambos, which was near the village Avlonari, until he recovered. His good reputation as a faithful and obedient monk quickly spread and thus caught the attention of the Bishop Fostinis of Kymi. He began to visit Porphyrios frequently, and with the aid of Archbishop Porphyrios III of Sinai (from whom Porphyrios was given his final name), ordained the young monk a deacon and then a priest. Two years later he was made a confessor and would at times hear confessions for multiple days at a time without sleep or food.

His next major ministry was serving as the Chaplain at the Polyclinic Hospital in Athens for roughly 33 years (1940-1973). It was through the well-known Professor of Canon Law, Amilkas Alivizatos, that Porphyrios was assigned to the Church of Saint Gerasimos which was associated with the hospital. During this time he helped many patients spiritually by acting as their father confessor. In addition to his hospital duties, he helped to renew the Church of Saint Nicholas in Kallisia, often having recourse to it during the night to pray by himself or with family.

However, Porphyrios had still been unable to fulfill another dream he shared with his family: founding a monastery. After years of searching, he bought some land upon the top of a hill in Milesi where he later founded The Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration. He remained there for many years before returning to his old cell on Mount Athos where he spent his last years. He departed this life on December 2nd, 1991. Porphyrios was declared a saint by the Ecumenical

## Lives of the Saints

### Prophet Habakkuk



Troparion & Kontakion

The Holy Prophet Habakkuk, the eighth of the Twelve Minor Prophets, was descended from the Tribe of Simeon, and he prophesied around 650 B.C.

The Prophet Habakkuk foresaw the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the Babylonian Captivity and the later return of the captives to their native land. During the war with the Babylonians the prophet withdrew to Arabia, where the following miracle occurred. When he was bringing dinner to the reapers, he met an angel of the Lord, and instantly by the strength of his spirit he was transported to Babylon, where at the time the Prophet Daniel was languishing in prison. The food intended for the reapers assuaged the hunger of the exhausted Prophet Daniel (Dan. 14:33-37).

After the end of the war with

the Babylonians, the Prophet Habakkuk returned to his homeland and died at a great old age. His relics were found at the time of Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), together with the relics of the Prophet Micah (August 14).

The Fourth Ode of the Psalter (“O Lord, I have heard thy report, and was afraid...”) is based on Habakkuk 3:2-19.

## Parish Calendar

### Service and Events

November 15 to December 10, 2018

#### Thursday, November 15

Nativity Fast

#### Sunday, December 2

Akathist to St Prophyrius  
14th Sunday of Luke  
Liturgical and Education Ministry meeting  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, December 3

The Holy Prophet Sophonias (Zephaniah)

#### Tuesday, December 4

Akathist to St John of Damascus  
Akathist to St Barbara  
Barbara the Great Martyr  
Glorification of St Alexander Hotovitzky  
8:30AM Daily Matins  
7:00PM Deanery Meeting

#### Wednesday, December 5

Sabbas the Sanctified  
4:30PM Soup Kitchen  
6:00PM Great Vespers with Litya

“in the flesh.” The Greek word for Incarnation would be sarkothenta, meaning “made flesh.” So the Incarnation of the Word of God is the “enfleshment” of the Word, and here “flesh” means the totality of our human nature. The Word has assumed our human nature and united it to Himself in an indissoluble union that restores the fellowship of God and humankind. The sacramental life of the Church is based on the Incarnation, and the potential for created reality to become a vehicle for spiritual reality. The ultimate manifestation of this is the Eucharist, and the bread and wine “becoming” the Body and Blood of Christ.

Christmas is the time of the year to recall all of this profound reality and recover a genuine Christian vocabulary that expresses our Faith about as well as what is humanly possible. This further means that theological words are not dry and abstract concepts when approached with not only respect, but with awe and wonder. This makes our reading and studying of our theological Tradition exciting – as well as humbling. The words reveal life-transforming truths that if received with prayer and thanksgiving enhance and expand our minds and hearts, so that we might have the “mind of Christ.”

<https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/the-incarnation-a-word-about-the-word1>

vocabulary, at least in its most basic forms. As we continually learn a new technology-driven vocabulary derived from computers to smart phones, so too we need to be alert to the traditional vocabulary of the Church as it has been sanctified over centuries of use. And this vocabulary should be natural to us – not something foreign, exotic and “only for theologians.” It does not take a great deal of effort to be theologically literate, and there is no excuse not to be.

As we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, a key term that must be part of the vocabulary of all Orthodox Christians is Incarnation. The Nativity of Christ is the incarnation of the Son of God as Jesus of Nazareth. Or, we simply speak of The Incarnation, immediately knowing what that word is referring to.

If we turn to the Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, we find the term defined somewhat blandly, in that kind of clipped, compact and objective style found in most dictionaries:

- in•car•na•tion \in-kär-`nā-shən\ n (14c) 1 a (1): the embodiment of a deity or spirit in some earthly form (2) cap: the union of the divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ.

In the Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology, the Orthodox theologian, Father John McGuckin, begins his definition under a fairly long entry of this term as follows:

Incarnation is the concept of the eternal Word of God (the Logos)

“becoming flesh” within history for the salvation of the human race. Incarnation does not simply refer to the act itself (such as the conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin, or the event of Christmas); it stands more generally for the whole nexus of events in the life, teachings, sufferings, and glorification of the Lord, considered as the earthly, embodied activity of the Word [p. 180].

Speaking of expanding our theological vocabulary, we need to further know that we translate the key Greek term Logos as Word, referring of course to the Word of God Who was “with God” and Who “was God,” according to Saint John’s Gospel “in the beginning.” We also refer to the Word of God as the “Son,” “Wisdom” and “Power” of God. It is this Logos/Word of God Who becomes incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth. The key verse that is the classical expression of the Incarnation in the New Testament is found in the Gospel according to Saint John 1:14: “And the Word (Logos) became flesh.”

This profound paradox of the Word-becoming-flesh is found in the well-known kontakion of the Nativity, written by Saint Romanos the Melodist. He begins his wonderful hymn with that paradox captured in the following manner: “Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One; and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One....”

Incarnation is derived from the Latin word

- Norwich

### Thursday, December 6

Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra  
St. Nicholas the Wonderwork  
8:30AM Akathist to St Nicholas

### Friday, December 7

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan  
6:00PM Kuziak Potluck Dinner

### Saturday, December 8

Forefeast of the Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos  
5:30PM Great Vespers

### Sunday, December 9

10th Sunday of Luke  
Fellowship and Stewardship Ministry  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

### Monday, December 10

The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephus  
Dori Kuziak - B

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Malcolm, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Elena, Jevon, the new born Stella Anna, Ivan and Joscean.

And for... Sofie, Katrina,

Olena, Valeriy,

Olga, Tatiana, Dimitri, Alexander and Maxim.

All of our College Students: Alex, Kaitlyn, Jack, Sam, Connor, Nadia, Isaac and Matthew.

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;

All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.

All those who have perished due to hatred and intolerance and all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

*Today we commemorate:*

Prophet Habakkuk (Abbacum, Avakkum—6th c. B.C.). Ven. Afanásii (Athanasius) “the Resurrected One”, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—ca. 1176). Ven. Afanásii, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). Martyr Myrope of Chios (ca. 251). Ss. John, Heraclemon, Andrew,

and Theophilus, of Egypt (4th c.). St. Jesse, Bishop of Tsilkani in Georgia (6th c.). St. Stephen-Urosh, King of Serbia (1367).

## Hymns of the Day

### Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,  
You destroyed hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.  
And when from the depths You raised the dead,  
all the powers of heaven cried out://  
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

### Tone 2 Troparion (Prophet Habakkuk)

We celebrate the memory  
of your Prophet Habakkuk, O Lord;  
through him we beseech You://  
“Save our souls!”

### Tone 2 Kontakion (Resurrection)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior,  
seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb!  
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld  
this and rejoiced with You, //  
and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

### Tone 8 Kontakion (Prophet Habakkuk)

Divinely eloquent Habakkuk, you announced  
to the world the  
coming forth of God from the south; from the  
Virgin.

Standing on the divine watch, you received a  
report from the radiant Angel:  
“You proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ to  
the world!”

Therefore in gladness we cry out to you://  
“Rejoice, splendid adornment of the  
Prophets!”

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

**Prokeimenon. 2nd Tone. Psalm 117.14,18.**

The Lord is my strength and my song.  
Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-17.**

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that

you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

## Wisdom of the Fathers

We may learn from this that when we ask with faith, God does not give something other than what we ask for, but the very same thing. However, when we ask for one thing and receive something else, it is clear that either we did not make a good request or we did not ask with faith.

### ***Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria***

*The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Luke, 11th Century*

The Savior Himself is He Whom we are asked to put on. It is one and the same thing to say, 'Put on the whole armor of God,' and 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' Our belt is truth and our breastplate is righteousness. The Savior is also called both 'truth' and 'righteousness.' On this principle He is also to be understood as the 'Gospel of peace.'

He is Himself the 'shield of faith' and the helmet of salvation. He is the 'sword of the Spirit,' because He is the Word of God, living and efficacious, the utterance of which is stronger than any helmet and sharp on both sides.

### ***St. Jerome***

*Unknown, 5th century*

## Reflection



The Incarnation: A word about the Word!

“He, the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own,

as the instrument through which He was known and in which He dwelt” [Saint Athanasius the Great].

Within the Church we have a biblical/theological vocabulary that is very expressive of what we believe as Christians. These words are drawn primarily from the Bible, the Ecumenical Councils, and the theological writings of the great Church Fathers, such as Saint Athanasius the Great, quoted above. As responsible, believing and practicing Christians, we need to know this