



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Email: stalexis@ dneoca.org

Fr Steven Hosking

Rector

Phone: 860-866-5802 (Message)

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Services Schedule

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

Bulletin for Sunday, July 21, 2019

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 - General Confession;

First Wed of the Month

(The Church is open at 4:30p for "Open Doors" - during fasting seasons or by appointment).

Thursday at 8:30a - Daily Matins

Saturday at 5:30p - Great Vespers

Sunday at 9:30a - Divine Liturgy

Members of our Parish Council are:

Deacon Timothy Skuby - Attached

Greg Jankura - Council President

Michael Kuziak - Council Vice President

Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer

Glenn PenkoffLidbeck - Council Secretary

Kyle Hollis - Member at Large

Roderick Seurattan - 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

As will be explained during "announcements", there will be no services for the Transfiguration held at St. Alexis Church. Please see the invitation from Fr Steven Voytovich below..

Your Eminence, Archbishop Nikon, Fr. John (Chancellor), Fr. John (Dean), and brothers in Christ:

Most Reverend Master, your blessing please. I would like to cordially invite you and your parish faithful to join us in the celebration of our patronal feast day of the Transfiguration of our Lord on Monday/Tuesday, August 5-6 in New Haven. We plan to celebrate Vigil with blessing of fruit for the feast on Monday evening, beginning at 6pm, and the Divine

Liturgy with the blessing of fruit on Tuesday, August 6th, beginning at 9:00am. Weather permitting, we may include a procession after Liturgy. Following the Liturgy all will be invited to a light brunch in our church hall. While we don't need names, if you plan to come with parish faithful, I would be grateful to know approximately how many plan to come. This is simply for brunch preparations. Clergy are warmly invited to serve, with white vestments. You may like to serve for the whole vigil, but for several recent feasts we have also welcomed concelebrants to participate in the Litya during Vespers (w/stole), and again for the Magnification through Gospel reading (with phelonian) during Matins.

We hope you will plan to come and add to the fullness of the celebration of our patronal feast day!

In Christ,

Fr. Steven Voytovich

—

Because of last week's technical difficulties, I have repeated some of the previous announcements.

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I would like to do a study on Metropolitan Tikhon short monograph entitled "Of What Life Do We Speak?", to begin the week of August 12th. This work is available on the OCA web [here](#)

<https://oca.org/holy-synod/statements/his-beatitude-metropolitan-tikhon/of-what-life-do-we-speak-four-pillars-for-the-fulfillment-of-the-apostolic>

A Study Guide is also available for downloading [here](#)

<https://oca.org/study-guide-available>

Please download these documents, print them out if so desired, and we will have a few planned discussions about the Metropolitan's work.

Anne and I will be taking our vacation from Sunday, July 28th through Sunday, August 4th. In the case of necessity, please contact Dn Timothy Skuby at tvskuby@gmail.com ((808) 341-1813). In an emergency, I can still be reached at 860-866-5802.

Fr Sergei Bouteneff will be the celebrant on the 28th and Fr. David Mezynski will be the celebrant on the 4th. Vespers will be held the Saturday's before each Liturgy. Fr Dn Timothy will be the celebrant.

Beginning when I return from vacation in August, Open Doors will only be held only on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month, to be followed by General Confession: except during fasting seasons, when Open Doors will continue to be held every Wednesday. I will be available, by appointment, for all other Wednesdays.

Here is the link to the sermon given on 7/7...
[Worry and the Simply Things](#)

<https://stalexischurch.org/files/sermons/3rd-Sunday.mp3>

Here is the link to the sermon given on 7/14...
[On Obedience and Humility](#)

<https://stalexischurch.org/files/sermons/Obedie-and-Humility.mp3>

Memorandum to all Concerned Persons

From: Archpriest John Hopko

Re: Demolition of the Church Building and the Parish House, Waterbury, CT

Date and Time of Memo: Thursday evening, July 18, 2019

Dear All:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

We have completed all the necessary preliminary tasks, and, thus, both the Church Building (Temple) and Parish House (Rectory) of Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary ("St. Mary's") Orthodox Church, Waterbury, CT, will undergo demolition now, as soon as the City of Waterbury approves our permit application, which is pending. The actual work is likely to take place next week.

This is a difficult moment. However, it also represents a step forward into the future for all involved. We are resolving issues, handling challenges, and, most importantly, putting ourselves in a position to not simply survive in the present, but to thrive in the future. In all of this, we remember that our first task is to be utterly and totally faithful

to the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ. May He bless us and help us. O Lord, as You know, and as You will, have mercy!

With love in Christ,

Fr. John H.

Archpriest John Hopko

CT Dean and Pastoral Administrator of the Waterbury Parish

Saints and Feasts

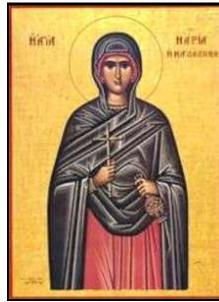


July 21

John and Symeon the Fool for Christ

These Saints were from the city of Edessa in Mesopotamia and flourished during the reign of Justin the Younger (565-578). After

a pilgrimage to Jerusalem they were moved with a desire to forsake the world; they were tonsured monks by the Abbot Nikon, and soon after left the monastery to struggle together in the wilderness near the Dead Sea. When they had passed a little more than thirty years together in silence and prayer, Symeon, having reached the heights of dispassion, departed for Emesa in Syria, where he passed the rest of his life playing the fool, saving many souls from sin while hiding his sanctity with seemingly senseless behavior. He reposed in 570; by the providence of God, John, who had remained in the wilderness, departed soon after.



July 22

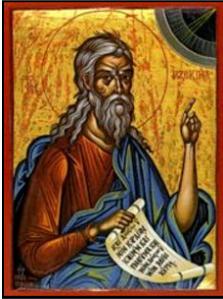
Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles

Saint Mary was from Magdala in Galilee on the Sea of Tiberias, and for this was named

Magdalene. When the

Lord Jesus cast out seven demons from her, from which she had been suffering, she became His faithful and inseparable disciple, following Him and ministering unto Him even to the time of His crucifixion and burial. Then, returning to Jerusalem together with the rest of the Myrrh-bearers, she prepared the fragrant spices for anointing the body of the Lord. And on the Lord's day they came very early to the tomb, even before the Angels appeared declaring the Resurrection of the Lord. When Mary Magdalene saw the stone taken away from the tomb, she ran and proclaimed it to Peter and John. And returning immediately to the tomb and weeping outside, she was deemed worthy to be the first of the Myrrh-bearers to behold the Lord arisen from the dead, and when she fell at His feet, she heard Him say, "Touch Me not." After the Lord's Ascension, nothing certain is known concerning her. Some accounts say that she went to Rome and later returned to Jerusalem, and from there proceeded to Ephesus, where she ended her life, preaching Christ. Although it is sometimes said that Saint Mary Magdalene was the "sinful woman" of the Gospel, this is nowhere stated in the

tradition of the Church, in the sacred hymnology, or in the Holy Gospels themselves, which say only that our Lord cast seven demons out of her, not that she was a fallen woman. "Madeleine" is a form of Magdalene.



July 23

Ezekiel the Prophet

The Prophet Ezekiel ("God is strong") was the son of Buzi and a priest by rank. He was taken captive and brought to Babylon during the reign of Jechonias. In the fifth year of this captivity, about 594 or 593 B.C., he began to prophesy. Having prophesied for about twenty-eight years, he was murdered, it is said, by the tribe of Gad, because he reproached them for their idolatry. His book of prophecy, divided into forty-eight chapters, is ranked third among the greater Prophets. It is richly filled with mystical imagery and marvelous prophetic visions and allegories, of which the dread Chariot of Cherubim described in the first Chapter is the most famous; in the "gate that was shut," through which the Lord alone entered, he darkly foretold of the Word's Incarnation from the Virgin (44:1-3); through the "dry bones" that came to life again (37:1-14), he prophesied both of the restoration of captive Israel, and the general resurrection of our race.

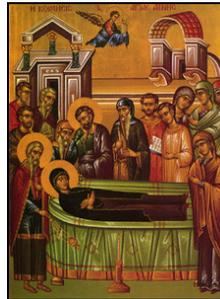


July 24

Christina the Great Martyr of Tyre

Saint Christina was from Tyre in Syria, the daughter of a pagan named Urban. Enlightened in her heart to believe in Christ, she

broke her father's idols, made of gold and silver, and distributed the pieces to the poor. When her father learned this, he punished her ruthlessly, then cast her into prison. The rulers subjected her to imprisonments, hunger, torments, the cutting off of her breasts and tongue, and finally impalement, in the year 200, during the reign of the Emperor Septimius Severus.



July 25

Dormition of St. Anna, mother of the Theotokos

According to tradition, Anna, the ancestor of God, lived for sixty-nine years, and her spouse Joachim, for eighty;

according to one account, Saint Joachim died two years before Saint Anna. The Theotokos had been orphaned of both her parents already when she was eleven years of age, when she was living in the Temple (see Sept. 8 and Nov. 21). Saint Anna

is invoked for conceiving children, and for help in difficult childbirth.

Parish Calendar

Service and Events

July 21 to July 29, 2019

Sunday, July 21

5th Sunday of Matthew
Evangelism and Outreach Ministry meeting
Melody Sacotas - B
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 22

Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles

Tuesday, July 23

Phocas the Holy Martyr, Bishop of Sinope
8:30AM Daily Matins

Wednesday, July 24

Christina the Great Martyr of Tyre
Akathist to New Martyr Maximus
Glenn PenkoffLidbeck
4:30PM Open Doors
6:00PM Evening Prayers

Thursday, July 25

Repose of Sonja Geyer
Dormition of St. Anna, mother of the Theotokos
Paul Konstantino
8:30AM Daily Matins

Friday, July 26

Paraskeve the Righteous Martyr of Rome
Akathist to St Jacob Netsvetov
Akathist to Venerable Moses of Carpathians
Repose of St. Jacob Netsvetov
Samuel Boyd

Saturday, July 27

Repose of Ann Kiernan
Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer
Akathist to St Panteleimon
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, July 28

Buildings and Grounds Ministry Meeting
6th Sunday of Matthew
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 29

No Services
The Holy Martyr Callinicus
Chobor

Prayers, Intersessions and Commemorations



William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Vincent, James, Luke, Aaron, Kathryn, Anastasia, Malcolm, Veronica, Richard, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Susanne

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

Many years! to Marie Christine (Mary Magdalene) and Christine Jankura (Christina the Great Martyr) on the occasion of their Name's Day and to Glenn PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of his birthday. And also to Anne Hosking, Ann Pavlik and Marlene Melesko on the occasion of their Name's Day (Repose of St Anna).

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 Ezekiel (6th c. B.C.). Ven. Simeon of Emessa, Fool-for-Christ, and his fellow ascetic, Ven. John (ca. 590). Ven. Onuphry (Onuphrius) the Silent, and Ven. Onísim, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—12th-13th c.).

Hymns of the Day

Tone 4 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

When the women Disciples of the Lord learned from the Angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the Apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!"

Tone 4 Troparion (*for Saints Simeon and John*)

O God of our Fathers, always act with kindness towards us; take not Your mercy from us, but guide our lives in peace// through the prayers of Venerable Simeon and John!

Tone 2 Troparion (*Prophet Ezekiel*)

We celebrate the memory of Your Prophet Ezekiel, O Lord; through him, we beseech You:// save our souls!

Tone 4 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell,

and as Master, //
He has risen on the third day!

Tone 2 Kontakion (*for Saints Simeon and John*)

Let us praise the venerable Simeon
as an equal to the angels,
for he walked in the flesh upon the earth as a
bodiless angel
shining forth to all as an example of the
virtues;
and with him let us honor his companion,
the ever memorable and God-bearing father
John, //
for they ceaselessly pray to the Lord for us
with faith and love!

Tone 4 Kontakion (*Prophet Ezekiel*)

You have been revealed as a Prophet of God,
wondrous Ezekiel,
proclaiming to all the incarnation of the Lord,
the Lamb and Creator, //
the Son of God, Who has ever revealed
Himself.

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

5th Sunday of Matthew
The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to
the Romans 10:1-10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

Gospel Reading

5th Sunday of Matthew
The Reading is from Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one would pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here

to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.

Wisdom of the Fathers

"And going about," he says, "to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. And these things he says to show, that it was from a petulancy and love of power that they erred, rather than from ignorance, and that not even this righteousness from the deeds of the Law did they establish. (Matt. xxi. 38; John. xii. 19, 42.) For saying "going about to establish" is what one would do to show this. And in plain words indeed he has not stated this (for he has not said, that they fell short of both righteousnesses), but he has given a hint of it in a very judicious manner...For if Christ be "the end of the Law," he that hath not Christ, even if he seem to have that righteousness, hath it not. But he that hath Christ, even though he have not fulfilled the Law aright, hath received the whole. For the end of the physician's art is health.

As then he that can make whole, even though he hath not the physician's art, hath everything; but he that knows not how to heal, though he seem to be a follower of the art, comes short of everything: so is it in the case of the Law and of faith...For what was the object of the Law? To make man righteous. But it had not the power, for no one fulfilled it. This then was the end of the Law and to this it looked throughout, and for this all its parts were made, its feasts, and commandments, and sacrifices, and all besides, that man might be justified. But this end Christ gave a fuller accomplishment of through faith.(*). Be not then afraid, he says, as if transgressing the Law in having come over to the faith. For then dost thou transgress it, when for it thou dost not believe Christ.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 17 on Romans 10, 4th Century

Now, should any one say, "And wherefore did Christ fulfill the devils' request, suffering them to depart into the herd of swine?" this would be our reply, that He did so, not as yielding to them, but as providing for many objects thereby.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 28 on Matthew 8, 4th Century

Reflection



5th Sunday after Pentecost - Orthodox Homily on Gadarene Demoniacs

Our Lord Jesus Christ has numerous encounters with those who have been possessed (indwelt) by

the demons, whom the demons torment and control, forcing them to do their bidding and destroying themselves and others, ultimately leading to their death, both spiritual and physical. Today's Gospel is one such account.

Now, there are two errors that we can commit in our thinking as regards the demonic: One is that we teach others that demons and those who worship Satan are just scary but innocent fun, that there's really no such thing as witches, demons, and the devil himself; the other is to attribute too much power to Satan and his minions, the demons, and those who serve them—in other words, to be afraid of them and attribute more power to them than to God.

Holy Tradition clearly teaches us that Satan and his demons are a spiritual force to be reckoned with, that we have to contend with, fight and struggle against. St. Paul reminds us of this when he says, "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this age, against

spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

The two men, the Gergesene demoniacs, are possessed by a whole legion of demons who torment them. We read, that the men are violent, "exceedingly fierce," so that no one could "pass that way." Appropriately, these men live among the tombs because they are truly among the living dead. They are enslaved by the demons and their God-given faculties, the beautiful nous (eye of the soul) that God placed in them has been darkened, obscured by the spiritual confusion and paralysis that surrounds them by this host of demons.

We don't know how they came to be possessed. There are many sins and practices that can give the devil a foothold. All of us can come under demonic influence. Some people actually come to be possessed by the demons if they do not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them instead.

Likewise, certain sinful practices can make a foothold for demonic influence or possession as well: pornography, drugs, even video games when played to excess can altar one's reality and become an entry point for demonic activity.

With regard to demonic possession, we have no reason to believe that it does not continue in our own day; in fact, we can be sure that it does. The same demons active in Christ's day, are still active today and will be until the Second Coming of Christ.

And while medical science may treat the symptoms of demonic possession—some of which may be mistakenly labeled under

the generic title of “mental illness,” it cannot cure that possession or influence with drugs. There is a mystery here: What we do know is that only the healing in Christ through the new life in Him, the exorcism of the demons, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and our continued “Yes” to God’s healing work in our lives, can drive them away.

Exorcism is the first part of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and a necessary precursor to putting on Christ. We expel the demons and their influence from the neophyte (the newly illumined) so that Christ may come and make His abode with him through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at Chrismation.

Christ came that we may be free of the demons, free of their control and influence, that we may not be enslaved by them. This freedom is given us by virtue of our choosing life with Him who is the Life over the living death that Satan and his minions give those whom they enslave. Christ came to equip us by the Holy Spirit to do battle against those spiritual forces of wickedness so that we may overcome our passions and their temptations that wage war against our life with God and so that those footholds of the demons may be healed by Christ God, the Great Physician of our souls and bodies.

As Orthodox, we’re not afraid of the demons: “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (I Jn. 4:4), St. John assures us. At the same time, as Orthodox we don’t downplay the reality of the evil we are fighting against. Satan is described by Christ as the “murderer of man.” He and his demons are bent on our destruction. We certainly don’t pretend that witches

and demons and ghosts are innocent fun or make them look ‘cute’, nor do we participate in activities that may make others think that this is what we believe as Orthodox Christians.

As for the Gergesene demoniacs, Christ cast out those demons and sent them into a herd of swine and they drowned at sea. The men went their way, freed of their demonic enslavement and proclaimed through the whole city what great things Jesus had done for them. The destruction of the herd of swine shows us the incomparable value of human life, whose salvation, as the Orthodox Study Bible puts it, “is worth every sacrifice.”

While those indwelt by the Holy Spirit may not be indwelt by the demons, their influence can still wreck havoc on our lives IF we let them. We must exercise great discipline and vigilance to fight against them through our “No!” to sin and our “Yes!” to God, which is manifested in the cross of our daily repentance and our humbling ourselves through sacramental confession. By keeping short accounts with God in His Church, we allow Christ God to step in to heal those places most susceptible to the influence of the prince of this world and enable us to gain the victory by God’s grace.

This is the good news inherent in today’s Gospel. There is nothing in this world or of this world that can destroy us if we avail ourselves of our God-given life in Him, struggling for healing from our passions and learning to recognize the dangers of those habits and practices so often accepted or even encouraged these days in our

culture, but which lead us away from Him who is life and who calls us to holiness, being transformed into His likeness more and more. This is the journey of salvation from this world and the prince of this world that Christ God leads us on. Remember: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Fr. Robert Miclean
Holy Archangels Orthodox Mission
Sunday, 28 July 2013

