



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Attached

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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, February 23, 2020

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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 - 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:**

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large  
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary  
Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer  
Glenn PenkoffLidbeck - Council President  
Kyle Hollis - Member at Large  
Roderick Seurattan - Council Vice President

**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****Sunday, March 1st - Forgiveness Sunday**

Forgiveness Vespers will begin at 12pm, followed by the Rite of Forgiveness. This is the beginning of the Lenten Fast.

This Sunday is also Mission Sunday. OCMC Coin Boxes have been set out if you would like to collect your "loose" change for donation.

**CWS Hygiene Kits**

As part of the parish's Lenten Outreach, we will be collecting supplies for distribution in hygiene kits.

**Supplies needed:**

One hand towel measuring approximately 15"x 28" to 16"x 32"

(no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)

One washcloth

One wide-tooth comb removed from the package

One finger nail or toe nail clipper removed from the package

One bath size bar of soap in the wrapper

One toothbrush in the package

Note: All of the items MUST be new.

Put the above contents into a 1 gallon zip lock bag. Remove the excess air from the bag and seal before boxing. Do not add any extra items or toothpaste. A tube of extended expiration date toothpaste will be added to each Hygiene Kit just prior to its journey.

Value: \$15

Processing fee: \$2 per Kit

\*Do not enclose money or religious articles inside the kits or in the shipping boxes.

*Please bring your donations to church no later than March 15.*

**Used Coats** will also be collected for distribution at *Safe Futures*. Clean used coats and jackets can be dropped off in the boxes found downstairs.

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Vincent, James, Luke, Aaron, Kathryn, Veronica, Richard, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Susanne  
All of our College Students: Alex, Sam, Nadia, Isaac, Jack 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.

Many Years! to Connor Kuziak on the occasion of his birthday.

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Today we commemorate:

**SUNDAY OF MEATFARE - Sunday of the Last Judgment.** Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (167). Ven. Polycarp of Briansk (1620-1621). Ven. John, Antiochus, Antoninus, Moses, Zebinas, Polychronius, Moses, and Damian, Ascetics, of the Syrian deserts (5th c.). Ven. Alexander, founder of the Monastery of the “Unsleeping Ones” (ca. 430). Ven. Damian of Esphigmenou (Mt. Athos —1280). Monastic Martyr Damian of Philotheou (1568).

## Parish Calendar

### Services and Events

February 23 to March 2, 2020

#### Sunday, February 23

Buildings and Grounds Ministry Meeting  
Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)  
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, February 24

Connor Kuziak  
First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist

#### Tuesday, February 25

Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople  
8:30AM Daily Matins  
9:00AM Bible Study

### **Wednesday, February 26**

Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza

### **Thursday, February 27**

Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn  
Procopius the Confessor of Decapolis  
8:30AM Akathist to St Raphael of Brooklyn

### **Friday, February 28**

Basil the Confessor

### **Saturday, February 29**

Cheesefare Saturday  
5:30PM Great Vespers

### **Sunday, March 1**

Forgiveness Sunday  
Mission Sunday  
Liturgical and Education Ministry meeting  
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
12:00PM Forgiveness Vespers

### **Monday, March 2**

Akathist to St Chad (Ceadda)  
Hesychius the Martyr

## **Saints and Feasts**

### **February 23**

#### **Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)**

The foregoing two parables -- especially that of the Prodigal Son -- have presented to us God's extreme goodness and love for man. But lest certain persons, putting their confidence in this alone, live carelessly, squandering upon sin the time given them to work out their salvation, and death

suddenly snatch them away, the most divine

Fathers have appointed this day's feast commemorating Christ's impartial Second Coming, through which we bring to mind that God is not only the Friend of man, but also the most righteous Judge, Who recompenses to each according to his deeds.

It is the aim of the holy Fathers, through bringing to mind that fearful day, to rouse us from the slumber of carelessness unto the work of virtue, and to move us to love and compassion for our brethren. Besides this, even as on the coming Sunday of Cheese-fare we commemorate Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight -- which exile is the beginning of life as we know it now -- it is clear that today's is reckoned the last of all feasts, because on the last day of judgment, truly, everything of this world will come to an end.

All foods, except meat and meat products, are allowed during the week that follows this Sunday.

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### **February 23**

#### **Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna**

This apostolic and prophetic man, and model of faith and truth, was a disciple of John the Evangelist, successor of Bucolus (Feb. 6), and teacher of Irenaeus (Aug. 23). He was an old man and full of days when the fifth persecution was raised against the Christians under Marcus Aurelius. When

his pursuers, sent by the ruler, found Polycarp, he commanded that they be given

something to eat and drink, then asked them to give him an hour to pray; he stood and prayed, full of grace, for two hours, so that his captors repented that they had come against so venerable a man. He was brought by the Proconsul of Smyrna into the stadium and was commanded, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, 'Away with the atheists.'" By atheists, the Proconsul meant the Christians. But Polycarp, gazing at the heathen in the stadium, waved his hand towards them and said, "Away with the atheists." When the Proconsul urged him to blaspheme against Christ, he said: "I have been serving Christ for eighty-six years, and He has wronged me in nothing; how can I blaspheme my King Who has saved me?" But the tyrant became enraged at these words and commanded that he be cast into the fire, and thus he gloriously expired about the year 163. As Eusebius says, "Polycarp everywhere taught what he had also learned from the Apostles, which also the Church has handed down; and this alone is true" (*Eccl. Hist.*, Book IV, ch. 14,15).

## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)**

Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown  
strength with

His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.  
He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world//  
great mercy.

### **Tone 1 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)**

When You, O God, shall come to earth with  
glory,  
all things shall tremble,  
and the river of fire shall flow before Your  
judgment seat;  
the books shall be opened, and the hidden  
things disclosed;  
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, //  
and make me worthy to stand at Your right  
hand, O Righteous Judge!

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him  
in the highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

#### **Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 146.5;134.3.**

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.  
Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

**The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2.**

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

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## Gospel Reading

**Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)  
The Reading is from Matthew 25:31-46**

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then

the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

He indicates the dispositions of each, calling the one kids, the other sheep, that He might indicate the unfruitfulness of the one, for no fruit will come from kids; and the great profit from the other, for indeed from sheep great is the profit, as well from the milk, as from the wool, and from the young, of all which things the kid is destitute.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily on Matt. XXV, 4th Century*

For when one has pity on the poor, he lends to God; and he who gives to the least gives to God--sacrifices spiritually to God an odour of a sweet smell.

### **St. Cyprian of Carthage**

*The Lord's Prayer, 33. B#41, p.102, 3rd century*

## Beyond the Sermon



The Syrian Penitential Spirit The Witness of Saints Ephraim and Isaac (Part 3)

Similarly, the third quality—in Greek, hypomone, meaning

“patience”— is best understood as arising from humility. St. Isaac perfectly states this connection in the same Homily 42: “in proportion to your humility you are given patience in your woes” (212). In other words, just as humility incarnates sophrosyne, so it gives rise to patience. In the same way that—in the first sentence—sloth and crazed busyness produced the condition for the hunger to control things (philarchia), so, too, sophrosyne and humility together yield patience as their fruit. But note again the difference in movement between the two sentences. In sentence 1, the sequence may rightly be characterized as vicious: whipsawing from sloth to busyness, then to domination and submission. Here, in sentence 2, the sequence is incarnative, with each quality—or pathway—giving itself wholly to the actualization of the next. Sophrosyne gives itself into humility, and together they become incarnated in and as patience. This incarnative movement thus perfectly expresses the action of kenotic, or self-emptying, love. Thus, the fourth and final quality of this beautiful spirit is stated: agape, or love. A later homily of St. Isaac’s possesses this sentence: “Love is the offspring of knowledge, and knowledge is the offspring of the health of soul; health of soul is a strength which comes from prolonged patience” (62:298). Isaac’s sequence here thus interestingly matches Ephraim’s sequence in the prayer, for in both, the endpoint of love fulfills the whole sequence. Even the differences between Isaac’s and Ephraim’s formulations can be understood as harmonic and not divergent. For St. Ephraim’s sophrosyne is a superb reading of St. Isaac’s “health of soul,” while

St. Isaac's "knowledge" perfectly fits St. Ephraim's "humility of mind." And again, the sequence of the second sentence is the movement of incarnation and kenotic love, the divine becoming always more fully realized in our flesh as we become always more divinized in God. Then the prayer's third and final sentence emerges. Here St. Ephraim prays that God give him the sight to see fully his own transgressions. We may understand this sight as completing the prayer's movement into incarnation. That is, St. Ephraim prays that he may see himself fully in the way that God sees him: in all his sinfulness. St. Ephraim also prays that he be given not to judge his brother in this awareness of his own sinfulness, not to blame another even slightly for his own sin. And in so praying, St. Ephraim makes the second great sentence of the prayer become fully incarnate. To be able to withstand—for even an instant—fully knowing one's own sinfulness without even remotely blaming another for any of that sinfulness: here is the heart and mind of the Orthodox Lent. For such knowledge would be akin to seeing ourselves in the way God beholds us: seeing our transgressions and never judging another. To Syriac Orthodoxy, such seeing is the supreme end of all ascetic labors. For such knowledge, Saints Isaac and Ephraim are saying, would yield in us the immense fruitfulness of actual loving: of God and of one's brother or sister in God. In Homily 62, St. Isaac asks, "What is knowledge?" and then answers: "The perception of life immortal." "And what is life immortal? Consciousness in God" (298). In this way, then, the third sentence of St. Ephraim's prayer moves the penitent's mind into the mind of God, and we achieve what St. Paul

calls the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). And from within the mind of Christ, St. Ephraim beholds Christ's eternity: "for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages." From this perspective, St. Ephraim's prayer—"Grant me to see my own transgressions"—can be understood to incarnate, in and as repentance, what Our Lord prays in John 17: "I am no longer in this world . . . and I come to You, Holy Father" (John 17:11). To achieve genuine sight of one's sinfulness without blaming others is to be with God. "Now I come to You," Our Lord continues, "and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Note very carefully: as Christ says this great priestly prayer, He is "no longer in this world" at the very moment He is speaking "these things . . . in the world." In other words, this prayer of Christ's is spoken at the boundary between worlds, where heaven and earth touch, combining within Himself the life here and the life there. And at this boundary, Christ gives all His joy to be incarnated and made full in us. Just so, in its final phrase the Prayer of St. Ephraim achieves the blessedness of heaven—and the penitent gives all this blessedness to his brother in the action of surrendering all his judgment of him. Here is the fullest incarnation of humility and patience; here is the deepest heart of Orthodox Lent.

Sheehan, Donald. *The Grace of Incorruption: The Selected Essays of Donald Sheehan on Orthodox Faith and Poetics* (pp. 19-20). Paraclete Press. Kindle Edition.