



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Services Schedule

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

Bulletin for Sunday, February 28, 2021

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)

Members of our Parish Council are:

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary
Carolyn Neiss - Vice President
Marlene Melesko - Council Member at Large
Kyle Hollis - President
Roderick Seurattan - Treasurer

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

Soul Saturday

We will hold Liturgy for the Departed on Mar 6th. If you have any departed persons that you would like commemorated during this service, please forward their names to me.

Seminarian Support

Please get to me the number of Lenten books you would like to purchase in support of seminarians. I would like to place the bulk order by the end of next week. While the books are \$14 a piece, please don't worry about payment until I have a complete order.

Confessions

Please schedule a date and time with me for confession. I am willing to work with your schedules as much as possible, but I need to provide me with some options.

Stewardship Forms

Another appeal to have you return your stewardship forms as soon as possible. Thus far, I have received just six... We are also behind on our monetary contributions, which is creating a cash flow problem in meeting our bills.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Archpriest Dennis,
Archpriest Michael,
Deacon Timothy, Evelyn,
Katheryn, Anne, Aaron,
Veronica, Richard,
Nancy, Susanne, Carol,
Alexander, Gail, Vincent,
Nina, Ellen, Maureen,
Elizabeth, Christopher,
Joshua, Jennifer, Petra,
Olivia, Jessica, Sean,
Sarah, Justin, Nona,
Arnold, Michael, Kirk,
Carol-Anne, Anthony, Natasha, Gene, John,
John, Michael, Kelley, Krisha, Alix, Natalie,
Edward, Nathan, Caila, Julianna, Paul, John,
Jacob, Lynn, Anna, Richard, Robert, Dorothy

Memory Eternal! Archpriest Eugene,
Archpriest Joseph, Dana.

Many Years! to Michael and Zachary Neiss on the occasion of their birthday.

- 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, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 5.
Ven. Basil the Confessor, Companion of Ven. Procopius at Decapolis (750). Bl. Nikolai, Fool-for-Christ at Pskov (1576). Hieromartyr Proterius, Patriarch of Alexandria (457). Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos in Pamphylia (250). Ven. Marina (Marana), Cyra (Kyra) and Domnica (Domnina), of Syria (ca. 450). Venerable Domnica (ca. 450). John Cassian the Roman (435).

Parish Calendar

Parish Calendar

February 28 to March 8, 2021

Sunday, February 28

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, March 1

The Holy Righteous Martyr Eudocia the Samaritan

Tuesday, March 2

Akathist to St Chad (Ceadda)
Hesychius the Martyr
8:30AM Daily Matins followed by Lenten Reflection

Wednesday, March 3

Michael and Zachary Neiss
The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus, and Basiliscus
6:30PM General Confession

Thursday, March 4

Gerasimus the Righteous of Jordan
8:30AM Daily Matins
6:30PM Daily Vespers followed by Lent Reflection

Friday, March 5

Conon the Gardener

Saturday, March 6

Saturday of Souls
9:00AM Divine Liturgy
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, March 7

Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)

9:15AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, March 8

Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia

Saints and Feasts

February 28

Righteous John Cassian the Confessor

Note: If it is not a leap year the hymns of Saint John are transferred to the 28th.

This Saint was born about the year 350, and was, according to some, from Rome, according to others, from Dacia Pontica (Dobrogea in present-day Romania). He was a learned man who had first served in the military. Later, he forsook this life and became a monk in Bethlehem with his friend and fellow-ascetic, Germanus of Dacia Pontica, whose memory is also celebrated today. Hearing the fame of the great Fathers of Scete, they went to Egypt about the year 390; their meetings with the famous monks of Scete are recorded in Saint John's *Conferences*. In the year 403 they went to Constantinople, where Cassian was ordained deacon by Saint John Chrysostom; after the exile of Saint Chrysostom, Saints Cassian and Germanus went to Rome with letters to Pope Innocent I in defence of the exiled Archbishop of Constantinople. There Saint Cassian was ordained priest, after which he went to Marseilles, where he established the famous

monastery of Saint Victor. He reposed in peace about the year 433.

The last of his writings was *On the Incarnation of the Lord, Against Nestorius*, written in 430 at the request of Leo, the Archdeacon of Pope Celestine. In this work he was the first to show the spiritual kinship between Pelagianism, which taught that Christ was a mere man who without the help of God had avoided sin, and that it was possible for man to overcome sin by his own efforts; and Nestorianism, which taught that Christ was a mere man used as an instrument by the Son of God, but was not God become man; and indeed, when Nestorius first became Patriarch of Constantinople in 428, he made much show of persecuting the heretics, with the exception only of the Pelagians, whom he received into communion and interceded for them to the Emperor and to Pope Celestine.

The error opposed to Pelagianism but equally ruinous was Augustine's teaching that after the fall, man was so corrupt that he could do nothing for his own salvation, and that God simply predestined some men to salvation and others to damnation. Saint John Cassian refuted this blasphemy in the thirteenth of his *Conferences*, with Abbot Chairemon, which eloquently sets forth, at length and with many citations from the Holy Scriptures, the Orthodox teaching of the balance between the grace of God on one hand, and man's efforts on the other, necessary for our salvation.

Saint Benedict of Nursia, in Chapter 73 of his Rule, ranks Saint Cassian's *Institutes* and *Conferences* first among the writings of the monastic fathers, and commands that

they be read in his monasteries; indeed, the Rule of Saint Benedict is greatly indebted to the *Institutes* of Saint John Cassian. Saint John Climacus also praises him highly in section 105 of Step 4 of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, on Obedience.

March 02

Hesychius the Martyr

Holy martyr Hesychius lived during the reign of king Maximian in 302. He was the first and the leader in the royal palace and the Senate, because he was magistrianus by office. When Maximian ordered that all Christians who were royal soldiers ought to be deprived of their belts (which were a sign of their royal merit) and live as civilians and without honour, many Christians preferred to live without any outward honour due to this illegal order than to be honoured and lose their soul. St. Hesychius was numbered with these Christians as well. When the king heard this, he ordered that the saint ought to be stripped of the expensive clothes, which he used to wear, and be dressed with a shabby mantle without sleeves woven from hair and to be as disgraced and disdained as to consort with women.

When this had been carried out, the king invited him and asked him: "Aren't you ashamed, Hesychius, that you lost the honour and office of magistrianus and that you have been debased to this kind of life? Or maybe you don't know that the Christians, whose way of life you preferred, have no power to restore you to your

previous great honour and office?" The saint replied: "Your honour, o king, is temporary but the honour and glory which Christ gives is eternal and without end." Because of these words the king got angry and ordered his men to tie a great millstone around the saint's neck and then to throw him in the middle of river Orontus, which lies in Coele Syria and which is commonly called Oronge. Thus, the blessed man received the crown of martyrdom from the Lord.

March 03

The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus, and Basiliscus

The Martyrs, who were from Amasia, were fellow soldiers and kinsmen of Saint Theodore the Tyro (see Feb. 17). They were betrayed to the Governor Asclepiodotus as Christians, during the reign of Diocletian (284-305). After many torments, Eutropius and Cleonicus were crucified; Basiliscus was not slain together with them, but was shut up in prison, in the hope that with time he might change his mind and sacrifice to the idols. He was beheaded on May 22; see also the account on that day.

March 04

Gerasimus the Righteous of Jordan

This Saint, who was from Lycia in Asia Minor, lived there for many years as a hermit, and then went to Palestine. There he built the great Lavra by the Jordan River, where a lion served him with great

obedience and devotion. One day the lion came looking for Gerasimus that he might feed him, but his disciples took the lion to the place where they had buried the Saint shortly before. The lion fell at the Saint's grave and, after roaring with grief, died at that very place. Saint Gerasimus reposed in 475.

March 05

Conon the Gardener

This saint lived during the reign of emperor Decius in 251. He came from the town of Nazareth. He left his hometown and went to the city of Mandron, in the province of Pamphylia. There he stayed at a place called Karmela or Karmena cultivating a garden which he used to water and plant with various vegetables. From this garden he obtained what is necessary for life. He had such an upright and simple mind that, when he met those who wished to arrest him and saw that they greeted him, he also greeted in return from the bottom of his soul and heart. When they told him that governor Publius called the saint to go to him, the saint answered with simplicity: "What does the governor need me, since I am a Christian? Let him call those who think the way he does and have the same religion with him." So, the blessed man was tied and brought to the governor, who tried to move him to sacrifice to the idols. But the saint sighed from the bottom of his heart, cursed the tyrant and confirmed his faith in Christ with his confession, saying that it is not possible to be moved from it even though he might be tortured cruelly. So, for this

reason they nailed his feet and made the saint run in front of the governor's coach. But the saint fainted in the street. Having fallen on his knees, he prayed and, thus, he commended his holy soul to the hands of God.

March 06

Saturday of Souls

Through the Apostolic Constitutions (Book VIII, ch. 42), the Church of Christ has received the custom to make commemorations for the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after their repose. Since many throughout the ages, because of an untimely death in a faraway place, or other adverse circumstances, have died without being deemed worthy of the appointed memorial services, the divine Fathers, being so moved in their love for man, have decreed that a common memorial be made this day for all pious Orthodox Christians who have reposed from all ages past, so that those who did not have particular memorial services may be included in this common one for all. Also, the Church of Christ teaches us that alms should be given to the poor by the departed one's kinsmen as a memorial for him.

Besides this, since we make commemoration tomorrow of the Second Coming of Christ, and since the reposed have neither been judged, nor have received their complete recompense (Acts 17:31; II Peter 2:9; Heb. 11:39-40), the Church rightly commemorates the souls today, and trusting in the boundless mercy

of God, she prays Him to have mercy on sinners. Furthermore, since the commemoration is for all the reposed together, it reminds each of us of his own death, and arouses us to repentance.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful,
praise and worship the
Word,
co-eternal with the
Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation

from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in
the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 3 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O
Father;
and among sinners I have scattered the riches
which You gave me.
And now I cry to You as the Prodigal:
"I have sinned before You, O merciful Father;
receive me as a penitent, //
and make me as one of Your hired servants!"

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise

Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 5th Tone. Psalm 11.7,1.

You, O Lord, shall keep us and preserve us.
Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has
failed.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20.

Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your

body and in your spirit which belong to God.

Gospel Reading

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The Reading is from Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe,

and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Wisdom of the Fathers

But if he had despaired of his life, and, ... had remained in the foreign land, he would not have obtained what he did obtain, but would have been consumed with hunger, and so have undergone the most pitiable death: ...

St. John Chrysostom

AN EXHORTATION TO THEODORE AFTER HIS FALL, 4th Century

... but since he repented, and did not despair, he was restored, even after such great corruption, to the same splendour as before, and was arrayed in the most beautiful robe, and enjoyed greater honours than his brother who had not fallen.

St. John Chrysostom

AN EXHORTATION TO THEODORE AFTER HIS FALL, 4th Century

Beyond the Sermon



Sermon on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son by St. John of Kronstadt
The Prodigal Son Orthodox Icon
I will arise and go to my father (Luke 15:18)

Brethren! All our attention must be

centered on the parable of the Prodigal Son. We all see ourselves in it as in a mirror. In a few words the Lord, the knower of hearts, has shown in the person of one man how the deceptive sweetness of sin separates us from the truly sweet life according to God. He knows how the burden of sin on the soul and body, experienced by us, impels us by the action of divine grace to return, and how it actually does turn many again

to God, to a virtuous life. We will repeat it and discuss how necessary and easy it is for a sinner to return to God.

One man had two sons. When they came of age, the younger one said to the father, "Give me my rightful share of the estate." And the father divided the property. The elder son did not take his portion and remained with the father, a sign that he loved his father with a pure heart, and he found satisfaction in fulfilling his will (neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment), and to depart from him he considered madness. But the younger, in a few days, having gathered all his property, left his father's house for a distant country where he wasted all his substance, living dissolutely. From all this it is evident that he did not have a good and pure heart, that he was not sincerely disposed towards his good father, that he was burdened by his supervision and he dreamed it better to live according to the will of his own depraved heart. But let us hear what happened to him in exile from his father's house. When he had spent everything in the foreign country in a disorderly manner, a great famine came upon that country and he began to be in need. He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have been happy to fill his stomach with the food (acorns and chaff) that the swine ate; but no one gave him any. Having come to his senses, he said, "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and I will say unto him: Father! I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy

to be called thy son. Receive me as one of thy hired servants." He arose and went to his father. When he was still afar off, his father saw him and had compassion on him and went to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him. He forgave him and led him to his house, dressed him in the finest clothes and made a feast in honor of his return. And so the lost son entered again into the love of his father.

Brethren! This is how the heavenly Father acts toward us. He does not bind us to Himself by force if we, having a depraved and ungrateful heart, do not want to live according to His commandments, but He allows us to depart from Him, and to know by experience how dangerous it is to live according to the will of one's heart, to know what an agonizing lack of peace and tranquility tries the soul, devoted to passions, by what shameful food it is nourished. For what can be more shameful than the food of the passions? God forbid that anyone remain forever in this separation from God. To be far from God is true and eternal perdition. They that remove themselves from Thee shall perish (Ps. 72:27), says the holy king and prophet David. It is necessary without fail to turn from the pernicious way of sin towards God with the whole heart. Let everyone be assured that God will see his sincere conversion, will meet him with love, and will receive him, as before, as one of His children.

Have you sinned? Say in your heart with full determination, I will arise and go to my Father, and in fact, go to Him. And just as you manage to say these words in your heart; just as you decide firmly to live

according to His will, He will immediately see that you are returning to Him. He is always not far from every one of us (Acts 17:27), and will immediately pour His peace into your heart. It will be suddenly so light and pleasant for you, as it is, for example, for a bankrupt debtor when they forgive his debts, or as pleasant as it is to a poor man whom they suddenly dress in fine clothes or offer a seat at a rich table.

At the same time take notice, brethren, that as many forms as there are of sins or passions, so also are there return paths to the heavenly Father. Every sin or passion is a path to a country far from God. Did you leave by the road of faithlessness? Turn back and, further, recognize all its foolishness, feel with your whole heart its heaviness, emptiness, perdition, and stand with firm footing on the path of faith, calming, sweet, and life-giving for the heart of man, and hold on to it with your whole heart. Did you leave by the way of pride? Turn back and go the way of humility. Hate pride, knowing that God resists the proud. Did you leave by the way of envy? Turn from this diabolic road and be content with what God has sent and remember whose offspring it is—the first envier was the devil and by the envy of the devil sin entered into the world (Wisdom 2:24). Be well-disposed towards everyone. If you left by the way of enmity and hatred, turn back and go the way of meekness and love. Remember that whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer (I John 3:15). Or did you depart from God by gluttony and dissoluteness? Turn back and go the way of moderation and chastity, and remember as a rule in life the words of the Saviour, Take heed to yourselves, lest your

hearts be overburdened with self-indulgence and drunkenness, and cares of this life (Luke 21:34), and use the words of the repentant prodigal son: We have sinned before Thee, and are no longer worthy to be called Thy sons. Receive us, even as hirelings. And He surely will receive us back as children. Amen.

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