



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Rector

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**Dn Timothy Skuby**

Attached

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**Email:** [dntimothy@stalexischurch.org](mailto:dntimothy@stalexischurch.org)

Services Schedule

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

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Bulletin for Sunday, April 11, 2021

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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)

### **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**

### **Message from the Building and Grounds Committee:**

#### **St. Alexis Clean Up Day List**

**April 17, 2021**

**9am to 3:30pm**

Many hands make light work!

We need your help to accomplish our "Spring Clean Up Chore List" on April 17th.

The list of "Inside" and "Outside" items is below.

Any time you can give to this project is sincerely appreciated.

Please contact Dori Kuziak, Dn. Timothy, or Carolyn Neiss to let us know what projects you're ready to tackle.

Dori Kuziak: [Dkuziak@icloud.com](mailto:Dkuziak@icloud.com), 860 573-9818 (cell)

Dn. Timothy: [dntimothy@stalexischurch.org](mailto:dntimothy@stalexischurch.org), 808 341-1813 (cell)

Carolyn Neiss: [cmneiss@comcast.net](mailto:cmneiss@comcast.net), 203-988-0541 (cell/text ok too!)

The Church doesn't have most of the tools needed for the outside jobs. Please let us know what tools you are able to bring: rakes, shovels, clippers, wheel barrow, etc.

We will also need volunteers with a truck to cart debris to the transfer station at the end of the day.

If you would like to volunteer for a specific project on the list, please let us know when you sign up.

Thank you for sharing your time and talents!

See you on April 17th!

#### Inside Church Activities

- Wash hardwood floors
- Vacuum floors
- Wash windows
- Clean out debris from sand in candle stands
- Dust icons in the Nave
- Check lights and replace bulbs

- as needed upstairs
- Check lights and replace bulbs in the storage area and mechanical/furnace room downstairs\*
- Clean bathroom
- Clean kitchen area (check fridge and clean out old items)
- Dust and vacuum the downstairs hall, classroom\*\*
- Collect trash and take it to the transfer station

\*Light bulbs for storage area are in a plastic bin in the closet upstairs

\*Light bulbs for the mechanical/furnace room are in the storage room downstairs

\*\*There are boxes for our new electronics being stored on the table in the downstairs hall; please do not move them and do not throw them away. The Advent wreath and candelabra are also on this table. Father Steven will take care of these as well.

### Outside Church Activities

- Clean flowerbeds
- Rake Red House yard
- Clean Gutters and check downspouts—some may be loose and need to be secured
- Power wash building and steps/ramp
- Spray moss on Church roof
- Remove ivy from back fence

### 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, Arnold,  
Carol-Anne, Anthony,

Natasha, Gene, John, John, Michael, Kelley,  
Krisha, Alix, Natalie, Edward, Nathan, Caila,  
Julianna, Paul, John, Jacob, Lynn, Anna,  
Richard, Robert, Dorothy, Elaina

Many years to Nina Naumenko on the occasion of her birthday!

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- 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.

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**St. John Climacus (of The Ladder).** Hieromartyr Antipas, Bishop of Pergamum, disciple of St. John the Theologian (92). Ven. Jacob (James), Abbot of Zheleznobórovsk (1442), and his fellow ascetic, James. St. Varsonúfii (Barsanuphius), Bishop of Tver' (1576). Martyrs Processus and Martinian of Rome (1st c.). Ven. Pharmuthius, Anchorite, of Egypt (4th c.). Ven. John, disciple of Ven. Gregory of Decapolis (9th c.). St. Callinicus of Cernica, Bishop of Rimnicului in Romania (1868)

## Parish Calendar

## Parish Calendar

April 11 to April 19, 2021

### Sunday, April 11

Sunday of St. John Climacus  
9:15AM Divine Liturgy

### Monday, April 12

Watson  
Basil the Confessor, Bishop of Parium

### Tuesday, April 13

Nina Naumenko  
Martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome  
8:30AM Daily Matins followed by Lenten Reflection

### Wednesday, April 14

Aristarchus, Pudens, Trophimus the Apostles of the 70  
6:00PM Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

### Thursday, April 15

5th Thursday of Lent: The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete  
6:30PM Life of St Mary of Egypt

### Friday, April 16

Rick Page  
Lisa Egan  
Agape, Chionia, and Irene, the Holy Martyrs  
6:30PM Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

### Saturday, April 17

5th Saturday of Lent: The Akathist Hymn  
9:30AM Parish Clean Up  
5:30PM Great Vespers

### Sunday, April 18

Repose of Alla Hamisevich  
Christine Jankura  
Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt  
9:15AM Divine Liturgy

### Monday, April 19

The Holy Hieromartyr Paphnutius

## Saints and Feasts

### April 11

#### Sunday of St. John Climacus

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. He is celebrated today because his book, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, is a sure

guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

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**April 11**

**Guthlac the Hermit of Crowland**

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### 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 Troparion (St. John Climacus)**

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the  
body,  
you were a wonderworker, O our

God-bearing Father John.  
You received heavenly gifts through fasting,  
vigil and prayer,  
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn  
to you by faith.  
Glory to Him Who gave you strength!  
Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//  
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

#### **Tone 3 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

On this day You rose from the tomb, O  
Merciful One,  
leading us from the gates of death.  
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;  
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//  
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of  
Your power.

#### **Tone 4 Kontakion (St. John Climacus)**

The Lord truly set you on the heights of  
abstinence,  
to be a guiding star, showing the way to the  
universe,//  
O our father and teacher John.

#### **HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS**

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace:  
the assembly of angels and the race of men. O  
sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the  
glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate  
and became a Child - our God before the ages.  
He made your body into a throne, and your  
womb He made more spacious than the  
heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O Full  
of Grace. Glory to you!

#### **COMMUNION HYMN**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest!  
The righteous shall be in everlasting  
remembrance! He shall not fear evil  
tidings! Alleluia 3X

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

**Prokeimenon. 3rd Tone. Psalm 46.6,1.**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises.

Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations.

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to  
the Hebrews 6:13-20.**

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

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## Gospel Reading

**Sunday of St. John Climacus  
The Reading is from Mark 9:17-31**

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said

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to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Seest thou how He now proceeds to lay beforehand in them the foundation of His doctrine about fasting? ... See, at any rate, how many blessings spring from them both. For he that is praying as he ought, and fasting, hath not many wants, and he that hath not many wants, cannot be covetous; ...

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century*

... he that is not covetous, will be also more disposed for almsgiving. He that fasts is light, and winged, and prays with wakefulness, and quenches his wicked lusts, and propitiates God, and humbles his soul when lifted up. Therefore even the apostles were almost always fasting.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



Reflections on Praying the Psalter

A rule of prayer is characterized above all by *rhythm*, the experience of a rule is that of submitting to the *rhythm* of it. You pray at certain times and in

certain words; in these times and words begin fairly soon to give a definite pattern to one's days. When a rule of prayer is first begun, there is usually an ecstatic period in which the prayers are resonant, profound, and extremely moving. It is exactly like falling in love: an extraordinary sweetness gives one's days vividness, depth, and perfection. You wake up into joy - not merely into happiness but into genuine joy, into something richer, sharper, and more actual than any happiness ever can be. Happiness is feeling, but joy is something greater in the same order of magnitude that a child's happiness at play is something far greater than the stuffed teddy bear he plays with. And just as a child's happiness at play may be expressed by only the tiniest outward signs, so a person experiencing the first joy of prayer may in fact be quite subdued. For the first work of spiritual joy is often very largely inward. So it was for me.

But our loving cannot remain ecstatic, nor our children play happily forever, so a rule

of prayer soon moves us beyond this first joy. For the experience of prayer that follows that first joy is experience of failure, and experience in which one's own prayer is a very poor thing, with nothing to recommend it. Prayer becomes a place of struggle, not triumph, a place where you just barely keep your head above water. And most of the time you sink and are engulfed again and again by the world you have so badly made and keep on making: your world of work and family and friends and enemies. This disastrous failure also is entirely undramatic and thoroughly unspectacular. Where it once was vast, gathered, and profound, prayer now becomes mean, scattered, and flat.

There is no way out of this. It is what the early Orthodox Fathers called *the desert*. You cannot survive in this merciless place unless you submit to the first conditions of it: that is, unless you meet its implacable demand for an ever deeper spiritual poverty. For what the rule is drawing you toward is what Mother Maria [Lydia Gysi] calls the End-Point, that point wherein - as at your bath - you are stripped of absolutely all you possess - "except your sins, and the cry for mercy." With a slowly growing awareness - or else with a sudden shock of insight - you see that the desert is, in fact, the place where you live now - and will live for the rest of your life. Where is joy? In the *rhythm*.

Into this desert comes the voices of the great Orthodox Masters of prayer, the saints, fathers, mothers, monks, and nuns of the holy tradition. St. Innocent of Alaska says in *The Art of Prayer*: "the whole Holy

Spirit teaches true prayer....A man with the Holy Spirit dwelling in him knows God and sees that He is his Father. He knows how to approach Him, how to ask and what to ask for. His thoughts in prayer are orderly, pure, and directed to the one object alone - God; and by his prayer he is truly able to do everything."

If we feel something like despair in hearing such a voice (for our thoughts and prayer are anything but quote orderly, pure, and directed"), we are also instructed. I haven't the slightest idea what sustains one in a rule of prayer. Certainly, it isn't pleasure of easily recognizable variety, for desert life is scarcely anyone's formula for personal happiness. Yet what St. Innocent here says - "by prayer he is truly able to do everything" - is illumined by a joy so profound, so strong, and vivid that all our notions of pleasure simply vanish in the way flickers of candlelight vanished in the glaring immensity of the desert sun. You die into joy.

All the time rhythm of the rule keeps on working.

The Shield of Psalmic Prayer, by Donald Sheehan





DIocese OF NEW ENGLAND – ORTHODOX  
CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Most Blessed TIKHON

*Archbishop on Washington, Metropolitan of All  
America and Canada*

*Locum Tenens of The Diocese of New England*

**Archpriest John Kreta**  
*Chancellor*

April 9, 2021

To the Clergy of the Diocese of New England,  
Christ is in our midst!

As I previously indicated, I am issuing the following general directives for our parishes and institutions as we approach Holy Week and Pascha.

Over the past year, all of you have been working very diligently with your parish leadership in navigating the various synodal, diocesan, and civil guidelines. I am grateful for your careful attention to the many complexities of this process and I am confident that you will maintain this vigilance as we enter Holy Week and the Paschal season. Please continue to monitor the local civil directives as you have and observe the following basic safety measures in church:

1. Maintain 6 foot distancing between individuals or family groups;
2. Maintain the wearing of masks; clergy may choose to not wear a mask in the altar but should wear one if there is an increased number of servers;
3. If anyone is sick or presenting symptoms, they must stay home.

As you know, my directives last year were particularly restrictive and most of you did not have in-person services for Holy Week and Pascha. Our year-long experience of navigating the pandemic, your faithful application of safety measures during that time, and the increasing availability of vaccines have brought us to a point where it is possible for us to anticipate a more traditional cycle of