



## 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.

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Bulletin for Sunday, July 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**

### **Faith Study**

We are continuing our Faith Study on Thursday nights, but I am in need of more questions from all of you. Our sessions have been good, and the recordings of them can be found in our shared folder. We will continue with these Zoom meetings until the beginning of the Dormition Fast.

### **Coffee Hour**

Some parishioners have asked why we can't resume coffee hour downstairs? Simply put, we are not yet ready to relax all our COVID restrictions and procedures. The so-called Delta Variant remains uncontained, and the room downstairs simply does not have enough ventilation to alleviate my concerns.

We now have a canopy that can be put up outside, and tables can be moved out as well. For the time being, we must be satisfied with these conditions, regardless of what other parishes might be doing. This pandemic isn't over yet.

### **Worth a Listen**

The following link is a lecture given by Fr Thomas Hopko, on Anxiety and Fear. It is worth listening to.

[https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/anxiety\\_and\\_fear](https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/anxiety_and_fear)

## **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: John Scrobat on the occasion of his birthday; and to Gabriel on the occasion of her Name's Day

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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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All Saints of Britain and Ireland. Finding of the Relics of Saint Hilarion, Archbishop of Veray (1998). Greatmartyr Euphemia the All-praised (451). Bl. Olga (in Baptism Elena), Princess of Russia (969). Hieromartyr Cindeus, Presbyter, of Pamphylia (3rd-4th c.).

## Parish Calendar

## Parish Calendar

July 11 to July 26, 2021

### Sunday, July 11

3rd Sunday of Matthew  
St. Olga, Princess of Russia  
9:15AM Divine Liturgy

### Monday, July 12

Proclus & Hilary the Martyrs of Ancyra  
John Skrobat - B  
8:30AM Akathist to Venerable Fr Paisios

### Tuesday, July 13

Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel  
6:30PM Catechism

### Wednesday, July 14

Aquila the Apostle among the 70  
4:30PM Open Doors

### Thursday, July 15

St. Vladimir Equal to the Apostles  
The Holy Martyrs Cyricus and His Mother Julitta  
Skip & Deborah Bray - A  
8:30AM Akathist to St Vladimir  
7:00PM Faith Study

### Friday, July 16

Athenogenes the Holy Martyr of Heracleopolis

### Saturday, July 17

The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margaret)  
5:30PM Great Vespers

### Sunday, July 18

New Martyr Elizabeth  
Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council  
9:15AM Divine Liturgy

### Monday, July 19

Repose of Olga Kurcharski  
Macrina the Righteous, sister of St. Basil  
8:30AM Akathist to St Seraphim of Sarove

## Tuesday, July 20

Mother Maria Skobtsova  
The Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah)  
8:30AM Akathist to Prophet Elijah  
6:30PM Parish Council Meeting

## Wednesday, July 21

John and Symeon the Fool for Christ  
4:30PM Open Doors

## Thursday, July 22

Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-bearer and  
Equal to the Apostles  
7:00PM Faith Study

## Friday, July 23

Phocas the Holy Martyr, Bishop of Sinope

## Saturday, July 24

Christina the Great Martyr of Tyre  
Glenn PenkoffLidbeck  
9:00AM Great Vespers

## Sunday, July 25

Repose of Sonja Geyer  
5th Sunday of Matthew  
9:15AM Divine Liturgy

## Monday, July 26

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

## Saints and Feasts

### July 11

**The All-Praised Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Princess of Kiev**

Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (see July 15). She reposed in peace in 969.

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### July 12

**Veronica, the woman with the issue of blood who was healed by Jesus**

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### July 13

#### **Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel**

It is believed that the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel was transferred to this day from March 26 so that it could

be celebrated more festively than in the period of the Great Fast; and, in fact, all the miracles of the Archangel are celebrated on this feast day, which has been listed here in the church books since the ninth century.

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## **July 14**

### **Aquila the Apostle among the 70**

Saint Aquila, who was from Pontus of Asia Minor, was a Jew by race and a tent-maker by trade. In the year 52 he and his wife Priscilla were in Corinth when Saint Paul first came there. They gave him hospitality, and the Apostle remained with them for many days, himself working at the same trade as they (Acts 18:2-3). And having believed in Christ through Paul, they followed him from that time on, working together with him and suffering perils with him for the sake of the preaching of the Gospel, as he himself testifies concerning them in his Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the nations" (Rom. 16:3-4). When and where they reposed is unknown.

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## **July 15**

### **Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles of Kiev**

Grandson of Saint Olga, Saint Vladimir ascended the throne of Kiev in 980. Though a zealous idolater, he was illumined by the grace of God, accepted the Christian Faith,

and completely changed his ways. He was baptized in Cherson in 988, receiving the name Basil; he came forth from the font not only healed of a blindness lately afflicting him, but also from being passionate and warlike, he became meek, peaceable, and exceedingly godly. Whereas his grandmother had refused marriage with the Emperor in Constantinople (see July 11), he married Anna, sister of the Emperors Basil and Constantine, and was accompanied home by priests from Constantinople. Diligently seeking to spread Christianity throughout his realm like a new Constantine, he destroyed the idols (having the chief diety Perun scourged and then cast into the Dnieper River), and summoned all his subjects to Holy Baptism. He reposed in peace in 1015.

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## **July 17**

### **The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margaret)**

This Martyr lived during the reign of Claudius II (268-270). She was from Pisidia of Cilicia and was the only daughter of a certain priest of the idols. On being orphaned by her mother, she was handed over to a certain woman who instructed her in the Faith of Christ. When she was fifteen years old, she was apprehended by the ruler of Olmbrius, and when asked her name, homeland, and faith, she answered: "My name is Marina; I am the offspring of the Pisidia; I call upon the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ." Because of this she endured bonds, imprisonment, and many whippings,

and was finally beheaded in the year 270. Saint Marina is especially invoked for deliverance from demonic possession.

## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)**

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal, You slew 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 3 Troparion (St. Euphemia)**

You brought joy to the Orthodox and shame to the defenders of heresy, for you confirmed what the Fathers of the Fourth Council had correctly taught. O glorious martyr Euphemia, fair virgin of Christ,//  
entreat Christ God to grant us His great mercy!

### **Tone 1 Troparion (St. Olga)**

Giving your mind the wings of divine understanding, you soared above visible creation seeking god the Creator of all. When you had found Him, you received re-birth through baptism. As one who enjoys the Tree of Life,

you remain eternally ✠ incorrupt,//  
O ever-glorious Olga.

### **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 6 Kontakion (St. Euphemia)**

For the sake of Christ your Bridegroom you underwent struggles in both martyrdom and faith. Now intercede with the Mother of God that heresies and the insolent enemies of the Orthodox be placed underfoot. You received and guarded that which was defined by the six hundred and thirty God-bearing Fathers,//  
O all-praised Euphemia.

### **Tone 4 Kontakion (St. Olga)**

Today let us praise God the Benefactor of all, Who glorified divinely-wise Olga,//  
that through her prayers, He may grant our souls remission of sins.

### **Tone 2 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)

V. The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps. 117:18)

## 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

#### **The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10**

Brethren, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

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## Gospel Reading

### **3rd Sunday of Matthew**

#### **The Reading is from Matthew 6:22-33**

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall

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be yours as well."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

There is an old saying: 'Excesses meet.' Too much fasting and too much eating come to the same end. Keeping too long a vigil brings the same disastrous cost as ... sluggishness... Too much self-denial brings weakness and induces the same condition as carelessness. Often I have seen men who would not be snared by gluttony fall, nevertheless, through immoderate fasting and tumble in weakness into the very urge which they had overcome. Unmeasured vigils and foolish denial of rest overcame those whom sleep could not overcome. Therefore, 'fortified to right and to left in the armor of justice,' as the apostle says (2 Cor. 6:7), life must be lived with due measure and, with discernment for a guide, the road must be traveled between the two kinds of excess so that in the end we may not allow ourselves to be diverted from the pathway of restraint which has been laid down for us nor fall through dangerous carelessness into the urgings of gluttony and self-indulgence.

### **St. John Cassian**

*Conferences, Conference Two: On Discernment no. 16; Paulist Press pg. 76, 5th century*

For God, He said, gave us understanding, that we might chase away all ignorance, and have the right judgment of things,

and that using this as a kind of weapon and light against all that is grievous or hurtful, we might remain in safety. But we betray the gift for the sake of things superfluous and useless.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 20 and 21 on Matthew 6, 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



Homily for the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost and the 3rd Sunday of Matthew in the Orthodox Church  
PRIEST PHILIP  
LEMASTERS | 19 JUNE  
2018

Ours is an age of anxiety. Many people are overcome with worry about matters large and small. Some certainly do need the help of physicians and psychological counselors in order to cope with their fears. The sickness of our souls remains, however, at the very heart of all our collective and personal brokenness. If our souls are not healthy, we will never find the peace that truly satisfies us as God's children who bear His image and likeness.

The Lord spoke of the health of our souls in terms of vision: "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full



of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" Christ taught that, if our spiritual vision is clear and focused, we will see ourselves and our problems in light of God's kingdom. Then we will be able to serve our one true Master and gain strength for being at peace, regardless of the circumstances of our lives.

If our spiritual vision is clouded and unfocused, however, we will not have the strength to see our problems and challenges in light of the Kingdom. We will instead stumble in the darkness to the point that we make the passing things of this life our constant obsessions, which is a path only to greater worry, anxiety, and fear. For example, many people make money and possessions false gods for which they will sacrifice just about anything. Jesus Christ teaches that we are not to worry about our food, drink, and clothing. Instead, we are to trust that our Heavenly Father knows that we need these things. "Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

This teaching does not condemn reasonable provision for a decent life for ourselves and our families. It does not deny that the necessities of life are God's good blessings. Instead, it gives us a clear example of how spiritual blindness enslaves us to idolatry, which leads only to constant worry. Poverty, hunger, and famine are always possibilities in our world. Economic depression, natural disaster, war, crime, disease, and disability are obvious threats to having adequate food, clothing, and shelter. There is simply no way that we can protect ourselves

completely from such dangers. If we make the physical necessities of life our gods, we cannot avoid being consumed by worry about them. That kind of idolatry inevitably fuels anxiety.

If the eyes of our souls are gaining clarity and focus, however, we will not blindly view life's necessities as the highest good, and neither will we make the lack of them the greatest evil. Instead, we will be illumined with the light of Christ to the point that we will see even the worst circumstances of life in this world as opportunities to serve our one true Master. We will already participate in God's reign as we learn to trust more fully that our Heavenly Father will provide what we need in this life and beyond.

When we struggle to see that God cares for us in the midst of our challenges, we must remember St. Paul's example of using suffering and difficulty for growth in holiness: "We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character, hope." Not simply wishful thinking, Paul's hope is grounded in "the love of God ...poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who was given to us." Christ died for the ungodly, including us, and has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts and souls to enlighten us with the glory of the Kingdom. In this context, our difficulties and needs are opportunities for gaining greater healing for our souls. We must use these tribulations to gain greater spiritual strength, clarity, and vision by growing in trust, humility, and patience.

When we are overcome with worry about

any problem or threat in life, we must use our weakness as an opportunity to gain greater spiritual strength: as a reminder to guard our thoughts as we turn our attention from obsessing about what we cannot change to an earnest, humble plea for the Lord's healing mercy. That is how we will open ourselves to greater participation in His life and, thus, find true peace.

Some lose the joy of life because of worry fueled by the love of money; others become miserable because of domination by anger, fear, lust, gluttony, self-righteousness, or other passions. These and all our other habitual sins are symptoms of our spiritual blindness, of our darkened souls which keep us from seeing ourselves, others, and the entire creation in the glorious light of the Kingdom. As long as we remain in the dark, we will never see anything clearly and easily stumble and fall.

Those who are sick do not need relief only for their symptoms; they require healing from the causes of their disease. They need therapy that goes to the heart of the matter. We will find that kind of healing in the spiritual life by: opening our souls to the light of Christ through daily prayer; reading the Bible and the lives and teachings of the Saints; and watching our minds and mouths to reject thoughts and words that are not pleasing to God. We will find it by fasting in order to humble ourselves before the Lord and gain strength in refusing to be enslaved to selfish desires. We will find it by taking confession on a regular basis as we embrace the mercy of the Lord through sincere repentance. We will find it by: forgiving those who have wronged us and

asking forgiveness of those we have wronged; giving generously of our time, attention, and resources to those in need; and attending the Divine Liturgy regularly as we receive the Body and Blood of Christ as often as possible.

This way of life is for our healing; it is for our good. It is what is necessary for us to open our darkened souls to the brilliant light of Christ as we learn to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is how we may gain the clarity and strength to serve our one true Master as we come to place our problems, fears, and worries in the context of trust in a Lord Who has conquered even death itself for our salvation purely out of love for His sons and daughters.

Regardless of the form that darkness takes in our lives, we must not despair. Instead, we must use our weakness and pain as reminders to open ourselves to the light of Christ as best we can. Stumbling around with our eyes closed is a good way to become disoriented and hurt ourselves. All of us have probably learned from experience that nothing but brokenness, pain, and worry come from embracing spiritual blindness. Since God created us in His image and likeness, we will never find ultimate satisfaction by looking for fulfillment in the passing things of this world. Doing so will only make us miserable and weak.

Let us, then, open ourselves to the healing light of Christ, trusting that He will respond graciously to even our small, faltering steps to put our lives in the context of His Kingdom. That is the ultimate cure for our

worries. If we trust primarily in ourselves and what we can get by using worldly things according to our own designs, we will inevitably be consumed by anxiety and fear. But if we gain the spiritual clarity to behold all things in the light of His glory, we will know peace from the depths of our souls. The One Who dwells in our hearts has conquered even death itself and made us participants in His eternal life. He delivers us from slavery to the fears that are rooted in our blindness. He makes it possible for us to experience already the joy of heaven even as we live and breathe in this world with all of its and our problems. As the Lord said, "Seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."