



## 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 25, 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**

### **Parish Shared Folder**

Once again, here is the link to the parish shared folder:

<http://bit.ly/St-Alexis>

### **Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry**

As was previously announced, this Sunday has been set aside for supporting the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM). A basket has been set aside for contributions, should you care to support this essential ministry.

### **Printed Bulletins**

I will, once again, begin printing out the bulletin starting the first Sunday in August,

but in a limited number only. In addition, I will also continue to publish the bulletins online.

### **Dormition Fast**

The fast begins next Sunday. I ask you, once again, to please consider this as an opportunity to re-establish or re-affirm your faith through alms-giving, fasting and prayer. Begin with coming to confession.

## **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: our new Catecumens; Gregory Hawkins and Daniel Cummings.

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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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**The Dormition of the Righteous Anna, mother of the Most-holy Theotokos.** Holy Women Olympias (Olympiada—408-410) the Deaconess, of Constantinople, and the Virgin Eupraxia of Tabenna (413). Ven. Makáry, Abbot of Zheltovódsk and Unzha (1444). Commemoration of the Holy 165 Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553).

## Parish Calendar

## Parish Calendar

July 25 to August 2, 2021

### Sunday, July 25

Repose of Sonja Geyer  
Reception of Catecumens

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  
8:30AM Akathist to St Jacob Netsvetov

### Tuesday, July 27

Repose of Ann Kiernan  
Akathist to St Panteleimon  
Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer  
8:30AM Akathist to St Panteleimon  
6:30PM Catechumenate

### Wednesday, July 28

Prochoros, Nicanor, Timon, & Parmenas the Apostles of the 70  
4:30PM Open Doors

### Thursday, July 29

The Holy Martyr Callinicus  
Chobor  
7:00PM Faith Study

### Friday, July 30

Silas, Silvan, Crescens, Epenetus and Andronicus the Apostles of the 70

### Saturday, July 31

Forefeast of the Precious Cross  
5:30PM Great Vespers

### Sunday, August 1

Procession of the Lifegiving Cross  
6th Sunday of Matthew  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy followed by Lessor  
Blessing of Water

### Monday, August 2

Akathist to St Stephen

Translation of the Relics of Stephen the Protomartyr

## Saints and Feasts

### 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.

### July 26

#### **Paraskeve the Righteous Martyr of Rome**

Saint Paraskeve, who was from a certain village near Rome, was born to pious parents, Agatho and Politia. Since she was born on a Friday (in Greek, Paraskeve), she was given this name, which means "preparation" or "preparedness" (compare Matt. 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, and John 19:31, where 'Friday' is called "the day of the preparation"). From childhood she was instructed in the sacred letters and devoted herself to the study of the divine Scriptures, while leading a monastic life and guiding many to the Faith of Christ.

During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, she was apprehended because she was a Christian and was urged to worship the idols, but she answered with the words of Jeremias: "Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth" (Jer. 10:11). Because of this she endured exceedingly painful torments, and was beheaded in the year 140. The faithful pray to her for the healing of eye ailments.

### July 27

#### **Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer**

This Saint, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him. Being proficient in the physician's vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon ("in all things a lion"), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning "all-merciful." On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man's soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened,

in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian. Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.

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## July 28

### **Irene the Righteous of Chrysovalantou**

Saint Irene, who was from Cappadocia, flourished in the ninth century. Because of her great beauty and virtue, she was brought to Constantinople as a prospective bride for the young Emperor Michael (842-867); however, as Saint Joannicius the Great foretold, it was God's will that she assume the monastic habit instead. She shone forth in great ascetical labours, and suffered many attacks from the demons; while yet a novice, she attained to the practice of Saint Arsenius the Great, of praying the whole night long with arms stretched out towards Heaven (see May 8). God showed forth great signs and wonders in her, and she became the Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou. She was granted the gift of clairvoyance and knew the thoughts of all that came to her. She appeared in a vision to the king and rebuked him for unjustly imprisoning a nobleman who had been falsely accused. Through a sailor from Patmos to whom he had appeared, Saint John the Evangelist sent her fragrant

and wondrous apples from Paradise. She reposed at the age of 103, still retaining the youthful beauty of her countenance. After her repose, marvelous healings beyond number have been wrought by her to the present day.

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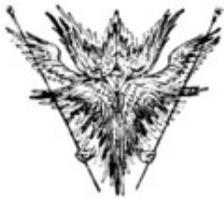
## July 30

### **Silas, Silvan, Crescens, Epenetus and Andronicus the Apostles of the 70**

Saint Silas was a companion and fellow labourer of the Apostle Paul: "And Paul chose Silas and departed...and he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" (Acts 15:40-41). He later became Bishop of Corinth, and reposed in peace. Saint Silvanos became Bishop of Thessalonica, and also reposed in peace. Saint Crescents, whom Saint Paul mentions in his Second Epistle to Timothy(4:10), became Bishop of Chalcedon, and brought many to the Faith. As for him whom the Apostle of the Nations praises as "my well-beloved Epenetus, the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ" (Roman 16:5), he became Bishop of Carthage, and after enduring many afflictions from the idolators, and bringing many of them to Christ, he departed to the Lord.

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## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)**

When the women  
disciples of the Lord  
learned from the angel  
the joyous message of  
Your 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 (St. Anna)**

Divinely-wise Anna,  
you carried in your womb the pure Mother of  
God who gave life to our Life.  
Therefore, you are now carried joyfully to the  
inheritance of heaven,  
to the abode of those who rejoice in glory, //  
where you seek forgiveness of sins for those  
who faithfully honor you, O ever-blessed one.

### **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 (St. Anna)**

We celebrate the memory of the progenitors  
of Christ,

and with faith we ask their help,  
that deliverance from every affliction be  
granted to those who cry out: //  
“Be with us, O God, Who in Your good  
pleasure glorified them!”

### **Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

O Lord, how manifold are Your works; / in  
wisdom have You made them all.  
(Ps. 103:26)

V. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God,  
You are very great! (Ps. 103:1)

### **Tone 4 Prokeimenon (St. Anna)**

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of  
Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)  
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise  
befits the just! (Ps. 32:1)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

#### **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

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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.

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## 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."

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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.

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

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*

One, to teach them that are delivered from those wicked tyrants, how great the malice of their insidious enemies: another, that all might learn, how not even against swine are they bold, except He allow them; a third, that they would have treated those men more grievously than the swine, unless even in their calamity they had enjoyed much of God's providential care. For that they hate us more than the brutes is surely evident to every man.

## St. John Chrysostom

Homily 28 on Matthew 8, 4th Century

### Beyond the Sermon



#### 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

## Ask questions in confession



Don't just confess your sins to the priest. Don't just say "Oh father I did sin a b c, how do I overcome?"

No. **Ask quality thoughtful questions focused on helping you develop virtues.** Focus your attention on developing virtues and your sinful habits should go away. Ask

- ❖ Father tell me one way I can love my family more?
- ❖ **Father what's an amazing virtue you observed off someone lately?**
- ❖ Father tell me a wonderful edifying story
- ❖ **Father how can I glorify God at my work or university and be an icon of Christ**
- ❖ Father how do I improve my prayer life?

## FASTING

Seeing that bodily disposition is important in worship and spiritual life, in general, great emphasis is placed in the Orthodox Church on fasting; if one should add up all of the fasting seasons and days of the Church calendar, he would find that more than half of the year is devoted to this ascetic labor. The question might rightfully be asked, then, as to why this is so.

According to St. Basil the Great, Adam, the first-created man, loving God of his own free will, dwelt in the heavenly blessedness of communion with God, in the angelic state of prayer and fasting. The cause of this first man's fall was his free will; by an act of disobedience he violated the vow of abstinence and broke the living union of love with God. That is, he held in scorn the heavenly obligations of prayer and fasting by eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Lack of abstinence, then, was the cause of the Fall and, as a result, because of this original greed, the soul becomes dimmed, and is deprived of the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ calls all of us to salvation through self-denial (Luke 14:26) and this is addressed to the free will of fallen man: If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me (Matt. 16:24). Thus, the Savior calls man to the voluntary fulfillment of those heavenly obligations, which he freely forsook, of observing prayer and fasting.

Repentance without fasting is made ineffectual since fasting is the beginning of repentance. The aim of bodily fasting is the enslavement of the flesh, for fasting bridles the lust of the stomach and of that below the stomach, meaning the removal of the passions, the mortification of the body and the destruction of the sting of lust. Thus it is necessary to overcome the stomach for the healing of the passions.

The personal example of the Lord Himself bears witness to the absolute necessity of bodily fasting. Did not the Savior fast for forty days and nights after His baptism to prepare for His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:2)? So too, many of the Saints of the Church were especially noted for their ascetic labors, which saw fasting as being of especially great importance.

In fasting the flesh and the spirit struggle one against the other. Therefore bodily fasting leads to the triumph of the spirit over the body, and gives a man power over the stomach, subdues the flesh and permits it not to commit fornication and uncleanness. Abstinence is the mother of cleanliness, the giver of health and is good for rich and poor, sick and healthy, alike. It strengthens the seeker after godliness in spiritual battles and proves to be a formidable weapon against evil spirits. As the Lord Himself said, concerning the casting-out of certain demons: This kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21).

This fasting, however, is not to be done out of pride or self-will; It must be observed in the praise of God and must be in accordance with the canons of the Church, since it consists in the complete renunciation of self-will and of the desires. At the same time, we must realize that for fallen man to attain perfection, even intensive fasting is insufficient, if in his soul he does not abstain from those things which further sin. Fasting is not only the abstinence from food, but also from evil thoughts and all passion, for, as the Savior says: Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man... (Matt. 15:17-20). Thus exterior fasting, without the corresponding interior fasting is in vain.

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