



## 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, September 26, 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**

### **Outreach**

OUTREACH would like to thank all who donated items to be sent to the orphanage in Djibouti, Africa, via Fr. James Parnell (All Saints Church) who is the Army's Chaplain stationed there. Because of your generosity, we were able to ship 12 boxes of school supplies, sandals, hygiene products, meds and clothing. Thank you for helping us to continue in our mission of helping those in need.

### **Book Study**

The Book Study will begin Thursday, October 14 at 7pm.. The book I would like to use is the following: *The Singing Heart: A Book of Quiet Reflections* by Ivan Ilyin

(Author), Alexandra Weber (Translator). It is available on Amazon.

## **Good News from Parishioners**

I would like to add a new section to the bulletin entitled, "Good News". In this section I would like to share "good" news from any of you that you would like to share. Send your contributions directly to me, and I will post them accordingly. "Especially with not being able to just sit and talk with each other...and some not staying for coffee hour...news seems to fall through the cracks. It could be an area where we can post anything from new babies, honor roll, deaths, birthdays, vacations, etc. I was thinking of this after I learned that Sue Egan became a Grandmother." Thanks to Marlene for this idea.

## **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, Dayna,  
Daniel and Gregory.

Many Years to Phyllis Sturtevant on the occasion of her birthday and to Susan and LLoyd Davis on the occasion of their anniversary.

Memory Eternal for Nadine Faro as we remember her falling asleep in the Lord.

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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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**Rest of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian** (2nd c.). Ven. Ephraim, Abbot of Perekóp, Wonderworker of Novgorod (1492).

## Parish Calendar

### Schedule of Services and Events

September 26 to October 4, 2021

#### Sunday, September 26

The Falling Asleep of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, September 27

Callistratus the Martyr & his 49 Companions  
Phyllis Sturtevant - B

#### Tuesday, September 28

Chariton the Confessor

#### Wednesday, September 29

Cyriacus the Hermit of Palestine  
4:30PM Open Doors

#### Thursday, September 30

Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop of Armenia  
Davis - A

#### Friday, October 1

The Holy Protection of the Theotokos  
8:30AM Akathist to Protection of the All-Holy Theotokos

#### Saturday, October 2

+Nadine Faro  
The Holy Hieromartyr Cyprian and the Virgin Martyr Justina  
5:30PM Great Vespers

## Sunday, October 3

Alex & Luba Martins - A  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

## Monday, October 4

Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens

## Saints and Feasts

### September 26

#### The Falling Asleep of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian

This Apostle was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James the elder. First a fisherman by trade, he became an Apostle and the beloved Disciple of Christ. Only he of all the Disciples followed Him even to the Cross, and was entrusted with the care of our Saviour's Mother, as it were another son to her, and a brother of Christ the Teacher. After this, he preached throughout Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus. When the second persecution against the Christians began in the year 96 during the reign of Domitian, he was taken in bonds to Rome, and there was cast into a vat filled to the brim with boiling oil. Coming forth therefrom unharmed, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Returning again to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant, he wrote his Gospel (after the other Evangelists had already written theirs) and his three Catholic Epistles. In all, he lived ninety-five years and fell asleep in the Lord during the reign of Trajan in the year 100. He was called Theologian because he loftily

expounded in his Gospel the theology of the inexpressible and eternal birth of the Son and Word of God the Father. It is for this

cause that an eagle—a symbol of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Irenaeus says—is depicted in his icon, for this was one of the four symbolic living creatures that the Prophet Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:10).

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### September 28

#### Chariton the Confessor

Saint Chariton was born in the city of Iconium during the reign of Aurelian, about the year 274. He was arrested, tortured, and condemned to death because of his Christian Faith, but finally set free by imperial edict. He came to Palestine, where he took up the ascetic life. He also brought many Jews and pagans to the Faith. Having dwelt in the desert of Judea for many years, and established several monasteries throughout the region, he reposed in peace.

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### September 28

#### Baruch the Prophet

The Prophet Baruch was the son of Nerias, and the disciple of the Prophet Jeremias (Jer. 39:12; 43:4 LXX). The extant prophetic book that he wrote is divided into five chapters; it was composed in the fifth year of the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews during the years of Sedekias, 583 B.C. The prophetic lection that is read on the eve of the Feast of Christ's Nativity, which bears

Jeremias' name, is taken from the prophecy of Baruch (Bar. 3:35-4:4). His name means "blessed."

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## **September 30**

### **Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop of Armenia**

This Saint, a Parthian by race, was the son of Anak. He was born about the year 240 and was taught the Faith of Christ in Caesarea of Cappadocia. He entered the service of Tiridates, King of Armenia, but when discovered to be a Christian, he was subjected to many horrible torments at the King's hands, then was cast into a pit of mire with poisonous serpents and left to die. By the power of God, however, he abode there unharmed for fourteen years, his needs provided by a certain widow, until he was made known by revelation and set free. He converted to piety innumerable multitudes of Armenians, including Tiridates himself, and was consecrated bishop by Leontius, Archbishop of Caesarea, to shepherd the vast flock he had gained for Christ. He spent the last part of his life in retirement in the ascetical discipline, and reposed in peace about the year 325. Saint Gregory is honoured as the Illuminator of Armenia.

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## **October 01**

### **The Holy Protection of the Theotokos**

The Feast of the Protection commemorates the appearance of the most holy Theotokos

in the Church of Blachernae in Constantinople in the tenth century, as recorded in the life of Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ's sake. While the multitudes

of the faithful were gathered in church, Epiphanius, the friend of Saint Andrew, through the Saint's prayers, beheld the Virgin Mary above the faithful and spreading out her veil over them, signifying her unceasing protection of all Christians. Because of this we keep a yearly feast of gratitude, imploring our Lady never to cease sheltering us in her mighty prayers.

*In the Greek tradition, this feast is celebrated on October 28, while in the Slavic tradition, this feast is celebrated on October 1.*

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## **October 01**

### **Romanos the Melodist**

Saint Romanos flourished during the reign of Anastasius (491-518). He was from Emesa of Syria, and apparently was born of Jewish parents, for a hymn written in his honour in Greek says he was "of Hebrew stock," and it has furthermore been noted that he uses many Semitic idioms in his writings. He was baptized an Orthodox Christian, and at some time became a deacon in the Church of Beirut. He was the first composer of the kontakia, the foremost of which is that of the feast of Christ's Nativity, On this day the Virgin .... In composing many of his kontakia. Saint Romanos was inspired by the hymns of Saint Ephraim of Syria.

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## 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 2 Troparion (St. John)**

Beloved Apostle of Christ our God,  
hasten to deliver a defenseless people!  
He Who allowed you to recline on His breast,  
receives you as you bow before Him.  
Implore Him, O John the Theologian,  
to disperse the persistent threat from the  
heathens,//  
entreating for us peace and great mercy!

### **Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

You descended into hell, O my Savior,  
shattering its gates as Almighty,  
resurrecting the dead as Creator,  
and destroying the sting of death.  
You have delivered Adam from the curse, O  
Lover of man,//  
and we cry to You: "O Lord, save us!"

### **Tone 2 Kontakion (St. John)**

Who shall declare your greatness,  
O virgin disciple,  
for you pour forth wonders and are a source of  
healings,//  
and pray for our souls as theologian and friend  
of Christ.

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)  
Their proclamation has gone out into all the  
earth, and their words to the ends of  
the universe. (Ps. 18:4)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### **Epistle Reading**

#### **The Reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 1:21-24; 2:1-4**

Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you  
in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has  
put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in  
our hearts as a guarantee.

But I call God to witness against me - it was to  
spare you that I refrained from coming to  
Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we  
work with you for your joy, for you stand firm  
in your faith. For I made up my mind not to  
make you another painful visit. For if I cause  
you pain, who is there to make me glad but  
the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I  
did, so that when I came I might not suffer  
pain from those who should have

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made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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## Gospel Reading

### The Reading is from Luke 5:1-11

At that time, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought

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their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

The sign that thou lovest God, is this, that thou lovest thy fellow; and if thou hatest thy fellow, thy hatred is towards God. For it is blasphemy if thou prayest before God while thou art wroth. For thy heart also convicts thee, that in vain thou multipliest words: thy conscience rightly judges that in thy prayers thou profitest nought.

### *St. Ephraim the Syrian*

#### *ON ADMONITION AND REPENTANCE.*

'God is love', and he who seeks to establish its bounds is like a blind man attempting to count the grains of sand in the deeps of the sea. In quality, love is the likeness of God, as far as this is possible to mortals; in action, it is intoxication of the soul; in its properties, it is the source of faith, the abyss of long-suffering, the sea of humility. Love is real renunciation of every contrary thought, for it 'thinketh no evil' (I Cor. 13:5). Love, passionlessness and sonship differ only in name. As light, fire and flame are combined in one single action, so it is with these three.

### *Monks Callistus and Ignatius*

*Directions to Hesychasts no. 90, Writings from*

## Beyond the Sermon



Metropolitan Anthony Sourozh  
Protecting Veil of the  
Mother of God  
Sunday 14 October 1990

In the name of the  
Father, the Son and the  
Holy Ghost.

Time and again we ask

ourselves what is the aim of the Christian life: what can we do to be true Christians? A simple, but very realistic reply is to say "Fulfil all the commandments, and you will be a Christian".

And yet, we may fulfil all the commandments, we may feel that we are right before God, but if our heart is not in what we do, we have not done what a Christian is called to do, to be, because the commandments which Christ left us are not drilling orders. In the commandments He reveals to us what we should do if our heart were pure, if we communed with God, if we were true to ourselves. These are the things — He says — that should become natural to you, and therefore, you can judge yourselves by comparing not your deeds to the commandments, but your heart to the inspiration that would make them natural.

And so it is not simply by doing things that this is achieved, but by becoming the kind of person for whom these things are their

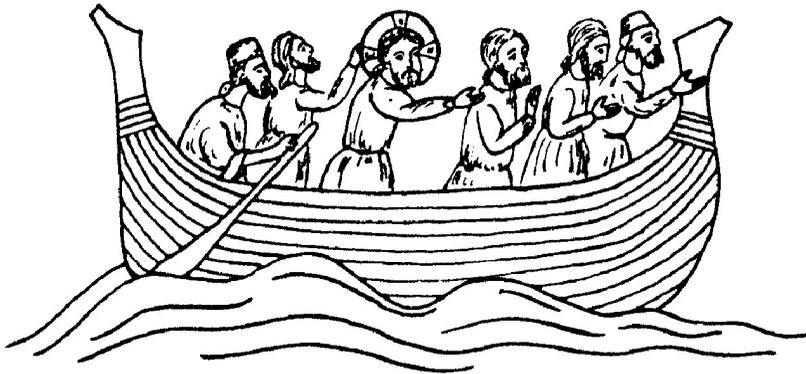
true nature; in other words, by willing to be the true, undistorted image of Christ. But where do we begin then? It is easy to be doers — how can we change our hearts, how can we find inspiration indeed to do it? It we think of God, if we think that God has so loved us that, to use the words of Saint Paul, He came to save us while we were still His enemies, that He gave his life that we may live free from evil; then what should be our first reaction, our first response? I think, at that level we should say, "Let my whole life be evidence to God that I have understood: understood that He believed in me and felt it was worth giving His own life for me, that He hoped that I would respond, and He loved me unto life and unto death."

If we have understood this, not only the love of God, but the faith He has in us, the hope He has placed upon us, then our first step should be to build our life in such a way as to be a joy for God; if we only could think of our lives as a way of giving God a little joy — not the exulting joy of perfect victory, but a joy which a mother, a father, a guide has when a child, a youth, a grown up man or woman says, "I do understand, I have understood, and now all my life I will strive to show my understanding". And showing our understanding of God's love, of God's faith and hope does not consist in singing praises to Him; it consists in making all our life a hymn of gratitude, so that seeing what we do, how gradually we become new people, how our hearts, full of gratitude and of joy, make us shine with an inner light, then we will have begun on our spiritual life.

There is a passage in the Gospel, in which we are told, "Let your light so shine before

men that seeing this light they may give glory to the Father Who is in Heaven...". What is this light which we must reveal, unveil, let freely shine around us? It is not our own light, it is not manifesting our intelligence, our human warmth, our talents; it is becoming so filled with what is God's, so transparent to His light, that His light may shine freely, and not be kept, as it were, in the darkness of our soul. Again, — it is the only way we can cast light, share light with others, because our talents, our intelligence, our hearts, may well be below those of others, while this light is life, this light is enlightenment, this light can help others to become new.

So let us begin with simply being actively grateful to God, — actively grateful: not emotionally, but in deed, to the core of our being, in every thought, in heart, in our will and action.



# Struggling to Believe



This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



**The Holy Apostle John is given the title "Theologian" because his Gospel interprets events and words, delving into their meaning in the light of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Rather than just recording episodes, John (who, by tradition, was aided in his writing by Prochorus) sets them in the context of Jesus the Messiah's coming: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...(1: 12).**

In the first chapter, John names four people—John the Baptist, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael—who recognize Jesus as the Savior, the One who fulfills the promises of Moses and the prophets. It is clearly a struggle to believe at first, at least for Nathanael, but Jesus rewards their recognition by assuring them that they will see "...heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (1: 51).

John had a special closeness to Jesus. As we know, he is referred to as the "beloved disciple," and he is the only one of the four Gospel writers who records two events involving Jesus' beloved Mother. The first is the wedding at Cana (2: 1-11) at which Jesus responds to His Mother's concern for the bridegroom by changing water into wine.

The second is Jesus' direction to Mary, as He hangs on the cross, to take John as her son, and to John that he care for Mary as his mother (19: 26-27). This loving, familial gesture is quite a contrast to Luke's Gospel, for example. There, Jesus' only words from the cross addressed to mothers are these in 23: 28-29: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!'"

Despite his love for Jesus, John doesn't avoid writing about the hostility He faced, and about the struggles of some to believe His words. For example, in John 6: 35-44 Jesus tells the Jews, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever..." The Jews "murmur" at this, wondering how He can claim to have come down from heaven when they know very well who His parents are. Their doubt is a bit like that of the Samaritan woman, who at first struggles to believe His claim that He has "living water" because He carries no vessel to draw from the well (4: 11).

#### Troparion - Tone 2

O beloved Apostle of Christ our God,  
Come quickly to deliver your helpless people.  
He on whose breast you leaned, will accept you as intercessor.  
Entreat Him, O Theologian, to disperse the clouds of darkness,  
Granting us peace and great mercy!

But the Samaritan woman does come to believe, as do many of the Jews. Struggle on the way to belief is no sin, and should come as no surprise. Jesus Christ warned us about it when He said, as John writes in 16: 4, "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away."