



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Services Schedule

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

Bulletin for Sunday, July 03, 2022

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

Susan Davis- Council Member at Large

Carolyn Neiss - President

Marlene Melesko - Vice President

Susan Egan - Treasurer

Dn Timothy Skuby - Secretary

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

The 20th All American Council : July 18th - 22nd

Over the next few weeks, before the start of the AAC, i would ask that you take some time to reflect on the following questions.

This year's theme is "Becoming Vessels of Grace"

- Does this theme apply to us as "persons" or to us as a parish? Perhaps both?
- How might the verses from St Paul related to this theme?

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us.

8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (2 Corin 4:7-10)

- How does our Parish Mission Statement fit with the theme of the AAC?

Mission Statement

St. Alexis Orthodox Christian Church is a local English speaking community of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) on the shoreline of Connecticut.

St. Alexis exists to:

Call all people to Christ
Worship as a community
Experience the joy of Christ in our lives
Share this joy with those around us
Educate people about the Truth and Presence of Orthodoxy
We offer the love of Christ to those in need, both in word and action.

- Our we living up to our Mission?
- If not, how are we falling short; if so, how are we succeeding?
- What, if anything, should we be doing different?

Save the Date:

Sunday, September 25, 2022

FORCC Benefit Banquet

St. Dimitrie's Orthodox Church Easton, CT

JUNE 2022 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

Financial Report

The parish continues to stay ahead of the annual budgeted expenses. We have recently had the Air Conditioners serviced and we have a new Lawn Service provider (Nichol's Landscaping). This company does not provide snow plowing services so we will be looking for a new provider come the fall.

Building and Maintenance

The council is looking at the fence repair/replacement project. We received bids last year but will be reaching out to get updated bids, since the prices have changed due to COVID and inflation. This is an ongoing project. Thanks to Greg Jankura for providing some temporary repairs as needed.

Planning & Priorities

The Parish Council is reviewing the progress that has been made during the first half of the year regarding the established Planning & Priorities List that they developed. We are currently looking at identifying one or two focus areas that we would like to concentrate on during the last half (six months of the year). After much discussion and prior to the next meeting the Parish Council will review the Parish's Mission Statement and bring their thoughts/ideas as to what we want to focus on as a parish. Due to the desire not to lose any momentum, there will be a special Parish Council meeting specifically to address this issue. It will be conducted on Thursday 7 July via Zoom at 6:00pm.

The July meeting will need to be rescheduled as it conflicts with the All American Council.

All American Council (AAC)

The All American Council meeting is being held in Baltimore from Sunday 17 July to Friday 22 July. Father Steven and John Skrobat (Parish Lay Delegate) will be attending. Father intends to be on vacation the weekend following the AAC meeting (23-24 July).

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Priest Ceraphim, Deacon Timothy, Evelyn, Katheryn, Anne, Aaron, Veronica, Richard, Nancy, Susanne, Gail, Kelley, Nina, Ellen, Maureen, Elizabeth, Christopher, Joshua, Jennifer, Petra, Olivia, Jessica, Sean, Sarah, Justin, Kyle, Dayna and Maria.

Please pray for our catecumen David.

Many Years! to Joan Skrobat and Sophia Brubaker on the occasion of their birthdays.

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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.

3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Martyr Hyacinth of Caesarea in Cappadocia (108). Translation of the Relics of Hieromartyr Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow (1652). Ven. Anatoly (Anatolius) of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.), and Ven. Anatoly (another), Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). St. Vasily, Bishop of Riazan' (1295). Rt. Blv. Princes Vasily and Constantine of Yaroslavl' (13th c.). Ven. John and Longinus, Wonderworkers of Yarensk (Solovétsky Monastery—1544-45). Bl. John of Moscow, Fool-for-Christ (1589). Ven. Nicodim (Nikódēmos), Abbot of Kozhenezérsk (1640). St. Alexander, founder of the "Unsleeping Ones" (ca. 430). St. Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople (458). Monastic Martyr Gerasimus (1812).

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

July 3 to July 11, 2022

Sunday, July 3

3rd Sunday of Matthew
Sophia Brubaker
Joan Skrobat - B
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 4

Christine Brubaker
Church Cleaning: Sue Davis
Andrew of Crete Author of the Great Canon

Tuesday, July 5

Athanasius of Mount Athos
8:30AM Daily Matins

Wednesday, July 6

Sisoës the Great
6:00PM General Confession

Thursday, July 7

Kyriake the Great Martyr
8:30AM Daily Matins
6:00PM Missions and Ministries

Friday, July 8

Sitka Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos
The Holy Great Martyr Procopius

Saturday, July 9

The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, July 10

4th Sunday of Matthew
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 11

Euphemia the Great Martyr
St. Olga, Princess of Russia

Saints and Feasts

July 03

Hyacinth the Martyr of Caesarea & Theodotos and Theodota the Martyrs

The Martyr Hyacinth, who was from Caesarea of Cappadocia, was the chamberlain of the Emperor Trajan. On being constrained by the Emperor to partake of the sacrifices offered to idols and not wishing to do so, he was shut up in prison without food, where he gave up his spirit to God in the year 108.

July 04

Andrew of Crete Author of the Great Canon

Saint Andrew was from Damascus; his parents' names were George and Gregoria. He became a cleric and secretary of Theodore and Patriarch of Jerusalem; from this, he is called "the Jerusalemite." He was present at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, which was convoked in 680 during the reign of Emperor Constantine IV (668-685). He became deacon of the Great church in Constantinople, that is, the Church of the Holy Wisdom of God, then Archbishop of Crete. He reposed in 720 or 723. Beside his other sacred writings, he also composed various hymns, among which is the famous Great Canon, which is chanted during Great Lent (see the Thursday of the Fifth Week of the Fast).

July 06

Sisoës the Great

This Saint, great and renowned among the ascetics of Egypt, lived in the fourth century in Scete of Nitria. After the death of Saint Anthony the Great, he left Scete to live in Saint Anthony's cave; he said of this, "Thus in the cave of a lion, a fox makes his dwelling." When Sisoës was at the end of his long life of labours, as the Fathers were gathered about him, his face began to shine, and he said, "Behold, Abba Anthony is come"; then, "Behold, the choir of the Prophets is come"; his face shone yet more bright, and he said, "Behold, the choir of the Apostles is come." The light of his countenance increased, and he seemed to be talking with someone. The Fathers asked him of this; in his humility, he said he was asking the Angels for time to repent. Finally his face became as bright as the sun, so that the Fathers were filled with fear. He said, "Behold, the Lord is come, and He says, 'Bring Me the vessel of the desert,'" and as he gave up his soul into the hands of God, there was as it were a flash of lightning, and the whole dwelling was filled with a sweet fragrance.

July 07

Kyriake the Great Martyr

Saint Kyriake was the daughter of Christian parents, Dorotheus and Eusebia. She was given her name because she was born on Sunday, the day of the Lord (in Greek,

Kyriake). She contested in Nicomedia during the reign of Diocletian, in the year 300. After many bitter torments she was condemned to suffer beheading, but being granted time to pray first, she made her prayer and gave up her holy soul in peace.

July 08

The Holy Great Martyr Procopius

The holy Martyr Procopius was born of a pious father named Christopher, but his mother Theodosia was an idolater. After Christopher's death, she presented Neanias - for this was the Saint's name before - to Diocletian, who was at Antioch in Syria. Diocletian made him Duke of Alexandria, and sent him there to punish the Christians. On the way to Alexandria, our Lord spoke to Neanias as once He had to Saul, and turned this new persecutor to faith in Him. Neanias turned back to Scythopolis, and preached Christ. He was betrayed by his own mother, and was arrested and tormented in Caesarea of Palestine. While he was in prison, the Lord appeared to him again and gave him the new name of Procopius (which is derived from the Greek word meaning "progress, advancement"). He was brought out of prison and taken to worship the idols, but at his prayer, the idols fell; many then believed in Christ and suffered martyrdom, among them certain soldiers, twelve women of senatorial rank, and the Saint's own mother, Theodosia. Saint Procopius, after further torments and imprisonment, was beheaded about the year 290.

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 4 Troparion (St. Hyacinth)

Your holy martyr Hyacinth, O Lord, through his sufferings has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God. For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.//

Through his intercession, save our souls!

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 2 Kontakion (St. Hyacinth)

Come, you faithful,
plait a crown of unfading hyacinths today

for the Martyr Hyacinth,
and let us cry to him://
"Rejoice, glory of martyrs!"

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him
in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 2nd Tone. Psalm 117.14,18.

The Lord is my strength and my song.

Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

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.

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 be yours as well."

Bible Cross Reference



Romans 5:1

Faith in Christ makes us justified, an ongoing state of communion with Him. Because of this ongoing communion, we have peace with God which is also ongoing. The Greek word *pistis*, here translated as faith, can also be rendered

"faithfulness." Faith is more than the conviction that something is true (Jam 2:19). Genuine faithfulness is continuous loyalty and obedience to God. Such faithfulness justifies a person through God's grace.

Being justified refers to an ongoing state of righteousness and not merely to a one-time event. This justification requires a redemption: a sacrificial offering capable of (1) setting us free from sin and death, and (2) uniting us eternally with righteousness

and life. In the OT, this sacrificial offering was prefigured by blood sacrifices—the killing of physically perfect animals for the temporal remission of sins (see Heb 9). Under the new covenant, Christ is the sacrificial offering that once for all eternally frees us from sin and death (Heb 10:14) and by His grace unites us with righteousness and life.

Wisdom of the Fathers

And let me beg you to consider how he everywhere sets down these two points; His part, and our part. On His part, however, there be things varied and numerous and diverse. For He died for us, and farther reconciled us, and brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought faith only as our contribution. And so he says, "by faith, unto this grace" What grace is this? tell me. It is the being counted worthy of the knowledge of God, the being forced from error, the coming to a knowledge of the Truth, the obtaining of all the blessings that come through Baptism. For the end of His bringing us near was that we might receive these gifts. For it was not only that we might have simple remission of sins, that we were reconciled; but that we might receive also countless benefits...A person has acquired rule and glory and authority, yet he does not stand therein continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. Or if man take it not from him, death comes, and is sure to take it from him. But God's gifts are not of this kind; for neither man, nor occasion, nor crisis of affairs, nor even the Devil, nor death, can come and cast us. out of them. But when we are dead we then

more strictly speaking have possession of them, and keep going on enjoying more and more.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 9 on Romans 4, 4th Century

Beyond the Sermon



Homily for Sunday,
August 8, 2021
In the Name of the
Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Today we hear about our
Lord entering a town. As
He is on His way to the

house where He will stay, two blind men follow behind Him, crying out, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”

Those of us who are blessed with healthy vision, even if we have to wear glasses, probably have some idea of how difficult it would be to be blind. If you’ve ever had an injury, or an illness that affected your sight—or if you’ve had a strong prescription and lost your glasses, or had a problem with your contact lenses—then you may have an idea of the fear that comes with losing your sight.

If you’ve ever been driving on the highway and suddenly driven into thick fog, you may know the feeling of fear that comes when you can’t see what is ahead of you. We rely

on our vision to know where we are going; we also rely on our vision to avoid threats and dangers that might be around us.

But even if our vision is 20/20, even if we can see clearly with our eyes, the challenges and hardships and uncertainties of life can seem like a kind of blindness. Not knowing what is ahead of us, not knowing what is around us, can be frightening.

When we face tragedy or misfortune, or when the people we love are suffering, it can be frightening. When there is division and strife between us and the people we love, the people we work with, or even other members of the Church, it can be frightening.

Facing the unknown, not knowing if things will get better, or if things will actually get worse—this can feel like a kind of blindness. And this can lead to a sense of spiritual emptiness: a sense of being alone, and in danger.

But, fundamentally, fear and spiritual emptiness are actually a crisis of vocation.

Now, often we think of vocation in terms of a specific ministry in the church, like priestly ordination or a monastic vocation. But there is a much more fundamental vocation that we all share, because vocation means to be called: to be called by God, and to follow Him.

Today, along with the blind men we cry out to Jesus, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” And our Lord is not silent. He answers by calling us out of darkness and fear, by calling us to return to our true vocation.

The most fundamental vocation shared by every single man, woman, and child is to become more like the perfect human being, Jesus Christ; to become ever more like our Lord, God, and Savior in whose image we are created.

Now, it is important to remember that our vocation is not a shortcut around the struggles and hardships of this life. Our vocation is to follow Christ through the darkness of this world, and through death itself, into the kingdom of heaven.

The Word of God entered into this world, took on human flesh, and as perfect God and perfect man, showed us that the way of eternal life is the way of the Cross.

As the Apostle Paul says, “share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:8-9).

God did not create us to be fearful or spiritually empty—this is not our vocation. Our fundamental Christian vocation is to be vessels of God’s grace. We were created to be vessels of God’s grace.

But a vessel is not something that is meant to be put on a shelf and admired, or locked in a glass box in a museum. A vessel is meant to carry something to someone who is in need, like a glass vial that carries a lifesaving medicine to someone who is ill.

And a sacred vessel is meant to carry God’s grace to those who are suffering, just like the holy chalice, that we’ll soon place on the altar, which carries the sacred Body

and Blood of Christ that will be distributed to all of us.

Our vocation is to be vessels of grace, so that we might bring the love, and mercy, and truth of Jesus Christ to those in need.

When our Lord hears the blind men following Him and crying out, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” He restores their sight, and delivers them from their darkness and fear.

Then the people bring to Him a man who was mute and possessed by a demon. And the Lord casts it out, so that the man can speak, so that he can give thanks to God and tell of the wonderful works of the Lord.

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Mt 9:35).

The Only-begotten Son of the Father, the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ comes into this world so that He might share God’s grace and healing and mercy with everyone.

Again and again, Christ allowed the sick, the weak, the sinful, and the broken to come to Him, and receive God’s healing and forgiveness and love. Jesus Christ is the perfect vessel of God’s grace. Everyone who comes to Christ with a broken and contrite heart receives God’s grace.

Receiving God’s grace, our sight is restored, our fear is cast out, and we are recalled to our true vocation: to become vessels of grace like Christ, the perfect vessel of God’s grace.

This is the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ: God calls all of us together, knowing our weakness, and our sorrows, and our fears. And God heals us, casting out fear with perfect love.

As God heals us, He unites us to Himself and unites us to one another, in the perfect bonds of love and mercy and compassion. And united, one to another in bonds of love, God fills His Church with divine grace. United as one Body in Christ, we become vessels of grace for one another, and for our neighbor.

Think for a moment about a church choir.

Each singer, on his or her own, can sing beautifully. But singing together, the choir creates sacred music with harmonic richness, and resonance, and depth that is simply impossible for one singer alone.

This does not mean that every singer sings every note perfectly, every time. But when a singer is slightly off key, or out of tempo, because they are surrounded by the voices of all the other singers, they can quickly adjust, correct, and more perfectly contribute their unique voice to the sound of the choir.

And when the voices of the singers blend perfectly, sacred music can take your breath away. It can make people say, "That is amazing. Listen to that! I want to hear more."

This is how we work together as the Church to be vessels of God's grace. In other words, we all contribute, one to another, to foster this growth in each of us and with each

of us together.

The reason that sacred choral music produces such a powerful sound is that all of the voices are in proper relationship with one another. Similarly, the Church manifests God's grace through the relationships of love, and compassion, and forgiveness that exist among the members.

People witness the grace of God in the life of the Church when they see how we are quick to repent, quick to ask forgiveness, and quick to forgive.

People witness the grace of God when they see us tenderly lift one another up when we stumble.

People witness the grace of God when they see us standing by one another in kindness and mercy through hard times.

When people witness God's grace, they are likely to say, "This is amazing. Look at this! I want to know more." And as the Body of Christ, we welcome all who seek God's saving grace.

God's grace is not some abstract theological concept. It is the real, tangible, power by which God acts in our lives to transform us.

It is this grace, the grace of God, that makes the Church the safe haven, the place where people are nurtured, where we find answers not only for our intellects but also for our hearts.

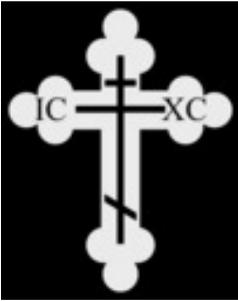
Today, on the day of the Resurrection, as we pray in the presence of our Venerable Father Herman, who was himself a vessel of God's grace, may God unite us one to another ever more perfectly as the Body

of Christ, so that corporately, united in bonds of love, God might use us as sacred vessels, to bring the pure, radiant, life-giving grace of the Gospel to all who seek everlasting life and the joy of the kingdom.

Amen.

The Most Blessed Tikhon is Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada

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Useful Resources and References

Parish Shared Folder

(for all documents, bulletins etc) -

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

The QR Code here may be used as well.



Parish Members'

Directory -

<https://stalexischurch.sharepoint.com>

This directory contains access to studies, sermons, and many other resources. It does require a login to access this "internal" site, so please see Fr Steven for this information.

Parish Web Site -

<http://www.stalexischurch.org> ; [calendar](#) (<https://bit.ly/StA-Calendar>)

Facebook - @stalexisorthodox

Youtube Channel - https://bit.ly/StA_Youtube

Join Zoom Meeting

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