



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, October 30, 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

Annual Meeting

This year's Parish Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, Nov 20th, after Liturgy. It will be in person (as opposed to Zoom alone). While the meeting will be recorded, it will not "zoomed" so to participate, you must be present. Accordingly, only those parishioners who meeting the criteria for "voting" members may vote: However, everyone is invited to attend. If you have any questions, please refer to the ByLaws as found in the parish handbook.

If anyone has a resolution or "new business" that they would like to introduce to the parish, please submitted such to a council member by Sunday, November 6th.

General Confession

Please note the change, General Confession has been moved from the first Wednesday of the month to the first Saturday, immediately following Vespers; effective this November.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Please continue to pray for our catechumens, David and Anthony (and his family).

- 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 institutionalize, 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.

Hieromartyrs Zenobius and his sister Zenobia, of Aegæ in Cilicia (285). Apostles Tertius, Mark, Justus, and Artemas, of the Seventy (1st c.). Hieromartyr Marcian, Bishop of Syracuse (2nd c.). Martyr Eutropia of Alexandria (ca. 250). Martyr Anastasia of Thessalonica (3rd c.). St. Stephen Milutin, his brother Ven. Dragutin (Theoctistus in monasticism), and their mother, St. Helen (Jelena), of Serbia.

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

October 30 to November 7, 2022

Sunday, October 30

5th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, October 31

Church Cleaning: Jo Barbera
Stachys, Andrew, Amplias, Apelles, Urban,
Aristobulus & Narcissus of the 70
Martyrdom of St. John Kochurov

Tuesday, November 1

+Joan Narvaro
Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenaries
of Asia, and their mother Theodota
8:30AM Daily Matins
6:00PM Budget Meeting

Wednesday, November 2

The Holy Martyrs Acindynos, Pegasios,
Aphthonios, Elpidophoros, and Anempodistos

Thursday, November 3

Acepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter,
& Aeithalas the Deacon, Martyrs of Persia
8:30AM Daily Matins
7:00PM Catechumens

Friday, November 4

Joannicius the Great

Saturday, November 5

Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn
5:30PM Great Vespers
6:00PM General Confession

Sunday, November 6

7th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, November 7

33 Martyrs of Melitene

Saints and Feasts

October 30

The Holy Martyrs Zenobius and His Sister Zenobia

These Saints were from Aegae in Cilicia, brought up in piety by their parents. Zenobius was a physician, and healed many freely by the power of God; because of his virtue he was consecrated Bishop of Aegae. With his sister he was taken by Lysias the Governor, and after many tortures they were beheaded, about the year 290, during the reign of Diocletian.

November 01

Cosmas and Damianos the Holy Unmercenaries and their mother Theodota

These Saints were from Asia (that is, Asia Minor). After the death of their father, their Christ-loving mother Theodota reared them in piety and in all manner of virtue, and had them instructed in every science, especially that of medicine. This became their vocation, and they went about healing every illness and malady, bestowing healing freely on both men and beasts alike; because of this, they are called "Unmercenaries." And thus, having completed the course of their life, they reposed in peace.

November 04

Ioannikos the Great

Saint Joannicius was born in Bithynia about the year 740. His father was named Myritrikes and his mother Anastaso. When he had reached maturity, he excelled in soldiery and was counted worthy of royal honours for his bravery. He had been brought up an iconoclast, but while yet a soldier, he was converted to Orthodoxy by a certain holy elder. He later forsook all things and departed for Mount Olympus, where he spent the remainder of his life in asceticism. Becoming great in virtue, he reposed in the Lord in the year 834, having lived some ninety-four years. To this Saint is ascribed the brief prayer, "My hope is the Father"

November 05

Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn

Saint Raphael Hawaweeny was born on November 8th, 1860 A.D., in Damascus, Syria, to pious Christian parents. He studied Arabic grammar and mathematics at the Antiochian Patriarchate parochial school where he was tonsured a reader in 1874. His strong academics served him well throughout his life, providing for him numerous opportunities to succeed and grow. He accepted a position in 1877 as an assistant teacher of Arabic and Turkish, which became full time in 1879. In 1889 he was tonsured a monk while working with Patriarch Hierotheos at the patriarchate, traveling with him on pastoral visits and serving as his personal assistant.

Longing to continue his theological studies, Raphael petitioned the Patriarch for permission to study at Halki Theological School, which was the only option for students of the Antiochian Patriarchate as the Balamand Seminary in Lebanon had been closed since 1840. After much persistence, Raphael received the blessing of the Patriarch and enrolled in Halki Seminary where he was ordained a deacon in 1885. After completing his degree at Halki, the young Deacon Raphael studied at the Kiev Theological Academy, working as a liaison between the Moscow and Antiochian patriarchates. Deacon Raphael was ordained to the holy priesthood in 1889 while in Kiev, continuing to serve that community for many years.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 led to the subsequent collapse of the silk industry in the Middle East, causing many Syrians and others to immigrate to the United States. These new citizens desired to have their religion present in their new homeland and sent letters to their mother churches for pastoral help. A few priests were sent, but none lasted, and so the people asked for Father Raphael Hawaweeny to come to America and serve. Both the Antiochian and Moscow Patriarchs agreed to this idea, and Father Raphael left for America where the people greeted him with great love. Father Raphael then spent many years serving the Syrians in Brooklyn, New York, but he desired to scan the continent for Syrians and other Orthodox Christians who were without spiritual leadership. He traveled by train and carriage across the nation, finding Orthodox Christians, recording their location, and performing liturgies, baptisms, and weddings. Upon his return to Brooklyn, Father Raphael worked to find clergy to send to these dispersed communities, giving them a full time pastor to minister to their needs.

In 1909, by the hands of Bishops Tikhon and Innocent of the Moscow Patriarchate, he was the first bishop consecrated in the New World. The now Bishop Raphael continued his ministry to the Christians throughout America. Bishop Raphael worked tirelessly in Brooklyn to mediate disputes between the Orthodox Christians from Syria and Maronite Catholic Christians who often fought violently with one another. Despite numerous outbursts and setbacks, Bishop Raphael continued his ministry serving

the Orthodox throughout his vast diocese. One such incident was when an influential leader of the Maronite group was killed and many people accused Bishop Raphael of ordering his murder. This led to many people attempting to harm the bishop, but he endured it all willingly. He was arrested under attempted murder charges, but was eventually cleared and let go after much time and money was spent in his defense.

Throughout his time in North America, Bishop Raphael founded 36 parishes to bring the Church to the faithful who were without a priest to guide them. Bishop Raphael truly lived out Gospel in all aspects of his life, striving tirelessly for the people in his care, even to the point of sacrificing his own physical health in order to maintain the spiritual health of his people. Bishop Raphael died on February 27th, 1915, at his home in Brooklyn. His funeral was attended by hundreds of people, including clergy from all ethnic backgrounds, illustrating his love for all of the people of God regardless of where they came from. The sacred relics of Saint Raphael, “the good shepherd of the lost sheep in North America,” were first interred in a crypt beneath the holy table at his Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn on March 7th, 1915, before being moved to the Syrian section of Mount Olivet Cemetery in Brooklyn on April 2nd, 1922. They were finally translated to the Holy Resurrection Cemetery at the Antiochian Village near Ligonier, Pennsylvania, on August 15th, 1988. His sanctity was officially proclaimed by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America on March 29th, 2000, and his

glorification was celebrated on May 29th of that year at the Monastery of Saint Tikhon in Pennsylvania.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown
strength with His arm.
He has trampled down
death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Tone 4 Troparion (Martyrs)

As brother and sister united in godliness
together you struggled in contest Zenóbius
and Zenobía.
You received incorruptible crowns
and unending glory//
and shine forth with the grace of healing upon
those in the world.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Resurrection)

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

Tone 8 Kontakion (Martyrs)

Let us honor with inspired hymns the two
martyrs for truth:
the preachers of true devotion, Zenóbius and
Zenobía;
as brother and sister they lived and suffered
together//
and through martyrdom received their
incorruptible crowns.

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. 3rd Tone. Psalm 46.6,1.

Sing praises to our God, sing praises.

Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19.

Brethren, I would have you know that the
gospel which was preached by me is not man's
gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor
was I taught it, but it came through a
revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard
of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted
the church of God violently and tried to
destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond
many of my own age among my people, so
extremely zealous was I for the traditions of
my fathers. But when he who had set me apart

before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Luke 8:26-39

At that time, as Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them

leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

The Faith We Hold



A Faith for the Future
Barbara Aber
Upbeat
V. 4, n.1, 1971

This has been a question asked since the beginning of Christianity when the first church was founded by the

apostles. This was evidenced by the trials, tribulations, and persecutions that the Church suffered at the hands of those who questioned its relevancy.

In every generation there are seers who predict the death of religion, but the very fact that it is still the topic of conversation and discussion almost 2,000 years later, is the best proof of religious vitality.

We are living in an age of religious revolution. It seems that the Churches are beginning to realize that they have to make themselves more adaptable to modern times, if they are to avoid having their priests, seminaries, and nuns leave the Holy Order.

The Western rite churches have already made some changes trying to eliminate medieval attitudes and practices that have little meaning for modern man. Their people are no longer content just to pray, pay and obey. Their priests and bishops want a voice in their religious affairs. Matters of contraception, celibacy, and mixed marriages are problems still facing them today. The laity are finding themselves as participants in the Liturgy in their own language and are now active in parish and diocesan councils. Liturgical changes of various kinds including new marriage and baptismal rites are now in effect. They are now encouraged to see non-Catholic Christians as brothers instead of heretics.

While the Western rite churches are doctrinally distressed, the Orthodox Churches seem spiritually stricken with apathy and complacency. But it is not the Church that is irrelevant, but rather, it is the people of the Church who make it irrelevant to themselves. Our Churches have become social lodges where many

times the priests are harassed by the people of the parishes when they try to enforce Orthodox tradition. Too much is often expected of the priests, nevertheless they perform their duties without complaining. In this fast moving world, we have made Christ's Church almost a business-oriented organization and have forgotten the meaning of charity, love, brotherhood. If the Church is to become more relevant to us, we must become less involved in our involvements and place less emphasis on materialism. We must turn away from our sins and be reconverted to Christ and the Gospel for our salvation. We must also take full part in the life of the Church using our time and our money generously to help support the work of the Church.

I believe the Church will always be relevant. The Orthodox Church edifice is the dwelling place of God and the Holy Spirit and is the body of Christ. It is through the Church we are able to experience Christ through the Eucharist, the life-giving body and blood of Christ. All those who share, with faith, this divine act, not only are able to live with new righteousness benefiting their souls, but become brothers to each other.

Life in the Church is life in the truth which possesses fullness and purity. To the Orthodox Church is committed the deposit of faith, the truth of the divine revelation, which is the same today as it was in the first century and is not susceptible to change. It is inflexible and will not suffer compromise. We must be careful to guard and preserve this Faith. Because human nature is weak and fallible, we need the strength and ideals of the Church to help us escape the evil in the world and to avoid its temptations. We need

it for our salvation if we are to have everlasting life.

Now is the time to wake out of our sleep and shed the yolk of apathy and complacency. It is the time to propagate our Faith and let the light of Orthodoxy shine in the world. Getting to know the heart of Orthodoxy can be found in its rites, but it may be difficult to obtain this spiritual development. The Christian people who are seeking Orthodoxy will find it, for it is said, "Seek and ye shall find."

Wisdom of the Fathers

On that day God will not judge us about psalmody nor for the neglect of prayer, but because by abandoning them we have opened our door to the demons.

St. Isaac the Syrian

Company, Orthodox Calendar. Wisdom of the Divine Philosophers: Volume Three (p. 29). Orthodox Calendar Company. Kindle Edition.

Beyond the Sermon



Metropolitan Anthony of
Sourozh

The healing of the men
of Gergesene - St.

Matthew 8:28-9:1

Sunday, 30th June 1991

In the Name of the

Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And to-day I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave human beings and through them work the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul. Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the

grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment. And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal. There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from

the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine. What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people. Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need? Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security? Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act. Amen.

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