



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, January 15, 2023

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:

Greg Jankura - Vice President

Susan Davis- Council Member at Large

Carolyn Neiss - President

Marlene Melesko - Council Member at Large

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

House Blessings

Blessing of homes continue through the end of the month. Please contact Fr Steven via email or text to schedule your now.

Budget Update

Since the approval of our parish budget this past November, there have been two unexpected expense increases. The federal government has authorized the mileage rate increase from .625 to .655 per mile and the OCA pension has increased the parish contribution increase from 10% to 12%, resulting in a 2023 expense increase of \$1631. We were able to compensate \$500

because we will not need to get our septic tank pumped this year. The net increase in our budget is \$1131. We will have more information about our budget after the February council meeting.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Memory Eternal for Victor Kuziak on the memorial of his falling asleep in the Lord.

Please continue to pray for our catecumens, David, James 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.

31st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone

6. Ven. Paul of Thebes (341) and John Calabytes (“the Hut-dweller”—5th c.). Ven. Pansophius of Alexandria, Martyr (ca. 249-251). Ven. Prochorus, Abbot, in the Vranski desert on the River Pshina in Bulgaria (10th c.). Ven. Gabriel, founder of Lesnovo Monastery in Bulgaria (11th c.).

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

January 15 to January 23, 2023

Sunday, January 15

Sanctity of Life
12th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 16

Veneration of Apostle Peter's Precious Chains

Tuesday, January 17

Anthony the Great
8:30AM Akathist to St Anthony the Great

Wednesday, January 18

Athanasios and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria
Repose of Victor Kuziak
8:30AM Akathist to St Athanasiaus
4:30PM Open Doors

Thursday, January 19

Macarius the Great of Egypt
8:30AM Daily Matins
7:00PM Catachesis

Friday, January 20

Righteous Euthymius the Great

Saturday, January 21

Maximus the Confessor
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, January 22

Kyra and Roderick Sutteran
15th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 23

Church Cleaning: S. Davis
Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra

Saints and Feasts

January 15

Paul of Thebes

Saint Paul, first among hermits, was born about 227 in the Thebaid of Egypt. In 250 he fled into the wilderness because of the persecution raging at that time under Decius. Having lived a solitary life in a certain cave for ninety-one years, he reposed in 341, at the age of 114, and was buried by Anthony the Great, who had been directed thither by God several days before the Saint's repose.

January 15

John the Cave Dweller

Saint John, who was from Constantinople, was the son of illustrious parents

-- Eutropius the Senator and Theodora. At twelve years of age he departed secretly from his home and went to the Monastery of the Unsleping (see Dec. 29). Aflame with longing for his parents, he returned after six years to his father's home in the guise of a pauper and beggar. Living in a small hut at the gates of his parents' house (wherfrom he is called "hut-dweller"), he remained unknown therein for many years, and suffered mockery at the hands of those who had been his own servants. Foreknowing his death, he revealed himself to his parents, and within a few moments reposed, about the year 450.

January 16

Veneration of Apostle Peter's Precious Chains

Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great and king of the Jews, grew wroth against the Church of Christ, and slew James, the brother of John the Evangelist. Seeing that this pleased the Jews, he took Peter also into custody and locked him up in prison, intending to keep him there until after the feast of the Passover, so that he could win the favour of the people by presenting him to them as a victim. But the Apostle was saved when he was miraculously set free by an Angel (Acts 12:1-19). The chains wherewith the Apostle was bound received from his most sacred body the grace of sanctification and healing, which is bestowed upon the faithful who draw nigh with faith.

That such sacred treasures work wonders

and many healings is witnessed by the divine Scripture, where it speaks concerning Paul, saying that the Christians in Ephesus had such reverence for him, that his handkerchiefs and aprons, taken up with much reverence, healed the sick of their maladies: "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:12). But not only the Apostles' clothing (which certainly touched the bodies of the sick), but even their shadow alone performed healings. On beholding this, people put their sick on stretchers and beds and brought them out into the streets that, when Peter passed by, his shadow "might overshadow some of them"(Acts 5:15). From this the Orthodox Catholic Church has learned to show reverence and piety not only to the relics of their bodies, but also in the clothing of God's Saints.

January 17

Anthony the Great

Saint Anthony, the Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified

the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city.

The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near

the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life.

Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Saviour. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

January 18

Athanasios the Great and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria

In the half-century after the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicea in 325, if there was one man whom the Arians feared and hated more intensely than any other, as being able to lay bare the whole error of their teaching, and to marshal, even from exile or hiding, the beleaguered forces of the Orthodox, it was Saint Athanasios the Great. This blazing lamp of Orthodoxy, which imperial power and heretics' plots could not quench when he shone upon the lampstand, nor find when he was hid by the people and monks of Egypt, was born in Alexandria about the year 296. He received an excellent training in Greek letters

and especially in the sacred Scriptures, of which he shows an exceptional knowledge in his writings. Even as a young man he had a remarkable depth of theological understanding; he was only about twenty years old when he wrote his treatise "On the Incarnation." Saint Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria, brought him up in piety, ordained him his deacon, and after deposing Arius for his blasphemy against the Divinity of the Son of God, took Athanasios to the First Council in Nicea in 325. Saint Athanasios was to spend the remainder of his life laboring in defense of this Holy Council. In 326, before his death, Alexander appointed Athanasios his successor.

In 325, Arius had been condemned by the Council of Nicea; yet through his hypocritical confession of Orthodox belief, Saint Constantine the Great was persuaded by Arius's supporters that he should be received back into the communion of the Church. But Athanasios, knowing well the perverseness of his mind, and the disease of heresy lurking in his heart, refused communion with Arius. The heresiarch's followers then began framing false charges against Athanasios. Finally Saint Constantine the Great, misled by grave charges of the Saint's misconduct (which were completely false), had him exiled to Tiberius (Treves) in Gaul in 336. When Saint Constantine was succeeded by his three sons Constantine II, Constans, and Constantius, in 337, Saint Athanasios returned to Alexandria in triumph. But his enemies found an ally in Constantius, Emperor of the East, and he spent a second exile in Rome. It was ended when Constans

prevailed with threats upon his brother Constantius to restore Athanasios (see also Nov. 6). For ten years Saint Athanasios strengthened Orthodoxy throughout Egypt, visiting the whole country and encouraging all: clergy, monastics, and lay folk, being loved by all as a father. After Constans's death in 350, Constantius became sole Emperor, and Athanasios was again in danger. On the evening of February 8, 356, General Syrianus with more than five thousand soldiers surrounded the church in which Athanasios was serving, and broke open the doors. Athanasios's clergy begged him to leave, but the good shepherd commanded that all the flock should withdraw first; and only when he was assured of their safety, he also, protected by divine grace, passed through the midst of the soldiers and disappeared into the deserts of Egypt, where for some six years he eluded the soldiers and spies sent after him.

When Julian the Apostate succeeded Constantius in 361, Athanasios returned again, but only for a few months. Because Athanasios had converted many pagans, and the priests of the idols in Egypt wrote to Julian that if Athanasios remained, idolatry would perish in Egypt, the heathen Emperor ordered not Athanasios's exile, but his death. Athanasios took a ship up the Nile. When he learned that his imperial pursuers were following him, he had his men turn back, and as his boat passed that of his pursuers, they asked him if he had seen Athanasios. "He is not far," he answered. After returning to Alexandria for a while, he fled again to the Thebaid until Julian's death in 363. Saint Athanasios suffered his fifth

and last exile under Valens in 365, which only lasted four months because Valens, fearing a sedition among the Egyptians for their beloved Archbishop, revoked his edict in February, 366.

The great Athanasios passed the remaining seven years of his life in peace. Of his fifty-seven years as Patriarch, he had spent some seventeen in exiles. Shining from the height of his throne like a radiant evening star, and enlightening the Orthodox with the brilliance of his words for yet a little while, this much-suffering champion inclined toward the sunset of his life, and in the year 373 took his rest from his lengthy sufferings, but not before another luminary of the truth -- Basil the Great -- had risen in the East, being consecrated Archbishop of Caesarea in 370. Besides all of his other achievements, Saint Athanasios wrote the life of Saint Anthony the Great, with whom he spent time in his youth; ordained Saint Frumentius first Bishop of Ethiopia; and in his Paschal Encyclical for the year 367 set forth the books of the Old and New Testaments accepted by the Church as canonical. Saint Gregory the Theologian, in his "Oration On the Great Athanasios", said that he was "Angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind; ... rebuking with the tenderness of a father, praising with the dignity of a ruler ... Everything was harmonious, as an air upon a single lyre, and in the same key; his life, his teaching, his struggles, his dangers, his return, and his conduct after his return ... he treated so mildly and gently those who had injured him, that even they themselves, if I may say so, did not find his restoration distasteful."

Saint Cyril was also from Alexandria, born about the year 376. He was the nephew of Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who also instructed the Saint in his youth. Having first spent much time with the monks in Nitria, he later became the successor to his uncle's throne in 412. In 429, when Cyril heard tidings of the teachings of the new Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, he began attempting through private letters to bring Nestorius to renounce his heretical teaching about the Incarnation. When the heresiarch did not repent, Saint Cyril, together with Pope Celestine of Rome, led the Orthodox opposition to his error. Saint Cyril presided over the Third Ecumenical Council of the 200 Holy Fathers in the year 431, who gathered in Ephesus under Saint Theodosius the Younger. At this Council, by his most wise words, he put to shame and convicted the impious doctrine of Nestorius, who, although he was in town, refused to appear before Cyril. Saint Cyril, besides overthrowing the error of Nestorius, has left to the Church full commentaries on the Gospels of Luke and John. Having shepherded the Church of Christ for thirty-two years, he reposed in 444.

January 19

Makarios the Great of Egypt

Saint Macarius the Great was from the Thebaid of Egypt, a disciple, as some say, of Saint Anthony the Great. He was born about 331 and struggled in asceticism in the desert at Scete. Although young, he was called "the child elder" because of his great

wisdom and austere manner of life. He was ordained presbyter and reposed in 391, at the age of sixty. There are fifty homilies ascribed to him.

It is said of Saint Macarius that he became as a God upon earth, for even as God protects the whole world, so did he cover the faults he saw as if he did not see them. Once he came back to his cell to find a thief taking his things and loading them on a camel. Macarius' non-possessiveness was so great that he helped the thief load the camel. When the camel refused to rise, Macarius returned to his cell and brought a small hoe, said that the camel wanted the hoe also, loaded it on, and kicked the camel telling it to get up. The camel obeyed Macarius' command, but soon lay down again, and would not move until everything had been returned to Macarius. His contemporary, Saint Macarius of Alexandria, was so called because he came from Alexandria and was therefore of that Greek-speaking colony; while Saint Macarius the Great is also called "of Egypt," that is, he belonged to the ancient race native to Egypt, the Copts.

January 21

Maximos the Confessor

The divine Maximus, who was from Constantinople, sprang from an illustrious family. He was a lover of wisdom and an eminent theologian. At first, he was the chief private secretary of the Emperor Heraclius and his grandson Constans. When the Monothelite heresy became

predominant in the royal court, out of hatred for this error the Saint departed for the Monastery at Chrysopolis (Scutari), of which he later became the abbot. When Constans tried to constrain him either to accept the Monothelite teaching, or to stop speaking and writing against it - neither of which the Saint accepted to do - his tongue was uprooted and his right hand was cut off, and he was sent into exile where he reposed in 662. At the time only he and his few disciples were Orthodox in the East (See also August 13).

Hymns of the Day



Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were
at Your tomb;
the guards became as
dead men.

Mary stood by Your
grave,

seeking Your most pure body.

You captured hell, not being tempted by it.

You came to the Virgin, granting life.

O Lord, Who rose from the dead, //

glory to You.

Tone 4 Troparion (Sts. Paul and John)

O God of our Fathers,

always act with kindness towards us;

take not Your mercy from us,

but guide our lives in peace //

through the prayers of the venerable Paul and
John!

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of
misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human
race.//
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the
Life, and the God of all.

Tone 2 Kontakion (St. John)

Longing for poverty in imitation of Christ,
you abandoned your parents' wealth, O wise
Father John;
grasping the Gospel in your hands, you
followed Christ God,//
unceasingly praying for us all.

Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Paul)

Today we gather and praise you with hymns
as an unwaning ray of the spiritual Sun;
for you shine on those in the darkness of
ignorance,
leading all ^mankind to the heights,//
venerable Paul, adornment of Thebes and firm
foundation of the fathers and ascetics.

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. 6th Tone. Psalm 27.9,1.

O Lord, save your people and bless your
inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17.

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and
worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus
came into the world to save sinners. And I am
the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy
for this reason, that in me, as the foremost,
Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience
for an example to those who were to believe in
him for eternal life. To the King of ages,
immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor
and glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Luke 18:18-27

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked
him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit
eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do
you call me good? No one is good but God
alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not
commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do
not bear false witness, Honor your father and
mother.' " And he said, "All these I have
observed from my youth." And when Jesus
heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still
lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to
the poor, and you will have treasure in
heaven; and come, follow me." But when he
heard this he became sad, for he was very
rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is
for those who have riches to enter the
kingdom

of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

Wisdom of the Fathers

When God created man He set a conscience within his soul so that he may be governed by it as by a rule, and so that he may be guided in what to do and what to avoid. Conscience is nothing other than natural or innate law, which is why it also agrees with the written Law of God. For whatever the Law of God teaches, conscience teaches also.

~ **St. Tikhon of Zadonsk**

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

Beyond the Sermon



Metropolitan Anthony of
Sourozh
ON FOLLOWING
CHRIST
30 January 1983

In the Name of the
Father, the Son

and the Holy Ghost.

Addressing the man who wanted to attain perfection, the Saviour said, "Follow me." These words were simple: at that time they meant leave all your cares, your family, your work, your calling, your habits and go with Christ along the roads of the Holy Land witnessing His miracles, listening to His words, becoming one of His disciples to your very depths; and awaiting that which was yet in the future and was known only to the Son of God who had come into the world in order to give His life for this world.

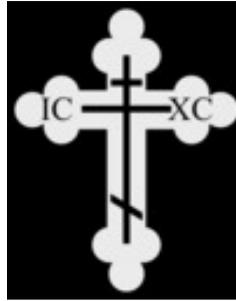
But when these words are addressed to us, what do they mean? They cannot mean the physical following of Christ along the highways and byways; but Christ calls us to follow Him into eternal life. When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Christ where He lived, He answered, "Come and see." In the earthly sense He was living in a hut not far from Jordan, but in another sense, in the sense that captivated the disciples once and for all and is mentioned in the Old and the New Testaments, He lived in the unapproachable light, in the depths of the Godhead, in that light which illumines every man who comes into the world.

And so the Lord calls us to come after Him into the depths of the knowledge of God, the depths of eternity and life. He Himself said that eternal life consisted in knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ; that eternal life was uniting ourselves with God so inseparably, to grow together with Him so deeply, to become one, that we should be able to say, "My life is Christ; His teaching, His ways, His thoughts and feelings, His will, and indeed His destiny - are mine; I take them on myself as the Cross, as the

Resurrection, as death and life, and as the way.

This is what it means to follow Christ now; it means to listen attentively to His divine word which outlines, which points the way of life, and on this path to be Christ's disciples to the limits of our strength, with all our might. To achieve this now, as in the old days, we must free ourselves of everything that would otherwise enslave us, bind us, keep us out of eternal life. We must each one of us consider this for ourselves, because each one of us has something, maybe unexpressed in words, maybe unconscious, that he prefers to God. To find out we must look deeply into ourselves and put this question: if the Saviour were to appear before us at this moment and say, "Leave that, it is the only barrier between you and eternal life," what would we answer? Would we leave it or would we say, "I can't, Lord, I'm sorry." This is what we must ponder over, because we are all called to follow Christ into the glory of eternal life; that is our vocation, to come to life in the spirit before we are, in due time, raised in the body, and to enter into the mystery of the God-Head, to know God, as St. Paul says, as we are known by Him, to worship Him with our whole life and spirit, with all truth. Amen.

The Back Page



Parish Web Site -

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

Facebook - @stalexisorthodox

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

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/StA-Zoom>

Meeting ID: 471 678 4843

Passcode: 1994

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,4716784843#,,,,,0#,,1994#

US (New York)

Dial by your location

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.



+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
Find your local number:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdeWbDJDW9>

Troparion to St Alexis

O righteous Father Alexis, / our heavenly intercessor and teacher, / divine adornment of the Church of Christ! / Entreat the Master of All / to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America, / to grant peace to the world / and to our souls, great mercy!

Troparion to St Herman

O blessed Father Herman of Alaska, / north star of Christ's holy Church, / the light of your holy life and great deeds / guides those who follow the Orthodox way. / Together we lift high the Holy Cross / you planted firmly in America. / Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ, / singing his holy Resurrection.

Troparion to St Elizabeth

Emulating the Lord's self-abasement on the earth, / you gave up royal mansions to serve the poor and disdained, / overflowing with compassion for the suffering. / And taking up a martyr's cross, / in your meekness / you perfected the Saviour's image within yourself, / therefore, with Barbara, entreat Him to save us all, O wise Elizabeth.

