



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, November 12, 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

Annual Parish Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, March 19th, following the Divine Liturgy. All members of the parish community are expected to be in attendance; for the well-being and prosperity of the parish. The meeting will NOT be streamed, but will be recorded. If you are willing to be nominated to serve on the Council, or to be a representative at our next Diocesan Assembly, please consider putting forth your name when nominations from the floor are called for.

Pledge and Stewardship Forms

All pledge and stewardship forms should be returned to Fr Steven by the beginning of the Annual Meeting. These documents may be found in the [Parish Shared Folder](#), in the directory called "Stewardship." Also to be found in this directory are the Parish Handbook and the Parish ByLaws.

Advent Scripture Study

Beginning this Sunday, I am including in the bulletins, a "do it yourself" scripture study on the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans called, "Receive the Light". This material is also to be found in the Parish Shared Folder as well. If so desired, we can have discussion of these lessons during coffee hour, for anyone who is interested.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Please pray for Evelyn Leake, Melissa Josefiak and Victor Hoehnebart who are in need of God's mercy and healing.

- 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.

Please let Fr. Steven know via email if you have more names for which to pray.

- Departed: Bishop Tikhon, Erin
- Clergy and their families: Mat. Clara, Mat. Evelyn, Mat. Ann, Mat. Amanda
- Catechumen: Robert, Abbie, Matthew, Joseph, Mary and Lynn
- Individuals and Families: Susan, Luba, Suzanne, Gail Galina Evelyn, Rosemary, John, Lucille, Kenneth, Karen, Oleg, Lucia, Victor, Melissa, Christine, Sebastian, Olga, Daniel & Dayna, Branislava, Alton, Richard
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Daniel Cummings, Natalie Kurcharski, Alexei Hoehnebart, Thomas Brubaker, Gregory Jankura (ND)
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Megan and her unborn child, David & Rachel and the newborn child Kaleb
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Maria, Zena

Saint Varnava (Nastic) (1964). St. John the Merciful, Patriarch of Constantinople (612-20). Ven. Nilus the Faster, of Sinai (5th c.). Bl. John "the Hairy", Fool-for-Christ, in Rostov (1580). Prophet Ahijah (960 BC). Ven. Nilus the Myrrhusher, of Mt. Athos (1651).

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

November 12 to November 20, 2023

Sunday, November 12

Daniel Cummings
8th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, November 13

John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
8:30AM Akathist to St John Chrysostom

Tuesday, November 14

Philip the Apostle
8:30AM Daily Matins

Wednesday, November 15

☞ Nativity Fast Begins
4:30PM Open Doors

Thursday, November 16

☞ Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist
Natalie Kurcharski - B
8:30AM Daily Matins

Friday, November 17

☞ Gregory the Wonderworker & Bishop

of Neo-Caesarea
Natalie Davis - B

Saturday, November 18

✠ Plato the Great Martyr of Ancyra
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, November 19

Annual Meeting
✠ 9th Sunday of Luke
Thomas Brubaker - B
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, November 20

Alexei Hoehnebart
✠ The Forefeast of the Presentation of the
Theotokos into the Temple

Saints and Feasts

November 12

John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria

Saint John was born in 555 on the island of Cyprus in the city of Amathus; his father, Epiphanius, was a ruler of Cyprus. The Saint was consecrated Archbishop of Alexandria in 608. A man of exemplary uprightness, in his zeal for Orthodoxy he strove mightily to fight the many heresies among the Christians in Egypt; but above all, he was famous for his singular generosity, humility, and sympathy towards all, especially the poor. His mercy was so great that the report of it reached the Persian invaders of Jerusalem, who desired to see him because of it. Saint John reposed in 619, at the age of sixty-four.

November 12

Nilus the Ascetic of Sinai

Saint Nilus, who had Constantinople as his homeland, was a disciple of Saint John Chrysostom. He had formerly been an eparch of the city, then became an ascetic on Mount Sinai. He wrote epistles and various ascetical works, and reposed about 451.

November 13

John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

This greatest and most beloved of all Christian orators was born in Antioch the Great in the year 344 or 347; his pious parents were called Secundus and Anthusa. After his mother was widowed at the age of twenty, she devoted herself to bringing up John and his elder sister in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. John received his literary training under Anthragathius the philosopher, and Libanius the sophist, who was the greatest Greek scholar and rhetorician of his day. Libanius was a pagan, and when asked before his death whom he wished to have for his successor, he said, "John, had not the Christians stolen him from us." With such a training, and with such gifts as he had by nature, John had before him a brilliant career as a rhetorician. But through the good example of his godly mother Anthusa and of the holy Bishop Meletius of Antioch (see Feb. 12), by whom he was ordained reader about

the year 370, he chose instead to dedicate himself to God. From the years 374 to 381 he lived the monastic life in the hermitages that were near Antioch. His extreme asceticism undermined his health, compelling him to return to Antioch, where Saint Meletius ordained him deacon about the year 381. Saint Meletius was called to Constantinople later that year to preside over the Second Ecumenical Council, during which he fell asleep in the Lord. In 386 Bishop Flavian ordained John presbyter of the Church of Antioch. Upon his elevation to the priesthood his career as a public preacher began, and his exceptional oratorical gifts were made manifest through his many sermons and commentaries. They are distinguished by their eloquence and the remarkable ease with which rich imagery and scriptural allusions are multiplied; by their depth of insight into the meaning of Scripture and the workings of God's providence; and, not least of all, by their earnestness and moral force, which issue from the heart of a blameless and guileless man who lived first what he preached to others. Because of his fame, he was chosen to succeed Saint Nectarius as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was taken away by stealth, to avoid the opposition of the people, and consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople on February 28, 398, by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was to prove his mortal enemy.

At that time the Emperor of the East was Arcadius, who had had Saint Arsenius the Great as his tutor (see May 8); Arcadius was a man of weak character, and much under the influence of his wife Eudoxia.

The zealous and upright Chrysostom's unsparring censures of the lax morals in the imperial city stung the vain Eudoxia; through Theophilus' plottings and her collaboration, Saint John was banished to Pontus in 403. The people were in an uproar, and the following night an earthquake shook the city; this so frightened the Empress Eudoxia that she begged Arcadius to call Chrysostom back. While his return was triumphant, his reconciliation with the Empress did not last long. When she had a silver statue of herself erected in the forum before the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Saint Sophia) in September of 403, and had it dedicated with much unseemly revelry, Saint John thundered against her, and she could not forgive him. In June of 404 he was exiled to Cucusus, on the borders of Cilicia and Armenia. From here he exchanged letters with Pope Innocent of Rome, who sent bishops and priests to Constantinople requesting that a council be held. Saint John's enemies, dreading his return, prevailed upon the Emperor to see an insult in this, and had John taken to a more remote place of banishment called Pityus near the Caucasus. The journey was filled with bitter sufferings for the aged bishop, both because of the harshness of the elements and the cruelty of one of his 310 guards. He did not reach Pityus, but gave up his soul to the Lord near Comana in Pontus, at the chapel of the Martyr Basiliscus (see May 22), who had appeared to him shortly before, foretelling the day of his death, which came to pass on September 14, 407. His last words were "Glory be to God for all things." His holy

relics were brought from Comana to Constantinople thirty-one years later by the Emperor Theodosius the Younger and Saint Pulcheria his sister, the children of Arcadius and Eudoxia, with fervent supplications that the sin of their parents against him be forgiven; this return of his holy relics is celebrated on January 27.

Saint John was surnamed Chrysostom ("Golden-mouth") because of his eloquence. He made exhaustive commentaries on the divine Scriptures and was the author of more works than any other Church Father, leaving us complete commentaries on the Book of Genesis, the Gospels of Saints Matthew and John, the Acts, and all the Epistles of Saint Paul. His extant works are 1,447 sermons and 240 epistles. Twenty-two teachers of the Church have written homilies of praise in his honour. Besides his feasts today and on January 27, he is celebrated as one of the Three Hierarchs on January 30, together with Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Theologian.

It should be noted that, because September 14 is the Exaltation of the Cross, the Saint's memory has been transferred to this day.

November 14

Philip the Apostle

This Apostle, one of the Twelve, was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and was a compatriot of Andrew and Peter. He was instructed in the teachings of the Law, and devoted himself to the study of the prophetic books. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus called

him to the dignity of apostleship, he immediately sought out and found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1.45). Having preached Jesus the God-man throughout many parts of Asia Minor, and having suffered many things for His Name's sake, he was finally crucified upside down in Hierapolis of Phrygia.

November 14

Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is

the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359. His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica.

November 15

Nativity Fast Begins

The Nativity Fast is one of [four main fast periods throughout the ecclesiastical year](#). Beginning on November 15 and concluding on December 24, the Nativity Fast gives individuals the opportunity to prepare for [the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior in the Flesh on December 25](#). By abstaining from certain food and drink, particularly from meat, fish, dairy products, olive oil, and wine, as well as focusing more deeply on prayer and almsgiving, we can find that the [primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of our dependence upon God](#).

November 16

Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist

This Apostle, who was also called Levi, was the son of Alphaeus and had Galilee as his homeland. A publican before being called by Christ, he became one of the Twelve Apostles, and an Evangelist. While still in Palestine, he wrote his Gospel first in Hebrew, being also the first of all to write the Gospel. When he is depicted in icons, there is portrayed next to him the likeness of a man, one of the symbolic living creatures mentioned by Ezekiel (1.10), which, as Saint Irenaeus writes, is a symbol of our Saviour's Incarnation.

November 17

Gregory the Wonderworker & Bishop of Neo-Caesarea

Saint Gregory was born in Neocaesarea of Pontus to parents who were not Christians. He studied in Athens, in Alexandria, in Beirut, and finally for five years in Caesarea of Palestine under Origen, by whom he was also instructed in the Faith of Christ. Then, in the year 240, he became bishop of his own city, wherein he found only seventeen Christians. By the time the Saint reposed about the year 265, there were only seventeen unbelievers left there. Virtually the whole duration of his episcopacy was a time of continual, marvellous wonders worked by him. Because of this, he received the surname "Wonderworker"; even the enemies of the truth called him a second Moses (see Saint Basil the Great's *On the Holy Spirit*, ch. 29).

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 8 Troparion (St. John)

By endurance you gained your reward,
venerable Father;
you persevered in prayer unceasingly;
you loved the poor and provided for them in
all things. //
Blessed John the Merciful, intercede with
Christ God that our souls may be saved!

Tone 8 Troparion (Ven. Nilus)

By a flood of tears you made the desert fertile,
and your longing for God brought forth fruits
in abundance.
By the radiance of miracles you illumined the
whole universe. //
Our holy Father Nilus, pray to Christ our God
to save our souls!

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)

You distributed your wealth to the poor
and in return obtained wealth from heaven, O
John the Merciful.

Therefore, we honor you and celebrate your
memory. //

O namesake of mercy.

Tone 8 Kontakion (Ven. Nilus)

By your vigilant prayer you cut away the
undergrowth of the body's insurgent passions.
As you have boldness before the Lord, free me
from every danger so that I may cry to you: //
"Rejoice, universal father Nilus!"

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 Letter to the Ephesians 2:4-10.

Brethren, God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God: not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Gospel Reading

8th Sunday of Luke

The Reading is from Luke 10:25-37

At that time, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Wisdom of the Fathers

When a man reveres God with all his heart and with faith, he receives through God's providence the power to control anger and desire; for it is desire and anger which are the cause of all evils.

St. Antony the Great

*On the Character of Men no. 12, Philokalia Vol. 1
edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Ware; Faber*

and Faber pg. 331, 4th century

'The Lord your God is one Lord' (cf. Deut. 6:4), revealed in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: in the unbegotten Father; in the Son, who is begotten eternally, timelessly and impassibly as the Logos, and who through Himself anointed that which He assumed from us and so is called Christ; and in the Holy Spirit, who also comes forth from the Father, not begotten, but proceeding. This alone is God and alone is true God, the one Lord in a Trinity of Hypostases, undivided in nature, will, glory, power, energy, and all the characteristics of divinity. Him alone shall you love and Him alone shall you worship with all your mind and with all your heart and with all your strength.

St. Gregory Palamas

A New Testament Decalogue no. 1, Philokalia Vol. 4 edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Ware; Faber and Faber pg. 323, 14th century

Receive the Light



ROMANS

One Body In Christ
Lesson 1: Who is St. Paul?

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans Lesson Series

Reading

- Acts 7:54-60
- Acts 8-9
- Acts 17:16-34
- Acts 22:3-21
- Acts 22:25
- II Corinthians 11:22
- Philippians 3:5

The rapid spread of Christianity came from an unlikely source. St. Paul was originally known as Saul of Tarsus, an early persecutor of Jewish Christians. Most Christians agree that without St. Paul, the new faith of Jesus Christ would not have spread far from a small sect of Judaism to become the centerpiece of Western civilization.

Originally named Saul and born in Tarsus, in Asia Minor, Paul received strict religious training in Jerusalem, under the esteemed teacher Gamaliel.

He was of the tribe of Benjamin and observed the Judaic Law as a Pharisee. (Acts 22:3-21) He persecuted the Christianized Jews in the early Church with great severity and cruelty, believing them to be heretical and blasphemous. (Acts 8) He oversaw the stoning of St. Stephen. (Acts 7:54-60)

Requesting and receiving a letter of authorization from the Jewish High Priest to hunt down Christians and bring them back as prisoners to Jerusalem, Saul took the road to Damascus. On the way he experienced a vision from Christ. It was one of the most dramatic changes in human history. (Acts 9) The once zealous persecutor of the faith now became one of Christianity's most powerful advocates.

He spent many years of his life learning about Christ and the new faith.

He was not one of Jesus' original Disciples, but soon linked himself with the Apostles (II Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:5) and became the greatest apostolic missionary of the Church. He was uniquely equipped to his task. Unlike many of the early Disciples, Paul was well educated; he could read and write, he spoke Greek and Aramaic fluently. He was also well versed in Greek Stoic and Hebrew legal philosophy. He was a Roman citizen from birth, giving him the civil rights entitled to a Roman citizen. (Acts 22:25) He was intelligent and used all his linguistic, cultural, and legal rights in spreading the Christian faith. (Acts 17:16-34)

Because of all these abilities, St. Paul was tasked with spreading the faith to the Gentiles by the Council of Jerusalem.

He traveled extensively throughout the Roman Empire, spreading the faith. His three missions to the Gentiles launched from Antioch. On his first missionary journey, on the island of Cyprus, Saul's name changed to Paul. (Acts 13) A brilliant orator and writer, St. Paul was adaptable, flexible, and sensitive to the various groups he found on his missionary journeys: Jews, Greeks, rich, slaves, male, female, government officials and prostitutes. He wrote extensively, even while in prison, to spread the faith and address various problems in the early Churches. As author of 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament, he influenced Christianity as no other man.

Discussion & Reflection

Q1: One of the most dramatic stories of the New Testament is the story of St. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. In fact, it has entered the phraseology of the English language as Road to Damascus. Have you ever had or known someone who has had a Road to Damascus?

A1: Road to Damascus experiences are those in which a person has a sudden insight that radically changes their beliefs. Whilst originally used in a spiritual context, the phrase also refers to other types of sudden conversion.

Q2: St. Paul utilized a number of gifts and abilities in spreading Christianity. What were they? Do a self-assessment of yourself. What abilities, gifts, skills do you possess that can be used for Christ?

A2: St. Paul utilized all his numerous gifts and abilities to spread the message of Christ. He used his multiple linguistic and cultural skills to spread the Gospel. To the Jews, he was a Jew, and spoke in a language understandable to the Jews. To the Greeks, he spoke Greek, and applied his understanding of Greek philosophy. He used his Roman citizenship to tell of Christ to the authorities. He spoke as a slave (slave of Jesus Christ) to the slaves. It is estimated that 10-15% of the total population were slaves.

Q3: During much of his ministry, St. Paul was a prisoner of the state awaiting trial on trumped-up charges that he had brought a Gentile into the Great Temple (corrupting the Temple), spoke against the Jews, the Law of Moses, and the Temple. Yet while in prison, he continued to spread the Gospel and minister to the Church. How did he do this even though he was shackled?

A3: He wrote letters called Epistles. It was the social media of the day. While his hands were shackled, he had assistants like Timothy write his messages. They were delivered by assistants also. Today, these letters comprise most of the New Testament.

Resources

- Orthodox Saints, Vol. II, p.229-230, George Poulos, Holy Cross Orthodox Press
- Orthodox Study Bible
- OrthodoxWiki.com, search for "Apostle Paul" or "St. Paul"
- St. John Chrysostom's Homily on II Corinthians: Paul's Love for His Flock
- Podcast: "The Whole Counsel of God" Acts 22 by Fr. Stephen De Young (www.antientfaith.org/podcasts/w)

Church Wisdom

Troparion (Tone 4):

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

Kontakion (Tone 2):

Today Christ the Rock glorifies with highest honor
The rock of Faith and leader of the Apostles,
Together with Paul and the company of the twelve,
Whose memory we celebrate with eagerness of faith,
Giving glory to the One who gave glory to them!

St. John Chrysostom on St. Paul

There was nothing more capacious than the heart of Paul, for he loved all the faithful with as intimate a love as any lover could have for a loved one, his love not being divided and lessened but remaining whole and entire for each of them. And what marvel is it that his love for the faithful was such, since his heart embraced the unbelievers, too, throughout the whole world?

Meditation & Activity

Some of the most beautiful words in the English language were written in the letters of St. Paul. One of those was contained in I Corinthians 13. Read the Epistle aloud and journal or discuss as a family its meaning in detail.