



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

Address: PO Box 134, 108 E Main St, Clinton,
CT 06413-0134

Phone: 860-664-9434

Web: <http://www.stalexischurch.org>

Email: stalexis@ dneoca.org

Fr Steven Hosking

Rector

Phone: 860-866-5802 (Message)

Email: frsteve@stalexischurch.org

Dn Timothy Skuby

Attached

Phone: (808) 341-1813

Email: dntimothy@stalexischurch.org

Services Schedule

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

Bulletin for Sunday, November 19, 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

First Sunday of Advent

Candle: green (faith)

Symbolism: The first candle reminds us of faith, the faith we have in God that He will keep His promise to send His Son.

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; 40:3-5; 52:7

Theme: God's promise to send the Messiah.

Annual Meeting

The meeting will take place right after Liturgy and the Post-communion prayers. We will have the blessing of the food, and enough time to set up and get people comfortable. We will then begin with the opening prayer. The meeting will conclude with the installation of the Parish Council

members.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE would like to thank all who stayed after Liturgy to participate in our Birthright Baby Shower as well as those who so generously donated gifts for the women and their newborns who are supported by Birthright. They were very thankful for all the wonderful, much needed items for their clients.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE is once again collecting Christmas gifts for Safe Futures of New London who provides support, counseling and housing for abused women, men and their families. There are lists of suggested gift items on the candle desk. The gifts should be new and unwrapped. The last day to donate is Sunday, December 3. Anyone in need of help can contact Safe Futures' 24-hour hotline at (860)701-6001.

Please see the attachment for a complete list of the needs for Safe Futures.

Changes to the "Typical" Weekly Schedule

Because the Feast of the Entrance occurs Tuesday this upcoming week, we will observe the Feast as a Vespereal Divine Liturgy on Monday evening (6pm). Daily Matins will still be held on Tuesday morning. Wednesday evening there will be an Akathist of Thanksgiving (6pm) via Zoom. There will be no Daily Matins on Thursday.

**"Thank You, O Lord!" A Sermon for Thanksgiving Day
By Fr. Alexander Schmemmann**

+ Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for having accepted this Eucharist, which we offered to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and which filled our hearts with the joy, peace and righteousness of the Holy Spirit.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for having revealed Yourself unto us and given us the foretaste of Your Kingdom.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for having united us to one another in serving You and Your Holy Church.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for having helped us to overcome all difficulties, tensions, passions, temptations and restored peace, mutual love and joy in sharing the communion of the Holy Spirit.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for the sufferings You bestowed upon us, for they are purifying us from selfishness and reminding us of the “one thing needed”: Your eternal Kingdom.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for having given us this country where we are free to worship You.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for this school[1], where the Name of God is proclaimed.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for our families: husbands, wives and, especially, children who teach us how to celebrate Your holy Name in joy, movement and holy noise.

+ Thank You, O Lord, for everyone and everything.

+ Great are You, O Lord, and marvelous are Your deeds, and no word is sufficient to celebrate Your miracles.

+ Lord, it is good to be here! Amen.

[1] St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological

Seminary of Yonkers, New York

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Please pray for Evelyn Leake 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 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.

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

Prophet Obadiah (Abdia—9th c. B.C.). Martyr Barlaam of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (ca. 304). Ven. Varlaam, Abbot of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—1065). Finding of the relics of Monastic Martyr Adrian of Poshekhónsk (Yaroslavl'—1625). Martyr Azes of Isauria and 150 soldiers with him (3rd c.). Martyr Heliodorus in Pamphylia (ca. 273). Ven. Hilarion the Wonderworker, Monk of Thessalonica (Georgian—875). Repose of St. Philaret (Drozdov), Metropolitan of Moscow (1867). Saints Barlaam the monk and Prince Ioasaph of India (4th c.).

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

November 19 to November 27, 2023

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

6:00PM Vesperal Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, November 21

✠ The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

8:30AM Daily Matins

Wednesday, November 22

✠ Archippus the Apostle, Philemon the Apostle & his wife, Apphia, Onesimos the Disciple of Paul

6:30PM Akathist Glory to God for All Things

Thursday, November 23

A. Martins - N

✠ Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium

Friday, November 24

✠ Our Holy Father Clement, Pope of Rome

Saturday, November 25

✠ Catherine the Great Martyr of Alexandria
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, November 26

🕊️ 13th Sunday of Luke
Christine Boyd - B
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, November 27

🕊️ James the Great Martyr of Persia
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Saints and Feasts

November 19

Obadiah the Prophet

The Divine Scriptures do not tell us with any certainty when the Prophet Obadiah lived nor what was his homeland. Thus, some say that he is that Obadiah who was Ahab's steward, who, because of Jezebel's wrath, hid one hundred prophets in a cave and fed them with bread and water (III Kings 18:4), and that he later became a disciple of Elias the Prophet about 903 B.C. But others surmise from the words of the same prophetic book that he is somewhat later than Joel (celebrated on Oct. 19). He is also called Obdiu, or Abdiu, or Obadiah; his name means "servant of God." His book of prophecy, which consists of only one chapter, is ranked fourth among the minor Prophets.

November 19

Barlaam of Caesarea

Saint Barlaam, who was from a certain

village near Antioch in Syria, was advanced in years and a husbandman by occupation. Because of his confession of Christ, he was brought before the judge, who had him scourged with whips and then scraped with iron claws. Since this could not break his constancy, he was forcibly haled to the idols' temple, and live coals with incense were placed in his right hand. The judge thought that he would cast them down because of the pain, thus seeming to have offered a sacrifice of incense to the idols. But Saint Barlaam stood unmoving until his hand was thoroughly burned by the coals; he fell to the ground, and so gave up his soul into the hands of the Lord. He contested in martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian (284-305). Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom both gave homilies in his honour.

November 21

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

According to the tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was brought to the Temple at three years of age, where she was consecrated to God and spent her days until she was fourteen or fifteen years old; and then, as a mature maiden, by the common counsel of the priests (since her parents had reposed some three years before), she was betrothed to Joseph.

November 22

Holy Martyr Cecilia and those with her

Saint Cecilia was of an illustrious Roman family. On being betrothed to Valerian, she drew him to the Faith of Christ, and he in turn drew his own brother Tiburtius to the same. They contested in martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian, in the year 288.

November 23

Gregory, Bishop of Agrigentum

Saint Gregory, the son of pious parents named Chariton and Theodora, was born in Agrigentum, a city of Sicily, and was great in virtue from his childhood. He was baptized, brought up, and tonsured reader by Bishop Potamion during the reign of Justinian II, in the seventh century. At the age of eighteen he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was ordained deacon by Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem. He traveled to Constantinople, and then to Rome where he was consecrated Bishop of his native Agrigentum. As Bishop of Agrigentum he worked many miracles and shone brilliantly in virtue, but also suffered many great temptation; from the priests Sabine and Crescentius, who so envied him that they slandered him to the Pope as a fornicator and had him cast into prison for two and a half years. In the end, however, he vindicated himself by casting the demon out of the woman who had falsely accused him of committing sin with her. Saint Gregory reposed in peace in deep old age.

November 24

Our Holy Father Clement, Pope of Rome

Saint Clement was instructed in the Faith of Christ by the Apostle Peter. He became Bishop of Rome in the year 91, the third after the death of the Apostles. He died as a martyr about the year 100 during the reign of Trajan.

November 25

Katherine the Great Martyr of Alexandria

Saint Catherine, who was from Alexandria, was the daughter of Constas (or Cestus). She was an exceedingly beautiful maiden, most chaste, and illustrious in wealth, lineage, and learning. By her steadfast understanding, she utterly vanquished the passionate and unbridled soul of Maximinus, the tyrant of Alexandria; and by her eloquence, she stopped the mouths of the so-called philosophers who had been gathered to dispute with her. She was crowned with the crown of martyrdom in the year 305. Her holy relics were taken by Angels to the holy mountain of Sinai, where they were discovered many years later; the famous monastery of Saint Catherine was originally dedicated to the Holy Transfiguration of the Lord and the Burning Bush, but later was dedicated to Saint Catherine. According to the ancient usage, Saints Catherine and Mercurius were celebrated on the 24th of this month, whereas the holy Hieromartyrs Clement

of Rome and Peter of Alexandria were celebrated on the 25th. The dates of the feasts of these Saints were interchanged at the request of the Church and Monastery of Mount Sinai, so that the festival of Saint Catherine, their patron, might be celebrated more festively together with the Apodosis of the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos. The Slavic Churches, however, commemorate these Saints on their original dates.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Your Cross You
destroyed death.
To the thief You opened
Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers
You changed weeping

into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ
God,
to proclaim that You are risen, //
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Barlaam)

Armed with youthful fervor,
you endured martyrdom in old age and
glorified Christ.
You offered Him your right hand as a whole
burnt offering
and your holy soul as a blameless sacrifice. //
Intercede that all that be granted forgiveness,
Great-martyr Barlaam.

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men
captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and
destroying its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and
cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith; //
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Barlaam)

Though weak with old age you vanquished the
Evil One
in your mighty contest, O Barlaam.
You endured the rack like one without a body,
and steadfastly endured the burning of your
hand. //
Therefore, God the Word has crowned you
with a crown of glory.

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. 7th Tone. Psalm 28.11,1.

The Lord will give strength to his people.
Verse: Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring
to the Lord honor and glory.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-22.

Brethren, Christ is our peace, who has

made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Gospel Reading

9th Sunday of Luke

The Reading is from Luke 12:16-21

The Lord said this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said

to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As he said these things, he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Wisdom of the Fathers

I cannot be silent about the story of Hesychius the Horebite. He passed his life in complete negligence, without paying the least attention to his soul. Then he became extremely ill, and for an hour he left his body.

St. John Climacus

Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step 6: On Remembrance of Death, 6th Century

And when he came to himself, he begged us all to leave him immediately. And he built up the door of his cell, and he stayed in it for twelve years without ever uttering a word to anyone, and without eating anything but bread and water.

St. John Climacus

Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step 6: On Remembrance of Death, 6th Century

Receive the Light



Lesson 2: What is the Epistle to the Romans?

Reading

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 15

Acts 18:1-18

Acts 20:3-21:16

Romans 1-16

St. Paul wrote 14 of the 27 books in the New Testament - the most of anyone. All of St. Paul's writings are in the form of letters to people or church congregations. These letters are known as epistles. The epistles in the Bible are not in any chronological order, but in the order of length. Romans is the longest of St. Paul's epistles.

The Epistle to the Romans was dictated by St. Paul to Tertius and delivered by the hand of Phoebe. (Romans 16:1, 16:22)

St. Paul wrote to the Church of Rome from Corinth approximately in the spring of 58 AD. He had never visited the Church of Rome but hoped to in the future on a missionary journey to Spain. (Romans 15:22-27) He noted that he had to return to Jerusalem first to take money he had collected in Macedonia and Achaia. The money was intended as relief for the poor and suffering members of the Jerusalem Church. (Acts 20:3-21:16) He was writing to a church that had been split between Jewish

Christians who followed the Mosaic Law and Gentile Christians who did not. (Acts 18:1-8) Because of the conflict, Emperor Claudius had banished the Jews from Rome. The Jews were just returning from exile, following Claudius' death, and reintegrating into the Church of Rome dominated by Gentile Christians. The dispute in the Church of Rome rekindled with their return. St. Paul addresses the dispute in his epistle. (Acts 15) The Epistle to the Romans was intended to establish St. Paul's credentials as Christian and his apostleship in anticipation of a future visit. (Acts 13:1-3) It is one of St. Paul's most important epistles. It clearly states God's righteousness revealed in Christ for our salvation. (Romans 1:16-17) This salvation through Christ is not through obedience to the Mosaic Law but separate from it. Our new life in Christ is through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Our new life in the Holy Spirit is through the Sacrament of Chrismation.

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul gives inspiring words to a mixed community of Gentile Christians and Judaic Christians on how to live together in Christ's love and peace. He knows that cultural tensions are inevitable and gives instructions in dealing with them.

Finally, St. Paul gives the Roman community practical instructions on living together in a mixed community with one another and on living in a pagan world. Living together in love and peace, the Christian community in Rome will grow strong and commend itself in the most important city in the ancient world: Rome.

Discussion & Reflection

Q1: St. Paul is writing a letter to a community he has never visited but hopes to visit in the future. The community has had a history of conflict. How would you address this community?

A1: Consider how to address the community carefully and in a balanced way to conciliate and reconcile the Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians together.

Q2: St. Paul uses a lengthy letter to communicate his Message of the Gospel, inspired by the Holy Spirit. We are called to be saints also and to communicate the Gospel in multiple ways. How can we accomplish this task?

A2: One of the important messages of the Epistle to the Romans is using multiple means to convey the message of Jesus Christ to the world. One of these is how we live our daily lives, so that we are not stumbling blocks for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to set an example of love and caring to attract others to our faith. We can also communicate the message of Christ through the words we use in e-mails, letters, and other methods of communication. We must be cognizant of the messages we are sending overtly and covertly.

Q3: St. Paul and the Roman Christians lived in a world that conflicted with their new faith. Our world is becoming increasingly hostile to Orthodox Christianity. How does St. Paul's practical advice help us to live our Christian faith in today's modern world?

A3: As in St. Paul's day, we must look for encouragement and advice from sources outside our community. Reading St. Paul's epistles each Sunday, especially Romans, offers encouragement and practical advice in living our lives in the world. Following his example, the church still receives epistles from our Patriarch, Metropolitan and Bishops to be read from the pulpit. In this way St. Paul's example still lives.

Resources

Orthodox Study Bible, p1519-1549

Podcast: "The Whole Counsel of God" Romans, Chapter 1 by Fr. Stephen De Young

(www.antientfaith.org/podcasts/wholecounsel)

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!

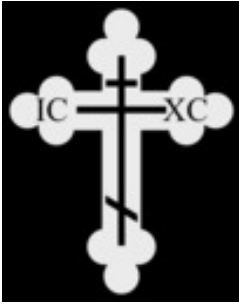
St. Paul's words:

St. Paul used the social media of the day, epistles (or letters.) This method of communication still exists! Write a letter of encouragement to a shut-in in the parish or to an elderly relative whom you haven't seen or visited in a while. Families can discuss together how this is like St. Paul writing to the Romans. Follow-up on the discussion if you receive a response to your epistle. Journal or encourage each member of the family to share their feelings about the response." Romans 12:2

Meditation & Activity

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The Back Page



Parish Shared Folder (for all documents, bulletins etc)
- <http://bit.ly/St-Alexis>

The QR Code here may be used as well.



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

- http://bit.ly/St_Alexis_Zoom



GIFTS FOR SAFE FUTURES

Last day of collection: December 3

Suggested Gift Items:

Adults

- Self-care items (lotion, body spray, body wash, face wash, etc.)
- Pajamas & bath robes -women's sizes Small – 2 XL
- Blankets (twin or queen) or cozy throws
- Warm slippers (all sizes 7,8,9,10)
- Bath towel sets, washcloths
- Adult coloring books & colored pencils (for relaxation)
- Warm winter socks, warm gloves
- Small coffee maker, toaster, handheld blender, can opener
- Umbrellas, wallets, cross body bags
- Holiday candy, snacks, hot chocolate, tea, coffee, etc.

Ideas for Children

- Winter clothing and Pajamas (Sizes: 2T-5T and 6-12 for boys & girls)
- Barbies, LOL dolls, Elmo toys, baby toys
- Lego building sets (all ages), cars, trucks
- Warm sweatpants, sweatshirts (Sizes: 4T-14 for boys & girls)
- Winter socks, hats, mittens
- Learning toys (baby – 12 years old), board games, puzzles
- Play food sets
- Dolls of all ethnicities
- Super hero figures or sets
- Paw Patrol toys, books, puzzles, plush toys
- Coloring books and crayons, art supplies
- Infant toys, musical toys, plush toys

Ideas for Teens & Tweens

- Gift cards to Target, Walmart, Old Navy, TJ Maxx, Dick's Sporting Goods, Sephora, Ulta, Michaels Craft Store, Best Buy
- Nail polish & manicure sets, make up sets
- Personal Care (male and female) – body wash, body spray, deodorant, razors, lotion
- Sports equipment, basketballs, footballs, skateboards, etc.
- Small electronics, handheld video games, headphones, ear buds, etc.
- Small Bluetooth speaker
- Craft sets, science sets, art supplies & paper
- Journals, stationary, notebooks & gel pens

Giving Guidelines:

Gifts must be new and unwrapped. We cannot accept toys or games with violent themes.