



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 28, 2024

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- President
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large
Luba Martins - 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

We now have two AEDs for the parish. One will be located upstairs in the narthex (back of the church) and one will be located downstairs. Both in plain view. I will arrange a "show and tell" as to how they are to be used at a future date. 'Thank you' to everyone who donated to this cause.

For those of you who had their house blessings postponed, I will reschedule with you this coming week.

Feast of the Presentation

This coming Friday is the Feast of Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple. This Feast is traditional celebrated with the blessing of candles. Bring your candles to be blessed either a Thursday's Vigil

or Friday's Liturgy.

Also, we still have plenty of Holy Water available for your personal use.

Reminder

Texts for the services may be found in parish shared folder on a weekly basis. A limited number of print versions will also be available at the candle desk, printed on white paper. Bulletins will be made available via email, our parish web site and a few in printed versions at the candle desk as well.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Please pray for Sarah, Aaron, Evelyn and Victor 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: Fr Anthony, Mat Elizabeth, Kenneth, Fr Michael
- Clergy and their families: Mat. Ann, Fr Sergei, and Mat Nancy
- Catechumen: Robert, Abbie, Matthew, Joseph, Mary, Kevin and Lynn
- Individuals and Families: Susan, Luba, Suzanne, Gail Galina Evelyn, Rosemary, John, Lucille, Karen, Oleg, Lucia, Victor, Melissa, Christine, Sebastian, Olga, Daniel & Dayna, Branislava, Alton, Richard, Kristen
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Aaron Hosking, Natalie Kurcharski (ND), Gail Kuziak, Dn Timothy (ND),
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Anastasia and her unborn child
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Maria, Brian, Fr Vasily, Katy, Fr Sergei

New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. Ven. Ephraim the Syrian (373-379). Ven. Theodosius, Abbot, of Tot'ma (Vologdá—1568). Ven. Efrem (Ephraim) the Wonderworker, Abbot of Novotórhsk (1053). St. Efrem, Bishop of Pereyaslavl'

(Kiev Caves—ca. 1098). Ven. Palladius the Hermit, of Antioch (4th c.). St. Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Nineveh (7th c.).

Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East. Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

January 28 to February 5, 2024

Sunday, January 28

15th Sunday of Luke
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 29

Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the God-bearer

Tuesday, January 30

Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom
8:30AM Daily Matins
7:00PM Catechumens

Wednesday, January 31

✠ Cyrus & John the Unmercenarys
4:30PM Open Doors

Thursday, February 1

Trypho the Martyr
8:30AM Daily Matins
5:30PM Vigil of the Presentation w/ the
Blessing of Candles

Friday, February 2

✠ The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior
in the Temple
Meeting of Our Lord
Blessing of Candles
8:30AM Divine Liturgy of the Presentation

Saturday, February 3

Afterfeast of the Presentation of Our Lord
and Savior in the Temple
5:30PM Great Vespers
6:00PM General Confession

Sunday, February 4

15th Sunday of Matthew
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 5

Agatha the Martyr

Saints and Feasts

January 28

Ephraim the Syrian

Saint Ephraim was born in Nisibis of Mesopotamia some time about the year 306, and in his youth was the disciple of Saint James, Bishop of Nisibis, one of the 318

Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council. Ephraim lived in Nisibis, practicing a severe ascetical life and increasing in holiness, until 363, the year in which Julian the Apostate was slain in his war against the Persians, and his successor Jovian surrendered Nisibis to them. Ephraim then made his dwelling in Edessa, where he found many heresies to do battle with. He waged an especial war against Bardaisan; this gnostic had written many hymns propagating his errors, which by their sweet melodies became popular and enticed souls away from the truth. Saint Ephraim, having received from God a singular gift of eloquence, turned Bardaisan's own weapon against him, and wrote a multitude of hymns to be chanted by choirs of women, which set forth the true doctrines, refuted heretical error, and praised the contests of the Martyrs.

Of the multitude of sermons, commentaries, and hymns that Saint Ephraim wrote, many were translated into Greek in his own lifetime. Sozomen says that Ephraim "Surpassed the most approved writers of Greece," observing that the Greek writings, when translated into other tongues, lose most of their original beauty, but Ephraim's works "are no less admired when read in Greek than when read in Syriac" (Eccl. Hist., Book 111, 16). Saint Ephraim was ordained deacon, some say by Saint Basil the Great, whom Sozomen said "was a great admirer of Ephraim, and was astonished at his erudition." Saint Ephraim was the first to make the poetic expression of hymnody and song a vehicle of Orthodox theological teachings, constituting it an integral part

of the Church's worship; he may rightly be called the first and greatest hymnographer of the Church, who set the pattern for those who followed him, especially Saint Romanos the Melodist. Because of this he is called the "Harp of the Holy Spirit." Jerome says that his writings were read in some churches after the reading of the Scriptures, and adds that once he read a Greek translation of one of Ephraim's works, "and recognized, even in translation, the incisive power of his lofty genius" (De vir. ill., ch. CXV).

Shortly before the end of his life, a famine broke out in Edessa, and Saint Ephraim left his cell to rebuke the rich for not sharing their goods with the poor. The rich answered that they knew no one to whom they could entrust their goods. Ephraim asked them, "What do you think of me?" When they confessed their reverence for him, he offered to distribute their alms, to which they agreed. He himself cared with his own hands for many of the sick from the famine, and so crowned his life with mercy and love for neighbor. Saint Ephraim reposed in peace, according to some in the year 373, according to others, 379.

January 28

Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Nineveh

The great luminary of the life of stillness, Saint Isaac, was born in the early seventh century in Eastern Arabia, the present-day Qatar on the Persian Gulf. He became a monk at a young age, and at some time

left Arabia to dwell with monks in Persia. He was consecrated Bishop of Nineveh (and is therefore sometimes called "Saint Isaac of Nineveh"), but after five months received permission to return to solitude; he spent many years far south of Nineveh in the mountainous regions of Beit Huzaye, and lastly at the Monastery of Rabban Shabur. He wrote his renowned and God-inspired Ascetical Homilies toward the end of his long life of monastic struggle, about the end of the seventh century. The fame of his Homilies grew quickly, and about one hundred years after their composition they were translated from Syriac into Greek by two monks of the Monastery of Mar Sabbas in Palestine, from which they spread throughout the monasteries of the Roman Empire and became a guide to the hesychasts of all generations thereafter.

January 29

Removal of the Relics of Ignatios the God-bearer

Saint Ignatius was a disciple of Saint John the Theologian, and a successor of the Apostles, and he became the second Bishop of Antioch, after Evodus. He wrote many epistles to the faithful, strengthening them in their confession, and preserving for us the teachings of the holy Apostles. Brought to Rome under Trajan, he was surrendered to lions to be eaten, and so finished the course of martyrdom about the year 107. The remnants of his bones were carefully

gathered by the faithful and brought to Antioch. He is called God-bearer, as one who bare God within himself and was aflame in heart with love for Him. Therefore, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 4), imploring their love not to attempt to deliver him from his longed-for martyrdom, he said, "I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found to be the pure bread of God."

Saint John Chrysostom has a homily in honour of the translation of the Saint's relics (PG 50:587).

January 30

Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johannites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous,

a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).

January 31

Cyrus & John the Unmercenaries

These Saints lived during the years of Diocletian. Saint Cyrus was from Alexandria, and Saint John was from Edessa of Mesopotamia. Because of the persecution of that time, Cyrus fled to the Gulf of Arabia, where there was a small community of monks. John, who was a soldier, heard of Cyrus' fame and came to join him. Henceforth, they passed their life working every virtue, and healing every illness and disease freely by the grace of Christ; hence their title of "Unmercenaries." They heard that a certain woman, named Athanasia, had been apprehended together with her three daughters, Theodora, Theoctiste, and Eudoxia, and taken to the tribunal for their confession of the Faith. Fearing lest the tender young maidens be terrified by the torments and renounce Christ, they went

to strengthen them in their contest in martyrdom; therefore they too were seized. After Cyrus and John and those sacred women had been greatly tormented, all were beheaded in the year 292. Their tomb became a renowned shrine in Egypt, and a place of universal pilgrimage. It was found in the area of the modern day resort near Alexandria named Abu Kyr.

February 01

Bridget of Ireland

When Ireland was newly converted to the Christian Faith, the Holy Abbess Bridget devoted herself to the establishment of the monastic life among the women of her country, and founded the renowned convent of Kildare-Kil "Cell (or Church)" Dara "of the Oak." She was especially renowned for her great mercifulness, manifested in her lavish almsgiving and in miracles wrought for those in need. The Book of Armaugh, an ancient Irish chronicle, calls Saint Patrick and Saint Bridget "the pillars of the Irish" and says that through them both, "Christ performed many miracles." She reposed in peace about the year 525.

February 02

The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to

Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master. . ." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.

The Apodosis of the Feast of the Meeting in the Temple is usually on the 9th of February. This, however, may vary if the Feast falls within the period of the Triodion. Should this occur, the Typicon should be consulted for specific information concerning the Apodosis of the Feast.

February 03

Symeon the God-Receiver, Anna

the Prophetess

Yesterday we celebrated the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple; today we honor the righteous Elder Symeon and Prophetess Anna, who prophesied concerning Him by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and were the first in Jerusalem to receive Him as the Messiah.

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Daniel 3.26,27.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11.

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew,

circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Matthew 22:35-46

At that time, a lawyer came up to Jesus and asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put your enemies under your feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Wisdom of the Fathers

The perfect peace of the holy angels lies

in their love for God and their love for one another. This is also the case with all the saints from the beginning of time. Most truly therefore is it said that 'on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Matt. 22:40).

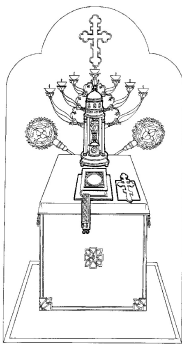
St. Maximos the Confessor

Fourth Century on Love no. 36, Philokalia Vol. 2 edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Ware; Faber and Faber pg. 104, 7th century

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 Faith We Hold



Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
The meaning of love
1966

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The meaning of love is the meaning of life, because love, in spite of

what we very often think or imagine, is not a simple feeling. When we speak of God, and we say that God is love, we do not mean that He is infinite feeling. We mean something deeper than this: that God is a plenitude of life and of being. And this applies also to our human love. Someone who is possessed by love is a man who has a plenitude of life in himself, in whom the sense of life, the power of life is so full, so great, that life is sure of itself. And this generates joy, courage, enthusiasm, and it goes so deep that it is beyond death itself. The Holy Scripture says that love is stronger than death. Indeed it is stronger than death because it has placed itself by its fullness, its power, its intensity in the realm of the resurrection, in the realm of eternal life. And this is why love is capable of final sacrifice, not only of giving and of receiving but of laying down one's life, because this life, if it is given, is also possessed in its fullness. It is plenitude of life which finds expression in final sacrifice. You may remember the words of Christ: 'No one is taking My life from Me, I give it freely

Myself.' In that respect love, the fullness of life which it expresses, is invulnerable. People may take our lives, people may put us to any test, and yet one remains invulnerable because no one in reality is taking; the person who loves is giving.

I would like to give an example of this. During the Russian Revolution a mother with two children was hiding in a small town. One evening a woman came, as young as she was, in her late twenties, and told her that she had been discovered, betrayed, and that she was to be arrested in the night in order to be shot. The mother looked at the children, and her new friend said, 'Don't worry, you go, and you hide.' And the mother said, 'How could I go with these two children. I would be found within a few hours.'- 'No', said her unknown friend, 'I will stay behind, call myself with your name and be shot perhaps, but you will escape.' And so she did.

This was an act of love, which proceeded from such fullness of life, from such certainty that life was not ending, and that it was only in the fulfillment that she would find in her death that she could do this.

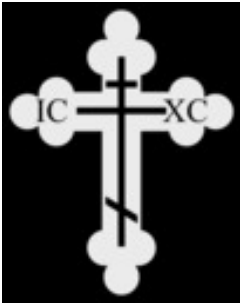
No one has greater love than he who lays down his life for his friends. Who does it himself, freely, and who in doing so, attains to the fulfillment of life because life is worth only what one lives for, and life attains this fulfillment when all is done that can humanely be done beyond fear, in joy, in certainty.

This is the meaning of love to me. Such fullness of life, that will allow me to accept, to become totally vulnerable, never recoil, never resist, give myself to the last, without discrimination to anyone and for anyone

with a certainty that love shall never be defeated, that love is stronger than death; because to love means that we already have renounced a limited self and grown into communion, that is community of life with God, who is love itself. Amen.



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.



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