



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, February 18, 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

Many Thanks to everyone who participated in our Annual Chilli/Chowder Cookoff for Souper Bowl Sunday. It seemed as if everyone was well feed and had a good time. All proceeds will go to IOCC.

Parish Council Meeting via Zoom this Tuesday, beginning at 6p. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Choir Rehearsals

As we move toward the season of Great Lent, I am asking that anyone who would like to sing in choir please come to rehearsals on Sundays beginning at 8:45a. Other rehearsals will also be scheduled throughout thr upcoming weeks. This is an essential ministry within the Church and practices ensure a well-ordered and beautiful prayer offering. Thank you, to everyone who makes this conscientious

effort to the prayer life of our community.

"Book" Study beginning Tuesday, February 20th at 7p via Zoom.

This study will be based on the book, "Living the Mission; A Spiritual Fomration Guide". This book is a broad study of the themes introduced in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. I will provide all the necessary reading materials the week before each session. This will be our Lenten study for this upcoming season.

LIVING THE MISSION: AN OVERVIEW

There is no better way to get a sense of how the Church came into being than the book of Acts, formally known as the Acts of the Apostles. A con tinuation of the Gospel of Luke, Acts traces in vivid narrative the period from one of Jesus's last appearances before his disciples to the apostle Paul's house arrest in Rome, a span of approximately thirty-five years. A synopsis of the early years of the Church, Acts is true to its title. It is full of action. And at the center of every action is the Holy Spirit, so much so that some have suggested the book should be titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" because of the huge role the Spirit plays in the drama that unfolds on its pages. Studying the way the disciples allowed the Holy Spirit to guide them as they dealt with every challenge and opportunity that came their way is incredibly helpful as we too seek to live the mission we are called to by Jesus.

In this book we focus on what it means to be a part of a fellowship, part of the community of the Church of Jesus Christ. Throughout Living the Mission we point to specific insights we can learn from

the events Luke records and the stories he tells as the People of God form communities first in Jerusalem and then radiating outward, much like circles emanate from a stone thrown into a lake. The farther the circles go out and the larger the communities become, the more their actions are scrutinized and opposed. In spite of opposition and human hesitation, the Holy Spirit continues to work through the disciples and to reveal that the kingdom of God is available to everyone here and now. Acts is the story of how the followers of Jesus became the Church. It shows us exactly how those of us who are not able to be in Jesus's physical presence can still follow him, how Jesus is still with us in the Holy Spirit, and how we are called to form communities into which we are forever inviting others. We invite you to join us as we meet and learn from the first members of the Church as they proclaim and live the good news and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! to Nadia PenkoffLedbeck and Conner Kuziak on the occasion of their birthdays.

Memory Eternal to Lillian (Valery's Grandmother)

Please pray for Sarah, Aaron, Evelyn, Victor and Valerie (John

and Joan's granddaughter) 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, Kenneth
- 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, Subdeacon Paul, Leonore
- Birthdays and Name's Days this

- Month: Nadia PenkoffLidbeck, Connor Kuziak
- Anniversaries this Month: Stasia and Glenn PenkoffLidbeck
- Expecting and Newborn: Anastasia and her unborn child
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Maria, Brian, Katy, Lauren

Sunday of Zacchaeus. St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome (461). Ven Cosmas of Yakhromsk (1492). St. Agapitos the Confessor and Wonderworker, Bishop of Synnada in Phrygia (4th c.). St. Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople (449-450).

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

February 18 to February 26, 2024

Sunday, February 18

Sunday of Zacchaeus.

Nadia PenkoffLidbeck
Mission Sunday
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 19

The Holy Apostles of the Seventy Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus

Tuesday, February 20

Leo, Bishop of Catania
8:30AM Daily Matins
6:00PM Parish Council Mtg

Wednesday, February 21

† Timothy the Righteous
4:30PM Open Doors

Thursday, February 22

The Finding of the Precious Relics of the Holy Martyrs in the Quarter of Eugenius
8:30AM Daily Matins

Friday, February 23

† Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

Saturday, February 24

First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist
Connor Kuziak
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, February 25

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee:
Triodion Begins Today
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 26

Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza

Saints and Feasts

February 18

Leo the Great, Pope of Rome

According to some, this Saint was born in Rome, but according to others in Tyrrenia (Tuscany), and was consecrated to the archiepiscopal throne of Rome in 440. In 448, when Saint Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, summoned Eutyches, an archimandrite in Constantinople, to give account for his teaching that there was only one nature in Christ after the Incarnation, Eutyches appealed to Saint Leo in Rome. After Saint Leo had carefully examined Eutyches's teachings, he wrote an epistle to Saint Flavian, setting forth the Orthodox teaching of the person of Christ, and His two natures, and also counseling Flavian that, should Eutyches sincerely repent of his error, he should be received back with all good will. At the Council held in Ephesus in 449, which was presided over by Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria (and which Saint Leo, in a letter to the holy Empress Pulcheria in 451, was the first to call "The Robber Council"), Dioscorus, having military might behind him, did not allow Saint Leo's epistle to Flavian to be read, although repeatedly asked to do so; even before the Robber Council was held, Dioscorus had uncanonically received the unrepentant Eutyches back into communion. Because Saint Leo had many cares in Rome owing to the wars of Attila the Hun and other barbarians, in 451 he sent four delegates to the Fourth Ecumenical Council, where 630 Fathers gathered in Chalcedon during the reign of Marcian, to condemn the teachings

of Eutyches and those who supported him. Saint Leo's epistle to Flavian was read at the Fourth Council, and was confirmed by the Holy Fathers as the Orthodox teaching on the incarnate person of our Lord; it is also called the "Tome of Leo." The Saint wrote many works in Latin; he reposed in 461. See also Saint Anatolius, July 3.

February 19

Philothea the Righteous Martyr of Athens

Saint Philothei was born in Athens in 1522 to an illustrious family. Against her will, she was married to a man who proved to be most cruel. When he died three years later, the Saint took up the monastic life and established a convent, in which she became a true mother to her disciples. Many women enslaved and abused by the Moslem Turks also ran to her for refuge. Because of this, the Turkish rulers became enraged and came to her convent, dragged her by force out of the church, and beat her cruelly. After a few days, she reposed, giving thanks to God for all things. This came to pass in the year 1589. She was renowned for her almsgiving, and with Saints Hierotheus and Dionysius the Areopagite is considered a patron of the city of Athens.

February 20

Leo, Bishop of Catania

This Saint, who was from Ravenna in Italy, lived during the reign of Leo the Wise

and his son Constantine Porphyrogenitus (end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries). He struggled especially against the paganism and sorcery still prevalent in those regions.

February 23

Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna

This apostolic and prophetic man, and model of faith and truth, was a disciple of John the Evangelist, successor of Bucolus (Feb. 6), and teacher of Irenaeus (Aug. 23). He was an old man and full of days when the fifth persecution was raised against the Christians under Marcus Aurelius. When his pursuers, sent by the ruler, found Polycarp, he commanded that they be given something to eat and drink, then asked them to give him an hour to pray; he stood and prayed, full of grace, for two hours, so that his captors repented that they had come against so venerable a man. He was brought by the Proconsul of Smyrna into the stadium and was commanded, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, 'Away with the atheists.'" By atheists, the Proconsul meant the Christians. But Polycarp, gazing at the heathen in the stadium, waved his hand towards them and said, "Away with the atheists." When the Proconsul urged him to blaspheme against Christ, he said: "I have been serving Christ for eighty-six years, and He has wronged me in nothing; how can I blaspheme my King Who has saved me?" But the tyrant became enraged at these words and commanded that he be cast into the fire,

and thus he gloriously expired about the year 163. As Eusebius says, "Polycarp everywhere taught what he had also learned from the Apostles, which also the Church has handed down; and this alone is true" (*Eccl. Hist.*, Book IV, ch. 14,15).

February 24

First & Second Finding of the Venerable Head of John the Baptist

The first finding came to pass during the middle years of the fourth century, through a revelation of the holy Forerunner to two monks, who came to Jerusalem to worship our Saviour's Tomb. One of them took the venerable head in a clay jar to Emesa in Syria. After his death it went from the hands of one person to another, until it came into the possession of a certain priest-monk named Eustathius, an Arian. Because he ascribed to his own false belief the miracles wrought through the relic of the holy Baptist, he was driven from the cave in which he dwelt, and by dispensation forsook the holy head, which was again made known through a revelation of Saint John, and was found in a water jar, about the year 430, in the days of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, when Uranius was Bishop of Emesa.

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 1st Tone. Psalm 32.22,1.

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 4:9-15.

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaios; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaios, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste

and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaios stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Wisdom of the Fathers

For Christ's presence is like that of some life-giving, scented balsam which restores health, enriches life and gives savor to the soul, the thoughts, the words of a man. In brief, distance from Christ means corruption and death, and closeness to Him means salvation and life.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic

Prolog, 4 February

Christ is the salvation that comes, and Zacchaeus is the house to which He comes.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic

Prolog, 4 February

The Faith We Hold



Metropolitan Anthony
Sourozh
ZACCHAEUS
20 JANUARY 1991

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

In these weeks of
preparation for Lent, we
were faced last Sunday
with the story of

Barthimaeus to attract our attention on our own blindness; our spiritual blindness of which we are not aware while physical blindness is so clearly perceived; but also on the fact that if we want to recover our sight, our spiritual vision, our understanding of self, of God, of our neighbour, of life, there is only one person to whom we can turn - it is God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Bartimaeus have tried all means to recover his sight, but it is only when he turned to Christ that he did recover it.

Whether we have taken advantage of the past week to reflect deeply on our own blindness, and in the darkness to begin to see some light, I do not know; each of us will have to answer for his eagerness or his laziness.

But today we are confronted with a new parable, or rather, a new story of the life of Christ: the story of Zacchaeus. This story speaks to us again directly and the question which is been asked from us is this: What matters to me more? The good opinion of people around me, that people should not jeer at you, laugh at you because you are seeking to see God, to meet Him, or the necessity, the inner call to discover

everything provided you can see Christ face to face? Is vanity stronger in us or the hunger for God? And Saint John of the Ladder says clearly that vanity is contempt of God and cowardice before men. What is our attitude: are we prepared to discard everything, provided we can meet God - or not? And in our circumstances it is not so much people who will prevent us, people will not jeer at us, they will not laugh at us: they will be totally indifferent; but this does not mean that we like beggars not turn to them, hoping for their approval, and in order to receive this approval, turn away from our search, from the only thing that can heal us and give us new life.

Also, we will find within ourselves conflicting voices, saying, Don't! Don't make yourself ridiculous! Don't single yourself out by a search which is not necessary; you have got everything... Zacchaeus was rich, Zacchaeus was known as an honorable citizen - so are we! We possess so much, we are respected - are we going to start on a road that will make us into what Paul calls 'the scum of the earth', debase us? This is the question which today's story of Zacchaeus says to us: is vanity, that is the search of things which are vain, empty, and the fear of other people's opinion that will prevail, or the hunger each of us has, at times, acute for a meeting with the living God? Amen.

