



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, March 24, 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 will once again have Pot Luck dinners on Wednesdays after Presanctified Liturgy to break the fast. Please bring your favorite Lenten Pot Luck meal to share with your fellow parishioners.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE is again sponsoring the Baby Bottle Campaign as our Lenten project to support Zoe for Life, an Orthodox organization located in Ohio who supports pregnant women before and after they have a baby by providing counseling and baby supplies. In the back of the church, you will find baby bottles to take home and fill with your loose change. Simply empty your change into the bottle every day. Once your bottle is full, please convert the change into bills and bring your

donation to church, putting it in the collection basket in the back of the church earmarked "Zoe for Life". Reuse

and repeat. The last to donate will be May 12th, the Sunday after Pascha. Contact Marlene Melesko with any questions: 860-739-4360 or mmelesko@sbcglobal.net

If it is lawful to say, weeping often overcomes God, for truly the compassionate one is pleasantly constrained by tears, by tears that are from the soul, not from the body, tears that are partially caused by afflictions. For we not only weep over the dead but also cry from wounds; for our flesh is clay, flowing with unceasing tears. Therefore, let us weep from the heart, in which manner the Ninevites, with compunction, opened heaven and they were seen by the Deliverer, and he accepted their repentance....

Having washed away the filth of the city with streams of tears, they adorned the entire city with prayers, and Nineveh, having converted to the compassionate one, pleased him; for she immediately showed the beauty in her heart to the one who examines the heart, and having mingled the misshapen flesh with sackcloth and ashes, she anointed it with beneficence as with oil, and having poured the perfume of fastings on it, she returns toward the ancient husband and is united with him, wherefore the Bridegroom embraced her repentance.

—St Romanos the Melodist, from On the Repentance of the Ninevites, a kontakion of compunction for Wednesday of the first

week of Lent (Translated by Andrew Mellas in Hymns of Repentance)

Confessions

I am available to receive confessions half before any service (with the exception of Liturgies), and anytime afterwards; on Wednesday, during Open Doors; as well as by appointment. Please do not wait until Holy Week. Confession should be part of everyone's preparation for meeting the Lord's Pascha. Please take advantage of this opportunity to come before the Lord.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Please pray for Sarah, Aaron, Evelyn, Victor and Blanche 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: Lauren, Evelyn, Lillian, Edward, Matthew, Lois
- Clergy and their families: Mat. Ann, 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, Robert,
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Zachary and Michael Neiss, Kyra Elliot, Matthew Kuziak
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Anastasia and her unborn child
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Maria, Brian, Katy, Lauren, Charles, Blanche, Ryan, Mark

Sunday of Orthodoxy. Forefeast of the Annunciation. Ven. Zachariah the Recluse. St. Artemius (Artemon), Bishop of Seleucia (1st-2nd c.). Ven. Zachariah, Ascetic, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th-14th c.). Martyrs Stephen and Peter of Kazan'

(1552).

- 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

March 24 to April 1, 2024

Sunday, March 24

☦ Sunday of Orthodoxy
9:30AM Divine Liturgy
4:00PM Deanery Lenten Vespers

Monday, March 25

☦ Annunciation of the Theotokos
6:00PM Vesperal Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, March 26

☦ Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel
8:30AM Lenten Matins
6:00PM Parish Council Mtg

Wednesday, March 27

☦ Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica
4:30PM Open Doors
6:00PM Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

Thursday, March 28

☦ Hilarion the New
8:30AM Daily Matins

Friday, March 29

☦ Mark, Bishop of Arethusa

Saturday, March 30

☦ Second Saturday of Lent
Alla Hamisevich
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, March 31

☦ Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
Repose of St Innocent
9:30AM Divine Liturgy
4:00PM Deanery Lenten Vespers

Monday, April 1

Jack Jankura
☦ Mary of Egypt

Saints and Feasts

March 24

Sunday of Orthodoxy

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with

the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: "If anyone does not offer

relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema." Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. This is the holy deed that all we the Orthodox commemorate today, and we call this radiant and venerable day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, that is, the triumph of true doctrine over heresy.

March 25

Annunciation of the Theotokos

Six months after John the Forerunner's conception, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, unto Mary the Virgin, who had come forth from the Temple a mature maiden (see Nov. 21). According to the tradition handed down by the Fathers, she had been betrothed to Joseph four months. On coming to Joseph's house, the Archangel declared: "Rejoice,

thou Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." After some consideration, and turmoil of soul, and fear because of this greeting, the Virgin, when she had finally obtained full assurance concerning God's unsearchable condescension and the ineffable dispensation that was to take place through her, and believing that all things

are possible to the Most High, answered in humility: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And at this, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her all-blameless womb, and the Son and Word of God, Who existed before the ages, was conceived past speech and understanding, and became flesh in her immaculate body (Luke 1:26-38).

Bearing in her womb the Uncontainable One, the blessed Virgin went with haste from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias had his dwelling; for she desired to find Elizabeth her kinswoman and rejoice together with her, because, as she had learned from the Archangel, Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. Furthermore, she wished to tell her of the great things that the Mighty One had been well-pleased to bring to pass in her, and she greeted Elizabeth and drew nigh to her. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt her six-month-old babe, Saint John the Baptist, prophesied of the dawning of the spiritual Sun. Immediately, the aged Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized her as the Mother of her Lord, and with a great voice blessed her and the Fruit that she held within herself.

The Virgin also, moved by a supernatural rejoicing in the spirit, glorified her God and Savior, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," and the rest, as the divine Luke hath recorded (1:39-55)

March 26

Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel

This festive Synaxis is celebrated to the glory of the Archangel Gabriel, since he ministered to the marvelous mystery of God's incarnate dispensation.

March 27

Martyr Matrona of Thessaloniki

This martyr was the servant of a certain Jewish woman named Pantilla, the wife of the Governor of Thessalonica. When Matrona refused to follow her mistress into the synagogue Pantilla beat her so severely that she died in a few days, and thus received the crown of her confession.

March 30

John Climacus the Righteous, author of The Divine Ladder of Ascent

This Saint gave himself over to the ascetical life from his early youth. Experienced both in the solitary life of the hermit and in the communal life of cenobitic monasticism,

he was appointed Abbot of the Monastery at Mount Sinai and wrote a book containing thirty homilies on virtue. Each homily deals with one virtue, and progressing from those that deal with holy and righteous activity (praxis) unto those that deal with divine vision (theoria), they raise a man up as though by means of steps unto the height of Heaven. For this cause his work is called

"The Ladder of Divine Ascent." The day he was made Abbot of Sinai, the Prophet Moses was seen giving commands to those who served at table. Saint John reposed in 603, at eighty years of age. See also the Fourth Sunday of the Fast.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had
been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were
guarding Your most pure
body,
You rose on the third

day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to You,
O Giver of Life:
"Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Your Kingdom!//
Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of
mankind!"

Tone 2 Troparion (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good

One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O
Christ our God.
Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend
the Cross in the flesh
and deliver Your creatures from bondage to
the Enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to
You:
“You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, //

by coming to save the world.”

Tone 4 Troparion (Forefeast)

Today is the prelude of joy for the universe!
Let us anticipate the feast and celebrate with
exultation:
Gabriel is on his way to announce the glad
tidings to the Virgin;
he is ready to cry out in fear and wonder://
“Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with
you!”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit,

Tone 8 Kontakion (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

No one could describe the Word of the Father;
but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos,
He accepted to be described,
and restored the fallen image to its former
state by uniting it to divine beauty.//
We confess and proclaim our salvation in
words and images.

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 8 Kontakion (Forefeast)

You are the beginning of salvation for all of us
on earth, Virgin Mother of God.
For the great Archangel Gabriel, God’s
minister, was sent from heaven to stand before
you to bring you joy://
Therefore, we all cry to you: “Rejoice, O
unwedded Bride!”

*(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing the
following)*

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a
Child –
our God before the ages.
He made your body into a throne,
and your womb He made more spacious than
the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.
Glory to you!

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him
in the highest!
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise
befits the just!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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 Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40.

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son

of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated -- of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, though well attested by their

faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Gospel Reading

Sunday of Orthodoxy

The Reading is from John 1:43-51

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Wisdom of the Fathers

Peter, when after so many miracles and such high doctrine he confessed that, "Thou art the Son of God" (Matt. xvi. 16), is called "blessed," as having received the revelation from the Father;

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 21 on John 1, 1. B#58, pp. 72, 73, 4th Century

... while Nathanael, though he said the very same thing before seeing or hearing either miracles or doctrine, had no such word addressed to him, but as though he had not said so much as he ought to have said, is brought to things greater still.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 21 on John 1, 1. B#58, pp. 72, 73, 4th Century

The Faith We Hold



Metropolitan Anthony of
Sourozh
'BE FOLLOWERS OF
ME AS I AM OF
CHRIST'
11th August 1985

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

In today's Epistle we hear words which at first may shock us, Saint Paul telling us, 'Be followers of me as I am of Christ'.

How could he say, 'Be followers of me' rather than say, 'Follow Christ whom I try to follow but not always succeed'?

I think, we must remember his life in order to understand these words. He is, according to Tradition, the young man who stood watching over the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. He went from Jerusalem,

out, with powers to persecute, to seize, to bring to death and judgment the Christians in Damascus. And of a sudden, having met Christ, he changed his life and did that at all risks.

And this is, I think, what he means when he says, 'Be followers of me as I am of Christ': I was a stranger to Him, I have become one of His people. I was a persecutor, I am now standing side by side with Him, carrying not only the shame but the terror of it. Because if nowadays some feel shy, timid, cowardly ashamed of professing their faith, in those days, proclaiming oneself a Christian was tantamount to offering oneself unto martyrdom. And he gives us a picture of what his life had been, in the same passage of the Epistle which we have read: all he has suffered because he choose Christ.

Elsewhere he says, 'For me life is Christ' - that means that all that was Christ's is his, and all that was alien to Christ, all that brought Him to Passion week and to the Crucifixion, he rejects. Nothing was left of life for him except what was in harmony with the Lord Jesus Christ. He accomplished what Christ had said to James and John: Are you prepared to drink My cup? Are you prepared to be merged into the ordeal

which shall be Mine? – that was for Paul life with Christ: to share His earthly destiny in all things, including martyrdom and death, if necessary.

And indeed, for him, whose heart had been conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ, death itself became an object of longing: didn't he say, 'for me death would be a gain, because as long as I am in the flesh I am separated from Christ'? He longed for death for nothing to separate him from the Lord who was his Savior, who was his teacher,

who had become his whole life.

When he says therefore, 'Be followers of me as I am of Christ' he does not pride himself of anything; he confesses his early life and he proclaims the wonder which God has achieved within his life.

Let us reflect on this. Most of us, from childhood, we have been united with Christ, brought to Him to be His own - but can we say that we have chosen Him when, being older, we could choose for Him or turn away from Him? Can we say that all our life is Christ, that anything which is contrary to Him, to His teaching, to His being is alien to us, indeed is repellent to us? Can we say that to live for us is to share with Him both His resurrection and the readiness to tread the way of the Passion? Can we say that we long for death because death for us is freedom and eternity?

Let us therefore reflect, time and again, on these words, on this call of Paul, 'Be followers of me as I am of Christ'. And let us reach out to the depth and to the greatness of our vocation to be Christ's body, the temples of the Holy Spirit, partakers of the divine nature, sons and daughters of the Living God. 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.



Parish Web Site -

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

Facebook - @stalexisorthodox

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

Join Zoom Meeting

- http://bit.ly/St_Alexis_Zoom



Ask questions in confession



Don't just confess your sins to the priest. Don't just say "Oh father I did sin a b c, how do I overcome?"

No. **Ask quality thoughtful questions focused on helping you develop virtues.** Focus your attention on developing virtues and your sinful habits should go away. Ask

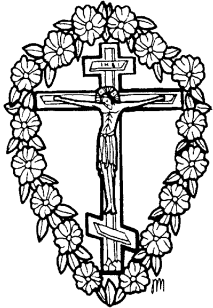
- ❖ Father tell me one way I can love my family more?
- ❖ **Father what's an amazing virtue you observed off someone lately?**
- ❖ Father tell me a wonderful edifying story
- ❖ **Father how can I glorify God at my work or university and be an icon of Christ**
- ❖ Father how do I improve my prayer life?

CTD - OCAGB LENTEN VESPERS 2024



Sunday, March 24 , 1st Sunday of Lent
Sunday of Orthodoxy—Vespers 4:00 pm
St. Dimitrie, Easton

Sunday, March 31, 2nd Sunday of Lent
St. Gregory Palamas—Vespers 4:00 pm
OCAGB: Holy Trinity, Bridgeport
CT Deanery: Sts. Peter & Paul, Springfield, MA



Sunday, April, 7, 3rd Sunday of Lent
Veneration of the Holy Cross
FORCC Sunday 4:00 pm
OCAGB: St. John the Baptist, Bridgeport
CT Deanery: St Nicholas, Pittsfield, MA
His Grace Bp. Benedict Presiding

Sunday, April 14, 4th Sunday of Lent
St. John Climacus—Vespers 4:00 pm
OCAGB: St. Nicholas, Bridgeport
CT Deanery: Holy Transfiguration, New Haven



Sunday, April 21, 5th Sunday of Lent
St. Mary of Egypt—Holy Unction
4:00pm Three Saints, Ansonia
His Grace Bp. Benedict Presiding

Sunday, April 28 Palm Sunday
Bridegroom Matins 4:00 pm
CT Deanery: All Saints, Hartford

