



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, September 08, 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) 322-2906, 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

Diocean Assembly

The Assembly this year occurs on Oct 25th & 26th, and will be held in Cumberland, RI.

New Catechumen

On Sunday, the 15th, we will initiate a new catechumen into the Church. Sarah Sanborn, who has been visiting the parish over the last several weeks, as been attending St Sophia Orthodox Church in New London for several years and has decided to continue her journey to Orthodoxy with us at St. Alexis.

Stewardship

Stewardship forms were emailed out to everyone on our mailing list. The are also

available in the back of the candle desk. Please be sure to return them to me before the end of the month as we will be using the pledges to generate our budget for the following year. We will also be putting our ministries together as well.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! To Katy Jankura on the occasion of her birthday.

Memory Eternal to Deborah Brey on the anniversary of her repose in the Lord. Please remember Glenn PenkoffLedbeck's father, Paul, in your prayers. He reposed in

the Lord on Thursday, Sept 5th. May his soul dwell with the righteous.

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: Galina, Olga, Mat Lillian, Dorothy, ArchBishop Nikon (9/1), Deborah Brey (9/10), Kelley Hosking-Billings (9/27)
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei, Fr Ceriphim
- Catechumen: Robert, Abbie, Matthew, Joseph, Mary, and Kevin
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Gail Galina, Evelyn, Rosemary, John, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles, Victor, Susan
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Zachariah Niess (9/5), Michael Niess (9/6), David Miller (9/11), Kathryn Jankura (9/12), Melissa Josefiak (9/16), Sophia Brubaker, Luba Martins, Nadia PenkofLedbeck (9/17)
- Anniversaries this Month: Lloyd and Susan Davis
- Expecting and Newborn: Lynn, David and their unborn child, Keree, Steve and their unborn child
- Traveling: Michael, Jason, Dn Timothy, Maureen
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Remy, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Cathy, Joe

Today's commemorated feasts

and saints

11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2. The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary . Sunday before Elevation.

- 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

St Alexis Parish

September 8 to September 16, 2024

Sunday, September 8

Sunday before Holy Cross
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, September 9

The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna

Tuesday, September 10

Menodora, Metrodora, & Nymphodora the Martyrs

+Deborah Bray

8:30AM Matins

7:00PM Bible Study

Wednesday, September 11

Theodora of Alexandria

Thursday, September 12

Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Kathryn Jankura - B

8:30AM Matins

6:30PM Deanery Mtg

Friday, September 13

Forefeast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross

6:00PM Vigil of the Cross

Saturday, September 14

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

8:30AM Liturgy of the Cross

5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, September 15

Sunday after Holy Cross

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, September 16

Melissa Josefiak

Euphemia the Great Martyr

Saints and Feasts

September 08

Sunday before Holy Cross

September 08

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was born of barren and aged parents, Joachim and Anna, about the year 16 or 17 before the birth of Christ. Joachim was descended from the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. Anna was of the priestly tribe of Levi, a daughter of the priest Matthan and Mary, his wife.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.

And when from the depths You raised the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
"O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

Tone 4 Troparion (Feast)

Your nativity, O Virgin,
has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of righteousness, Christ our God,
has shone from you, O Theotokos.
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.//
By destroying death, He has granted us
eternal life.

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

Tone 2 Kontakion (Resurrection)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb!

The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You, // and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Feast)

By your nativity, O most pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness,

Adam and Eve — from the corruption of death.

And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: //

“The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.”

Hymn to the Theotokos

Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God!

Virginity is foreign to mothers; childbearing is strange for virgins.

But in you, O Theotokos, both were accomplished. //

For this all the earthly nations unceasingly magnify you.

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the Name of the Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 2nd Tone. Psalm 117.14,18.

The Lord is my strength and my song.

Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12.

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this

right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the torturers, till he should pay all his debt.

So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Wisdom of the Fathers

Our Redeemer and Maker, Who was Son of God before the ages, became Son of Man at the end of ages. Thus the One Who, through the power of His divinity, had created us to enjoy the happiness of everlasting life, might Himself restore us, through the weakness of our humanity, to recover the life we had lost.

St. Bede the Venerable

Homilies on the Gospels, 2.18. 7th Century. Taken from: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Vol: John 1-10. Intervarsity Press, 2006, p. 126.

Beyond the Sermon



SUNDAY BEFORE
HOLY CROSS
September 8
THE GOSPEL
READING
John 3:13-17
[Life in the Kingdom]
The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

We read in the Old Testament in the Books of Exodus and Numbers that while the people of Israel travel in the wilderness, they face many challenges shortly after their slavery in Egypt. This includes the long journey, the desert, the lack of water and food, and the temptation not to trust the Lord when they could not see their destination — the Promised Land. As they struggle with their faith, they become discouraged on the way. In their frustration, they complain to Moses about their challenges in the wilderness. Then, serpents come into their camp and start biting them, so they ask Moses to pray for them.

Moses prays for the people, and the Lord tells Moses to make a brass serpent and put it on a pole. And if a serpent should bite someone, the Lord says, when the one bitten looks at it, he shall live (Numbers 21:1-9). This is the history behind Jesus’ words when He says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

The symbolic beauty points to the reality of God’s love for us and the grace given to us by His Son. In the Old Testament, the serpent symbolizes sin and the spiritual enemy of our souls, the evil one. When the people stop trusting God, and begin to be bitter and complain, they drift away from God, and that is when the serpents bite them. This is what happens with sin. When we direct ourselves away from the love of God instead of towards it, we become vulnerable to sin, which, in a sense, bites us and infuses venom into our hearts. God, however, in His great love for us, does not leave us to die in the wilderness, bitten by serpents, even when we turn away from Him. His love is endless, and He never gives up on His people. In the Old Testament story, Moses prays to God and asks for His help. As the one who would lead the people to the Promised Land, Moses prefigures Christ. Just as Moses prayed for his people in the Sinai Desert, Christ continually mediates for us to our Father. He is the One who died and rose again so we can enter the presence of God forever. Just as Moses in the wilderness hangs the serpent on a pole, so the Son of Man is hung on the Cross and whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. Jesus refers to His Crucifixion here. When the people of God in the wilderness look at the bronze serpent, they are healed and restored to life. Jesus fulfills this because even though He is perfect and without sin, He took on all our failures and nailed them on the Cross as He was crucified. In that sense, He died for us, and on the Cross, He destroys death by death. He can do so because He is the Son of God, and because He rose on the third day to restore us to

eternal life.

God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son. The word “world” has different meanings in Scripture and tradition. It can mean the natural world, the entire cosmos — the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that is in them, which God the Father created through the Son of God. It can also mean the world that has turned away from God, that is, worldly things such as pride and selfish desires. As Jesus says, “What will it profit a person if they gain the whole world, and lose their own soul?” (Mark 8:36) In this Gospel reading, however, God loves everything He created and all human beings, regardless of who they are. This is why the Father sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. This is why the Lord became incarnate, that is, he took human nature and united it to His divine nature. This is why He lived, died on the Cross, and rose again. It is because He gives Himself for our weaknesses which He heals and delivers us from death by giving us eternal life.

As Jesus rose from the dead, He also grants eternal life to all who believe in Him. As Saint Augustine of Hippo says, “He who looked to the serpent that was lifted up, was healed of its poison, and saved from death; so now he who is conformed to the likeness of Christ’s death by faith and the grace of baptism, is delivered both from sin by justification, and from death by the resurrection.”

This has a profound meaning for each one of us individually. The Lord loves the world and loves every single person with infinite love. And with perfect love. He knows us by name, and He knows our hearts. He knows our struggles and even our failures.

And yet, He has loved each of us and given Himself for us so we can have eternal life with Him. If we open our hearts to that love of God, who loves us infinitely to the point of giving us His own Son, and if we open our hearts to the Son, who voluntarily gives Himself, we cannot but be filled with love for God. As Saint Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia says, “What is higher than the highest? Love for Christ is something else. It is without end, without satiety. It gives life; it gives strength; it gives health; it gives, gives, and gives. And the more it gives, the more the person wishes to fall in love.”

When we look at the Cross and have faith in Christ, we are healed from the effects of sin. We are healed through the Holy Sacraments, prayer, and virtues. We are healed through the study of the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Church Fathers. God creates all things perfect and beautiful, yet we have often turned away from Him and wandered into the wilderness. As serpents, the sufferings and struggles of this world bite us. And yet, Christ has conquered all, and He has given Himself for us so we can have eternal life. As we behold the Cross, we are healed. As we behold His Resurrection with faith, we are raised to eternal life.

