



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 26, 2025

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:

Carolyn Neiss- President Greg Jankura -
Vice President
Boris Doph - Treasurer. James Ifkovic -
Secretary
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large

Luba Martins - Member at Large
Brett Malcolm - Member at Large

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

Please keep Gail "Galina" Kuziak, and her family in your prayers. Gail is in Danbury hospital and when the family came to visit this morning, she was found to be unresponsive. She was taken to receive a CAT scan and the family is discussing their further options.

This is all the details that I have at the moment.

Please keep Gail's husband, Victor, in your prayers as tomorrow is the anniversary of his repose. Memory Eternal.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Memory Eternal to the newly departed Gail Galina Kuziak.

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: Frank, Leonore, Gail Galena
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei

- B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne,
- Catechumen: Kevin, James
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles, Victor, Susan, Gregory
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Gail Kuziak (B-14 Jan), Fr Deacon Timothy (N-22 Jan),
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Keree, Steve and their unborn child, Katie and Aaron and their unborn child, Steven and Ashley and their unborn child Christopher
- Traveling: Michael, Jason
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Remy, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Cathy, Joe, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Marlene, Reader John

- 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.

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

31st SUNDAY AFTER

PENTECOST — Tone 6. New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. Ven. Xenophon, his wife, Mary, and their two sons, Arcadius and John, of Constantinople (5th-6th c.). Translation of the Relics of Ven. Theodore, Abbot of Studion (845). St. Xenophon of Robeika (1262). Martyrs Ananias—Presbyter, Peter, and seven soldiers, in Phœnicia (284-305). St. Simeon "the Ancient" of Mt. Sinai (ca. 390). St. Joseph, Bishop of Thessalonica, brother of St. Theodore of Studion (830). Rt. Blv. David (Dató) III, King of Iberia and Abkhazia (Georgia—1125).

Parish Calendar

St Alexis Parish

January 26 to February 3, 2025

Sunday, January 26

15th Sunday of Luke
Fr. Steven Voytovich - B
Sanctity of Life
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 27

Removal of the Relics of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
8:30AM Akathist to St John Chrystostom

Tuesday, January 28

Ephraim the Syrian
8:30AM Matins

Wednesday, January 29

Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the

God-bearer

8:00AM Akathist to St Ignatius

Thursday, January 30

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

8:00AM Akathist to Three Holy Hierarchs

8:30AM Matins

Friday, January 31

Cyrus & John the Unmercenaries

Saturday, February 1

Trypho the Martyr

5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, February 2

The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

Meeting of Our Lord

Blessing of Candles

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 3

Afterfeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

Saints and Feasts

January 26

Xenophon & his Companions

This Saint, a wealthy nobleman of Constantinople, was filled with piety toward God. He had two sons, Arcadius and John, whom he sent to Beirut to study law. But they were shipwrecked during their voyage; barely saved, they forsook all things and departed for Palestine. Saint Xenophon

and his wife Mary, ignorant of what had happened, went in search of their sons. On finding them in Jerusalem, dressed in the habit of monks, they also took up the monastic life. And thus, having completed their lives in holiness, they departed for the Lord about the beginning of the sixth century. Saint Xenophon and his sons reposed at Saint Sabbas Monastery, and Mary at the Monastery of Saint Theodosius.

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 these 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.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Your grave, seeking Your most pure

body.

You captured hell, not being tempted by it. You came to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, // glory to You.

Tone 4 Troparion (Ven. Xenophon)

O God of our Fathers, always act with kindness towards us; take not Your mercy from us, but guide our lives in peace // through the prayers of Venerable Xenophon and his family!

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,

He bestowed resurrection on the human race.//
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

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

Tone 4 Kontakion (Ven. Xenophon)

You kept vigil in the courts of the Lord with your wife and two children, blessed Xenophon,
and you gladly lavished your wealth on the poor.//
Therefore, you have inherited divine joy.

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Steadfast Protectress)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,
□Constant Advocate before the Creator;
despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, □but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. □Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, □O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 6th Tone. Psalm 27.9,1.

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17.

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

Wisdom of the Fathers

She had a great perfection of faith. She had no uncertainty about His divine majesty. She had no small measure of the virtue of patience. Yet the pitying Physician of the pitiful disdained her petitions. He kept her waiting for answer in order to demonstrate to us the perseverance of this woman that we can always imitate. She had the characteristics of constancy and humility. She willingly embraced the indignity she received, and even confirmed the Lord's statement. This woman rightly signifies the faith and devotion of the Church gathered from the nations

Saint Bede

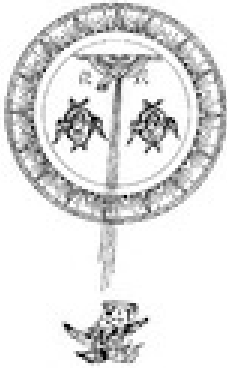
Hom. 1. 22, In Lent, Homilies on the Gospels, Bk. One, 216, 217.

Beyond the Sermon

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
The meaning of love
1966

Gospel Reading

Matthew 15:21-28



Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

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 fulfilment 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



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The QR Code here may be used as well.



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January 26, 2025
01/008

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we mark our annual Sanctity of Life Sunday, I would like to speak to you about martyrdom. Specifically, by understanding martyrdom, which we might consider the most pure, fundamental realization of the Christian vocation, we understand just why we hold life sacred.

At first, this may appear paradoxical. Martyrdom, after all, is willingly surrendering one's life for the sake of the Christian faith. Martyrdom teaches us that life in this world is not to be compared with the glorious and everlasting life that awaits us in the world to come. As the Lord says, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mk. 8:35).

Christ promises us in his Beatitudes that "blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:11–12). When we are rejected by the world because we accept the Gospel—when we reject the world in order to take up our Cross—then we display the Christian faith in all its truth and power and glory. Martyrdom, etymologically and in fact, always means "bearing witness," and the greatest and most fundamental way to bear witness to the Gospel is to die for the sake of the Gospel.

However, martyrdom, even when it points us towards the next life, also testifies to the immeasurable sacredness of our mortal life in this world. Here, in this life, it is possible for us to bear witness; here, in this life, we have the possibility of accepting Christ's gift of salvation. This is true for the literal martyrs, but it is also possible for every Christian through the bloodless martyrdom of asceticism. Whenever we die to our fleshly desires for the sake of the Gospel, we suffer a little martyrdom. Whenever we forgo power or wealth or gratification for the sake of Christ's commandments, we are bearing witness, in a small way, to the truth of the Christian faith.

In other words, martyrdom proper, as well as the ascetic martyrdom to which we are all called, are a way of "redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16). Through Christ's Incarnation and Passion, the fallen world

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and passing present age have become an arena of spiritual struggle and the place where salvation is accomplished.

Seen from this perspective, life in this world is not something cheap and utilitarian, but incredibly dear. The Lord gives us this life that we might offer it back to him, fulfilling our primordial role as priest and mediator of creation: man is called to commend himself and his fellow-men and all his life to Christ our God.

All life comes from God; all life belongs to God; and through the saving work of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, biological life in this world is now open to the possibility of true and everlasting life in the world to come.

Thus, on this Sanctity of Life Sunday, we bear witness to the truth that all human life, from conception to natural death, is sacred. We pray that the scales will fall from the eyes of our countrymen who do not recognize this basic truth, and we beseech the Lord that all violations of this holy principle—abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and the rest—would come to a swift end in our age and our land. Finally, we pray that we might find the strength to live in accordance with this teaching, showing forth the sanctity of life by devoting our own life to the pursuit of sanctity, thus bearing witness in our flesh to the truth of the holy Orthodox Christian faith.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada