



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 16, 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

References for those seeking to learn more about Orthodoxy

1) First, please have a look at **OrthodoxIntro**: <https://www.orthodoxintro.org/>

OrthodoxIntro is a true first-stop introduction to Orthodox Christianity as a website. It has basic information, such as the content of the gospel and what the day-to-day life of an Orthodox Christian looks like, as well as the key feature -- **Q&A email with qualified, canonical Orthodox clergy**, which I believe

is much-needed, considering how much confusion there is on the Internet.

2) Second, I'd like to point you to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@AncientFaithMinistries>

Here you can find many live shows and other podcasts covering numerous topics. These can edify and educate both you and your fellow parishioners, and of course this material often acts toward evangelism for those who use YouTube.

Resources on Parish Facebook Page

Throughout the upcoming fasting season, I will be posting Lenten resources on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/stalexisorthodox/>) in hopes that you will find them of use. I will try to duplicate the resources on our parish web site (<https://www.stalexischurch.org>) as I can.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations





Many Years! to Nadia PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of her birthday.

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: Gail Galena, Leonore, Maria
- 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: Demetra Tolis (3 Feb), Christina Hoehnebart (8 Feb), Gabrielle Neiss (8 Feb), Fr Deacon Timothy (12 Feb), Nadia PenkoffLidbeck (18 Feb), Connor Kuziak (24 Feb)
- Anniversaries this Month: Glenn & Stasia PenkoffLidbeck (15 Feb)
- Expecting and Newborn: Keree, Steve and their unborn child, Katie and Aaron and their unborn child, Steven and Ashley and their unborn child Christopher, Valery and Jason and their unborn child.
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Remy, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Cathy, Joe, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL

SON — Tone 1. St. Nicholas, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Archbishop of Japan (1912). Martyrs Pamphilius—Presbyter, Valens—Deacon, Paul, Seleucus, Porphyrius, Julian, Theodulus, Elias, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Samuel, and Daniel, at Caesarea in Palestine (307-309). St. Maruthas, Bishop of Martyropolis in Mesopotamia (422). Persian Martyrs in Martyropolis in Mesopotamia (4th 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

St Alexis Parish

February 16 to February 24, 2025

Sunday, February 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Mission Sunday
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 17

Theodore the Tyro, Great Martyr

Tuesday, February 18

Leo the Great, Pope of Rome
Nadia PenkoffLidbeck
8:30AM Matins
6:00PM Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 19

The Holy Apostles of the Seventy Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus
4:00PM Soup Kitchen

Thursday, February 20

Leo, Bishop of Catania
8:30AM Matins
7:00PM Book Study

Friday, February 21

Timothy the Righteous
6:00PM Akathist for the Departed

Saturday, February 22

Saturday of Souls
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, February 23

Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 24

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

Saints and Feasts

February 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him

by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man.

February 16

Pamphilus the Martyr & his Companions

This Martyr contested during the reign of Maximian, in the year 290, in Caesarea of Palestine, and was put to death by command of Firmilian, the Governor of Palestine. His fellow contestants' names are Valens, Paul, Seleucus, Porphyrius, Julian, Theodulus, and five others from Egypt: Elias, Jeremias, Esaias, Samuel, and Daniel. Their martyrdom is recorded in Book VIII, ch. 11 of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, called *The Martyrs of Palestine*.

February 17

Theodore the Tyro, the Great Martyr

Saint Theodore who was from Amasia of Pontus, contested during the reign of Maximian (286-305). He was called Tyro, from the Latin *Tiro*, because he was a newly enlisted recruit. When it was reported that he was a Christian, he boldly confessed Christ; the ruler, hoping that he would repent, gave him time to consider the matter more completely and then give answer. Theodore gave answer by setting fire to the temple of Cybele, the "mother of the gods," and for this he suffered a martyr's death by fire. See also the First Saturday of the Fast.

February 17

Hermogenes (Germogen), Patriarch of Moscow

Our Father among the Saints Hermogenes (Germogen), Patriarch of Moscow, was born about 1530 in Kazan. While yet a layman, he lived as a clerk in the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Kazan. In 1569, the year that Metropolitan Philip of Moscow was slain in Tver (see Jan. 9), Saint Barsanuphius, Bishop of Tver, fled to Kazan fearing the wrath of Ivan the Terrible. So Hermogenes became a spiritual son of Saint Barsanuphius. He was made priest of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Kazan, and was a witness of the miracles of the newly-appeared icon of our Lady of Kazan (see July 8). Later he became Abbot of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, and in 1589 was consecrated Metropolitan

of Kazan, in which capacity he converted and baptized many pagan Tartars and heterodox.

In late 1604, the so-called false Dimitry, a pretender to the Russian throne who claimed to be the son of Ivan the Terrible (who had died in 1584), crossed the Russian border, having the support of the Jesuits and King Sigismund III of Poland, who hoped through Dimitry to force Papism upon the Russian people; a few cities, such as Chernigov, soon surrendered to him. Shaken by these calamities, Tsar Boris Gudonov died suddenly, and in June, 1605, the pretender entered Moscow and took the Russian throne. He then declared his intention to marry a Polish woman without her receiving Baptism in the Orthodox Church; when the authorities and the hierarchy remained silent out of fear, it was Metropolitan Hermogenes alone who fearlessly rebuked him and demanded that she renounce Papism and be baptized according to the rites of Orthodoxy. For this, Hermogenes was banished to Kazan. In 1606 Prince Basil Shuisky led the people in the overthrow of Dimitry, and Basil was elected Tsar in Moscow; Hermogenes was made Patriarch of Moscow. The overthrow of Dimitry did not end the endeavours of the Poles to subject Russia to themselves, and in those times of upheavals, treachery, and bloodshed, the valiant Patriarch Hermogenes showed himself to be a great spiritual leader of the people, and, like Saint Philip of Moscow almost half a century before, the conscience of Orthodox Russia in times of betrayal and terror.

In 1609 King Sigismund succeeded

in setting his son upon the Russian throne, and Patriarch Hermogenes again insisted that the new Tsar be baptized in the Orthodox Church, marry an Orthodox Christian, and have no dealings with the Pope. The Poles, together with rebel boyars who supported them, imprisoned Patriarch Hermogenes in an underground chamber of the Chudov Monastery during Holy Week of 1611, where they slowly starved him to death; he gave up his holy soul on February 17, 1612.

In 1653, his holy relics were found incorrupt; in 1812, when Napoleon captured Moscow, the Saint's tomb was desecrated in the search for treasure; when the French withdrew, the Patriarch's holy body was found intact on the floor of the cathedral; in 1883 his holy relics were again found whole. Saint Hermogenes was glorified on May 12, 1913, and added to the choir of holy hierarchs of Moscow, whose feast is celebrated on October 5; at the time of his glorification a multitude of miracles were wrought through his incorrupt relics.

February 22

Saturday of Souls

Through the Apostolic Constitutions (Book VIII, ch. 42), the Church of Christ has received the custom to make commemorations for the departed on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after their repose. Since many throughout the ages, because of an untimely death in a faraway place, or other adverse circumstances, have

died without being deemed worthy of the appointed memorial services, the divine Fathers, being so moved in their love for man, have decreed that a common memorial be made this day for all pious Orthodox Christians who have reposed from all ages past, so that those who did not have particular memorial services may be included in this common one for all. Also, the Church of Christ teaches us that alms should be given to the poor by the departed one's kinsmen as a memorial for him.

Besides this, since we make commemoration tomorrow of the Second Coming of Christ, and since the reposed have neither been judged, nor have received their complete recompense (Acts 17:31; II Peter 2:9; Heb. 11:39-40), the Church rightly commemorates the souls today, and trusting in the boundless mercy of God, she prays Him to have mercy on sinners. Furthermore, since the commemoration is for all the reposed together, it reminds each of us of his own death, and arouses us to repentance.

Hymns of the Day



day, O Savior,

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

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 4 Troparion (St. Alexis)

O righteous Father Alexis, our heavenly
intercessor and teacher, ☐divine adornment
of the Church of Christ! ☐Entreat the Master
of All to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in
America, ☐to grant peace to the world and to
our souls great mercy.

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

Tone 5 Kontakion (St. Alexis)

Let us, the faithful praise the Priest Alexis,
a bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America, a
model of patience and humility,
a worthy shepherd of the Flock of Christ.
He called back the sheep who had been led
astray
*and brought them by his preaching to the
Heavenly Kingdom.*

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 3 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O
Father;
and among sinners I have scattered the
riches which You had given me.
Therefore I cry to You like the Prodigal:
“I have sinned before You, O compassionate
Father; //
receive me a penitent, and make me as

one of Your hired servants!"

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Alleluia (3X)

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 the Corinthians 6:12-20.

Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple

of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.

Gospel Reading

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The Reading is from Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced

him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Wisdom of the Fathers

Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness - an intelligently free

and immortal life...Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life unto death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!' (Luke 15:18).

St. John of Kronstadt

My Life in Christ: Part 1; Holy Trinity Monastery pgs. 104-105, 19th century

But if he had despaired of his life, and, ... had remained in the foreign land, he would not have obtained what he did obtain, but would have been consumed with hunger, and so have undergone the most pitiable death: ...

St. John Chrysostom

AN EXHORTATION TO THEODORE AFTER HIS FALL, 4th Century

Beyond the Sermon





Metropolitan Anthony
of Sourozh
PRODIGAL SON
3 February 1991

In the Name of the
Father, the Son and the
Holy Ghost.
How simple and how
restrained are the
words in which the
Gospel describes his
cruel rejection of his
father, and prepares

his departure into the far, the strange
country! "Father - give me my part of thy
inheritance!" Do these words not mean:
"Father - I can't wait until your death! You
are still strong, and I am young; it is now
that I want to reap the fruits of thy life, of
thy labours; later they will be stale. Let us
come to an agreement: for me you are dead;
give me what belongs to me or what would
belong to me after your actual death, and I
will go, and I will live the life I have chosen".
This is what really the young man meant; but
isn't it very much the way we treat God and
His gifts. From Him, as long as we are with
Him, we are in possession of all things, but
we feel constrained by His presence, we feel
limited by the inevitable rules of His
household: He expects from us integrity and
truth? He expects from us to learn from Him
what it means to love with all one's mind, all
one's heart, all one's strength, all one's
being, - and that is too much for us. And we
take all His gifts, and we turn away from
Him to use these gifts so that they can profit
us, and us alone, without any returns

either to God, or to anyone else.

We all, without any exception but in different
degrees obey the cruel, deceitful question of
satan to Christ in the wilderness! You have
the power to do it - make these stones to
become bread; You are God's child - use
what God has given you of wisdom, of
strength, use it for you own benefit! Why
waste your time until you are too old?.. Isn't
it an image of our own behaviour?

And then, the young man leaves; he leaves
for an alien country, a country which is not
God's own, a country which has rejected
God, renounced God, which has been
betrayed into the power of His adversary, a
country where there is no place for Him. And
he lives according to the rules of this country
and to the desires of his heart. And then,
hunger comes.

Now, we turn away, carrying with us the
gifts of God; and we live in a country which
is also alien; we live in a world which is man-
made, but not God-made; or rather: made by
God, and distorted by man. What kind of
hunger comes to us? We are rich, we are
safe, we have everything which God gave us,
and continues to give - only we don't realise
that God continues to give while we
squander. But what is the hunger that can
come to us? The awareness which Christ
describes in the first Beatitude: Blessed are
the poor in spirit, their's is the Kingdom of
God... Who are the poor of spirit? The poor
of spirit are those who have understood, and
understand day in, day out, all their life
through that they have no existence except
that God loved us into existence; we have no
life except God's life poured into us, His
breath, the breath

of life. And then we are so rich, because God has revealed Himself to us: He has revealed Who He is; we can love Him, know Him, worship Him, serve Him, emulate Him indeed because He has become man and has shown us what a man can be. And He has given us all that our intelligence, a heart, a will, a body, the world around us, the people around us, the relationships that are ours - all these are God's, because we cannot make them, we can force no one to love us, and yet, we have friends and people who love us. We cannot be sure of our mind: in one moment a stroke can extinguish the greatest mind; there are moments when we want to respond to a need, to a suffering - and our heart is of stone; only God can give it life! We waver between good and evil - only God can steady our will; and so forth.

If we only realise this, then we understand that we are totally destitute: we are nothing, we have nothing, and yet, so rich we are; because destitute, we are endowed with all the gifts of God; having betrayed Him time and again, turned away from Him time and again, we still are loved of Him: indeed - "blessed are the hungry: they shall be filled"! If we only realise our hunger for the real things, then it will come our way. But not simply because we are hungry; they will come our way at a moment when totally poor, we are loved: and this is the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of love: God loves us. And He has granted the gift of love to each of us. The young man felt hungry. He felt hungry for his father's home, and yet he knew that he had no right anymore to call himself a son to him: he was a murderer! He had told him: Die before your time that I may live according to my will... And yet

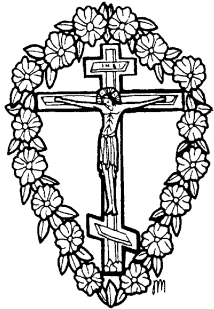
he goes, because he still can call the man whom he rejected 'Father'. And what happens then? The father sees him coming from afar off; he does not wait in dignity for him to fall at his feet and confess his sins. He rushes towards him, he embraces him! And the young man makes his confession: I am no longer worthy to be called thy son - but at that moment the father stops him: you may not be worthy of being my son, and yet, you are my son, and you can not become a hireling in you father's house... He claims from his, as God claims from us that we should be aware, and grow to the level of our human greatness: the children of the Living God called to be partakers of the divine nature, His sons and daughters in Christ and in the Spirit. That is what this parable tells us; that is what we must reflect on: where do we stand to this first simple, cruel, murderous words of the young man? And are we aware of our dereliction? Are we hungry enough to realise that we must go home to the Only One who loves us, and Who, seeing us fallen, still claims from us the greatness of sonship... Let us reflect on this. It's one more step towards the day when in repentance we will come to make our confession, receive forgiveness. And if we were honest in our repentance, determined in our turning Godwards, we will be at home and ready to enter into Holy week together with Christ the Son, together with the Father Who gives His Son, together with the Mother of God Who accepts the death upon the cross of Her Son, that we may be saved. Amen

CTD - OCAGB LENTEN VESPERS 2025



Sunday, March 9, 1st Sunday of Lent
Sunday of Orthodoxy—Vespers 4:00 pm
CT Deanery Sts. Peter & Paul, Meriden
OCAGB Holy Trinity, Bridgeport

Sunday, March 16, 2nd Sunday of Lent
St. Gregory Palamas—Vespers 4:00 pm
CT Deanery: St. Alexis, Clinton
OCAGB: St. Dimitrie, Easton



Sunday, March 23rd,
3rd Sunday of Lent
Veneration of the Holy Cross
FORCC Sunday 4:00 pm
OCAGB: Holy Ghost, Bridgeport

Sunday, March 30th,
4th Sunday of Lent
St. John Climacus—Vespers 4:00 pm
OCAGB: St. John, Bridgeport
CT Deanery: Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Terryville



Sunday, April 6 5th Sunday of Lent
St. Mary of Egypt—Holy Unction
4:00pm Three Saints, Ansonia
His Grace Bp. Benedict Presiding



Sunday, April 13 Palm Sunday
Bridegroom Matins 4:00 pm
CT Deanery: All Saints, Hartford

