



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Rector

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Attached

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### Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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### Bulletin for Sunday, March 02, 2025

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### 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

Lent starts Monday, March 3rd. Liturgically, we begin Lent with Forgiveness Vespers and the Rite of Forgiveness following Liturgy on March 2nd. Throughout Lent, I have reinstated Open Doors twice a week; Wednesdays from 4 to 6 and Saturdays from 3 to 5:30. These times are available for drop-in confession. If you need another date and time, these can be arranged by appointment.

Every parishioner is expected to come to confess during Lent. Please take a look at the Lenten resources on our web site.

<https://www.stalexischurch.org/lentenresources>

I have also placed two brochures on "confession" in the holders found on the wall at the base of the stairs.

**Be sure to check the [parish calendar](#) for specific dates of lenten services and events!**

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! to Michael and Zachary Neiss on the occasion of their birthdays.

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:
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne,
- Catechumen: James
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles, Victor, Susan, Gregory,
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Michael and Zachery Neiss (B-3 Mar), Matthew Kuziak (B-18 Mar)
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: 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, Julia, Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Matthew, Mark

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

### **SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE — Tone**

**3. The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.** Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia (ca. 320). St. Arsenius, Bishop of Tver (1409). Virgin Martyr Euthalia of Sicily (257). Martyr Troadius of Neo-Cæsarea (3rd c.). Ven. Agathon of Egypt (5th c.).

400 Martyrs slain by the Lombards in Sicily (579).

- 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**

March 2 to March 10, 2025

#### **Sunday, March 2**

Forgiveness Sunday

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

11:35AM Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness

#### **Monday, March 3**

The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus, and Basiliscus

Michael and Zachary Neiss

6:00PM Compline with the Canon of St Andrew

## **Tuesday, March 4**

Gerasimus the Righteous of Jordan  
8:30AM Matins  
6:00PM Compline with the Canon of St Andrew

## **Wednesday, March 5**

Conon the Gardener  
4:00PM Open Doors  
6:00PM PreSanctified Liturgy

## **Thursday, March 6**

42 Martyrs of Amorion in Phrygia  
8:30AM Matins  
6:00PM Compline with the Canon of St Andrew

## **Friday, March 7**

The Holy Martyred Bishops of Cherson:  
Basileus, Ephraim, Eugene, Capito,  
Aetherius, Agathodorus, and Elpidius

## **Saturday, March 8**

First Saturday of Lent: The  
Commemoration of the Miracle of Kollyva  
wrought by Saint Theodore the Tyro  
3:00PM Open Doors  
5:30PM Great Vespers

## **Sunday, March 9**

Sunday of Orthodoxy  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
4:00PM Lenten Vespers - Meriden

## **Monday, March 10**

Quadratus the Martyr & his Companions  
Kyra Elliot

## **Saints and Feasts**

### **March 02**

#### **Forgiveness Sunday**

The Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments. For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

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## **March 02**

### **Hesychius the Martyr**

Holy martyr Hesychius lived during

the reign of king Maximian in 302. He was the first and the leader in the royal palace and the Senate, because he was magisterianus by office. When Maximian ordered that all Christians who were royal soldiers ought to be deprived of their belts (which were a sign of their royal merit) and live as civilians and without honour, many Christians preferred to live without any outward honour due to this illegal order than to be honoured and lose their soul. St. Hesychius was numbered with these Christians as well. When the king heard this, he ordered that the saint ought to be stripped of the expensive clothes, which he used to wear, and be dressed with a shabby mantle without sleeves woven from hair and to be as disgraced and disdained as to consort with women.

When this had been carried out, the king invited him and asked him: "Aren't you ashamed, Hesychius, that you lost the honour and office of magisterianus and that you have been debased to this kind of life? Or maybe you don't know that the Christians, whose way of life you preferred, have no power to restore you to your previous great honour and office?" The saint replied: "Your honour, o king, is temporary but the honour and glory which Christ gives is eternal and without end." Because of these words the king got angry and ordered his men to tie a great millstone around

the saint's neck and then to throw him in the middle of river Orontus, which lies in Coele Syria and which is commonly called Oronge. Thus, the blessed man received the crown of martyrdom from the Lord.

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## **March 05**

### **Konon the Gardener**

This saint lived during the reign of emperor Decius in 251. He came from the town of Nazareth. He left his hometown and went to the city of Mandron, in the province of Pamphylia. There he stayed at a place called Karmela or Karmena cultivating a garden which he used to water and plant with various vegetables. From this garden he obtained what is necessary for life. He had such an upright and simple mind that, when he met those who wished to arrest him and saw that they greeted him, he also greeted in return from the bottom of his soul and heart. When they told him that governor Publius called the saint to go to him, the saint answered with simplicity: "What does the governor need me, since I am a Christian? Let him call those who think the way he does and have the same religion with him." So, the blessed man was tied and brought to the governor, who tried to move him to sacrifice to the idols. But the saint sighed from the bottom of his heart, cursed the tyrant and confirmed his faith in Christ with his confession, saying that it is not possible to be moved from it even though he might be tortured cruelly. So, for this reason they nailed his feet and made the saint run in front of the governor's coach.

But the saint fainted in the street. Having fallen on his knees, he prayed and, thus, he commended his holy soul to the hands of God.

## March 08

### First Saturday of Lent: The Commemoration of the Miracle of Kollyva wrought by Saint Theodore the Tyro

Julian the Apostate, knowing that the Christians purify themselves by fasting most of all during the first week of the Fast -- which is why we call it Clean Week -- planned to defile them especially at that time. Therefore he secretly commanded that during those days the markets be filled with foods that had been defiled with the blood of animals offered in sacrifice to idols. But by divine command the Martyr Theodore (see Feb. 17) appeared during sleep to Eudoxius, then Archbishop of Constantinople. The Saint revealed to him the tyrant's plan, then told him to call the faithful together immediately on Monday morning and prevent them from purchasing those foods, but rather to make *kollyva* to supply their needs. The bishop asked what *kollyva* might be, and the Saint answered, "*Kollyva* is what we call boiled wheat in Euchaita." Thus, the purpose of the Apostate was brought to nought, and the pious people who were preserved undefiled for the whole of Clean Week, rendered thanks to the Martyr on this Saturday, and celebrated his commemoration with *kollyva*. These things took place in 362. Wherefore,

the Church keeps this commemoration each year to the glory of God and the honour of the Martyr.

## Hymns of the Day



### Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world// great mercy.

### 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 6 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)**

O Master, Teacher of wisdom,  
Bestower of virtue,  
Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor,  
strengthen and enlighten my heart!  
O Word of the Father,  
let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:  
"Have mercy on me, a transgressor,//  
O merciful Lord!"

## **Gospel and Epistle Readings**

### **Epistle Reading**

#### **Prokeimenon. 8th Tone. Psalm 75.11,1.**

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

#### **The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4.**

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything,

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while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

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## **Gospel Reading**

### **Forgiveness Sunday**

#### **The Reading is from Matthew 6:14-21**

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay

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up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Spiritual delight is not enjoyment found in things that exists outside the soul.

### **St. Isaac of Syria**

*Unknown, 7th century*

Do we forgive our neighbors their trespasses? God also forgives us in His mercy. Do we refuse to forgive? God, too, will refuse to forgive us. As we treat our neighbors, so also does God treat us. The forgiveness, then, of your sins or unforgiveness, and hence also your salvation or destruction, depend on you yourself, man. For without forgiveness of sins there is no salvation.

### **St. Tikhon of Zadonsk**

*Unknown, 18th century*

## Beyond the Sermon



Forgiveness Sunday is the last day before we begin our journey through Great and Holy Lent, on our way to Pascha, the Feast of Feasts. With the Holy Feast of Pascha, we celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We celebrate the victory over death, as neither

death nor the power of the grave could hold our Savior prisoner. However, this victory came through the Cross, for it was on the Cross that Christ frees us from our bondage to sin. Now, through faith in Him, we are restored, we are transformed, and we are once again capable of eternal life. Therefore, our Lenten journey is a way for us to be united to Him in His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

The Lenten journey is also an opportunity for renewal and reorientation toward God as we strengthen our commitment to Him. It is an opportunity to intensify our ascetic struggle (ἄσκησις in Greek) to actualize our potential to become saints by nurturing the transformative and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. During Great Lent, we fast to open the door to a deeper spiritual dimension. We also intensify our prayer life to strengthen our bond with God, and we engage in works of charity to learn to love others more fully.



The Gospel reading for Forgiveness Sunday prepares us for the beginning of our Lenten journey by setting out the Lord's basic teachings on fasting, praying, and giving.

There is a fundamental connection between forgiveness and prayer. Our Lord taught us to pray in simplicity and truth. He gave us the Lord's Prayer, where we call on God to "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Christ then tells us, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." We might fall or miss the mark at many points throughout our lives, and it is only through the love and mercy of God that we can be reconciled to Him. We do not approach forgiveness as a contractual undertaking. We forgive because we trust and give ourselves over completely to God's infinite love and compassion.

This reconciliation with God requires that we take on His qualities of love and mercy towards humankind. We learn in the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35) that it is insincere to seek the mercy and forgiveness of God when we are not willing to be merciful to others. Nothing makes us more like God than being ready to forgive the wicked and wrongdoers, just as He taught when He spoke of making the sun shine on both the evil and the good. Forgiveness may sometimes be a process that takes time. What is most important is our willingness to participate in the process. Recognizing our own sinfulness, we understand the depth of our need

for forgiveness.

The Lord similarly teaches us about fasting. It is essential for us to understand both why and how we fast. In part, we fast to share in Christ's fasting at the beginning of His earthly ministry. As the ancient nation of Israel spent 40 years in the desert, so the Lord was led to the desert by the Holy Spirit, and there He fasted forty days and forty nights while He was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). He was victorious over all the temptations the enemy put before Him. He then began His ministry on earth. Jesus, as the Second Adam, was victorious through fasting, whereas the first Adam failed to fast from the fruit of the tree and fell into sin (Genesis 3). As Saint Basil says, "We have been injured by sin; let us be healed by repentance. But repentance is futile without fasting . . . It is because we did not fast that we were banished from Paradise. So let us fast that we may return to it."

Following in Jesus's steps, we fast so that we learn discipline. Through our efforts, with the grace of God, we learn to control the passions which seek to rule over us. We grow in self-control, so our appetite and body no longer dominate us. Our prayer life improves as we simplify our lifestyle, becoming less preoccupied with cooking, eating, and entertainment. The Church calls on us to become less materialistic and more spiritual, think more about our salvation, and take a few weeks during Lent to put aside worldly concerns. As a result, we learn restraint and abstinence, which bring about spiritual growth and purity of heart. One of the most significant benefits of fasting is that it helps us grow spiritually.

Fasting from food teaches us how to fast from sin, as both involve denying our impulsive desires and urges. We also fast to understand and empathize with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in need. We fast in preparation to receive our Savior during Holy Week and the Great Feast of Pascha.

However, it is essential to understand how to best approach fasting to maximize the spiritual benefits. Our fasting from food is only beneficial if we also seek fellowship with God and others. That is why fasting cannot be separated from prayer, forgiveness, and almsgiving. An active participation in the sacramental life of the Church is also necessary. Parishes throughout the world offer Presanctified Liturgies during the week in order to spiritually sustain the faithful in the period of Great Lent. Through Holy Communion, Christ Himself sustains our fasting efforts throughout the week. Fasting accomplishes its purposes only when it is not an end in itself, but a means of encountering Christ. As we fast, we focus on our own struggle, not on the efforts of others. We remember that the Pharisee fasted from food twice a week, but his heart was full of pride and judgment for others, so he could not benefit from fasting. The Lord, however, teaches us to fast with joy and in communion with Him: "Anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:17-18).

The Lord further tells us not to store up treasures on earth, but treasures

in heaven, for where our treasure is, there our heart will also be. We know this instinctively when we think of our loved ones. Our children represent our treasure, as do our parents, spouses, brothers and sisters, friends, and everyone we love. They are our treasures because we love them, so our hearts are with them. During Lent, we are presented with the opportunity to cultivate those relationships, but to also critically assess whether our hearts seek to cherish money, possessions, status, or other worldly things. These may not necessarily be evil if used for God's glory, but they are not an end in themselves. To accumulate treasures in heaven means letting go of our attachment to worldly things, trusting in God, setting our heart on Him, and serving others in love. May we open ourselves to God's love and grace as we begin Great and Holy Lent.

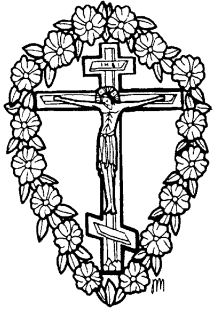
May it be a time of renewal and growth for all of us. May we draw ever closer to God, forgiving all injuries and insults, learning discipline and self-control over food, thoughts, words, and actions, and growing in love for God and each other. Our journey toward Pascha will place us on the path where His Cross can lead us completely to our own resurrection.

# 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

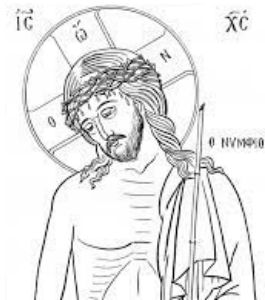
**Sunday, March 30th,**  
**4th Sunday of Lent**  
**St. John Climacus—Vespers 4:00 pm**  
OCAGB: St. John, Bridgeport  
CT Deanery: Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Terryville



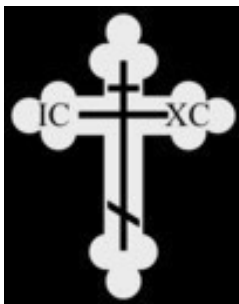
**Sunday, April 6 5th Sunday of Lent**  
**St. Mary of Egypt—Holy Unction**  
4:00pm Three Saints, Ansonia  
His Grace Bp. Benedict Presiding



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



## 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  
(<https://bit.ly/StA-Calendar>)

**Facebook -** @stalexisorthodox

**Youtube Channel -** [https://bit.ly/StA\\_Youtube](https://bit.ly/StA_Youtube)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

- [http://bit.ly/St\\_Alexis\\_Zoom](http://bit.ly/St_Alexis_Zoom)

