



## 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.

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Bulletin for Sunday, March 16, 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**

### **Lenten Vespers**

Service begins at 4pm this afternoon. We will have guests from around the Deanery, including His Grace Bishop Benedict. It is my hope that you will all return for this service. Service booklets will be provided as well as a Lenten repast will be served after the service. Your help would be appreciated.

**Upcoming Parish Council Meeting,  
Tuesday, March 18th @ 6pm via Zoom.**

Patristic Nectar is pleased to present a new four-lecture series by Father Josiah

Trenham entitled Churchmanship: Learning to Become a Faithful Parishioner.

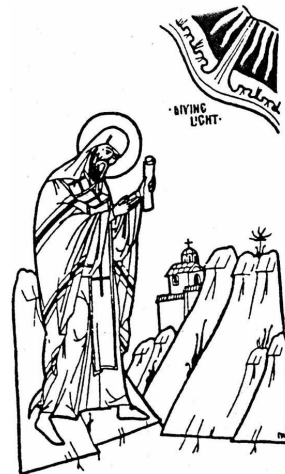
No person is born knowing how to live faithfully as a member of a parish. Faithful parishioners are made by God. This series is designed to set forth the traditional ecclesial vision for full-orbed church membership in which the spiritual dynamism of life in Christ is expressed in the fellowship of the local church where inspired service to God, each other, and to the world takes place.

The four lectures are entitled:

- Lecture #1 Orthodox Church Membership
- Lecture #2 The Duties of Parishioners to Each Other
- Lecture #3 The Duties of Parishioners to Their Priest
- Lecture #4 The Duties of Parishioners to the Mission of the Parish in the World

This series is available for free on the Patristic Nectar app.

**Listen To All For FREE**



## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many years! to Matthew Kuziak on the occasion of his 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: Maria, Nicholas
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei B, Fr Vladimir, Matushka Anne,

- Fr Vasily, Fr Justin
- 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, 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

#### **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone**

#### **5. St. Gregory Palamas. Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves**

**Lavra.** Martyr Sabinas of Egypt (287).

Martyr Papas of Lyconia (305-311). St.

Serapion, Archbishop of Novgorod (1516).

Apostle Aristobulus of the Seventy, Bishop of

Britain (1st c.). Hieromartyr Alexander, Pope

of Rome (119). Martyr Julian of Anazarbus

(3rd c.). Hieromartyrs Trophimus and Thalys

of Laodicea (ca. 300).

- 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 16 to March 24, 2025

#### Sunday, March 16

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
4:00PM Lenten Vespers - Clinton

#### Monday, March 17

Akathist to Patrick of Ireland  
Alexis the Man of God  
Akathist to St Alexis, Man of God

#### Tuesday, March 18

Matthew Kuziak  
Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem  
8:30AM Matins  
6:00PM Parish Council Mtg

#### Wednesday, March 19

The Holy Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria  
4:00PM Open Doors  
6:00PM PreSanctified Liturgy

#### Thursday, March 20

Akathist to St Cuthbert

Righteous Fathers slain at the Monastery of St. Savas  
8:30AM Matins

#### Friday, March 21

James the Confessor

#### Saturday, March 22

Third Saturday of Lent  
3:00PM Open Doors  
5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, March 23

Sunday of the Holy Cross  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
4:00PM Lenten Vespers - TBD

#### Monday, March 24

Forefeast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos

## Saints and Feasts

### March 16

#### Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against

Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica. A full service was composed for his feast day by the Patriarch Philotheus in 1368, when it was established that his feast be celebrated on this day. Since works without right faith avail nothing, we set Orthodoxy of faith as the foundation of all that we accomplish during the Fast, by celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy the Sunday before, and the great defender of the teachings of the holy Fathers today.

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## March 16

### **Sabine the Martyr of Egypt**

The holy Martyr Sabine was from Hermopolis in Egypt, and was known for his zeal and piety. During the persecution

of Diocletian, he concealed himself with other Christians in a small dwelling outside the city. But when he was discovered, and professed his faith in Christ, he was taken before Arian the Governor, and after he had been tortured he was drowned in the river. Concerning Arian the Governor, See also December 14.

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## March 17

### **Alexios the Man of God**

Saint Alexis was born in old Rome of illustrious parents named Euphemianus and Aglais, and at their request was joined to a young woman in marriage. However, he did not remain with her even for one day, but fled to Edessa, where he lived for eighteen years. He returned to Rome in the guise of a beggar and sat at the gates of his father's house, unknown to all and mocked by his own servants. His identity was revealed only after his death by a paper that he had on his person, which he himself had written a little before his repose. The pious Emperor Honorius honoured him with a solemn burial. The title "Man of God" was given to him from heaven in a vision to the Bishop of Rome on the day of the Saint's repose.

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## March 17

### **Patrick the Enlightener of Ireland**

Saint Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, was seized from his native Britain by Irish

marauders when he was sixteen years old. Though the son of a deacon and a grandson of a priest, it was not until his captivity that he sought out the Lord with his whole heart. In his Confession, the testament he wrote towards the end of his life, he says, "After I came to Ireland - every day I had to tend sheep, and many times a day I prayed - the love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. And my spirit was so moved that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many at night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain; and I would rise for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm." After six years of slavery in Ireland, he was guided by God to make his escape, and afterwards struggled in the monastic life at Auxerre in Gaul, under the guidance of the holy Bishop Germanus. Many years later he was ordained bishop and sent to Ireland once again, about the year 432, to convert the Irish to Christ. His arduous labours bore so much fruit that within seven years, three bishops were sent from Gaul to help him shepherd his flock, "my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord - so many thousands of people," he says in his Confession. His apostolic work was not accomplished without much "weariness and painfulness," long journeys through difficult country, and many perils; he says his very life was in danger twelve times. When he came to Ireland as its enlightener, it was a pagan country; when he ended his earthly life some thirty years later, about 461, the Faith of Christ was established in every corner.

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## **March 18**

### **Edward the Martyr, King of England**

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## **March 19**

### **Chrysanthos & Daria the Martyrs**

Saint Chrysanthos, who was from Alexandria, had been instructed in the Faith of Christ by a certain bishop. His father, who was a senator by rank and a pagan, had him shut up in prison for many days; then, seeing the unchanging disposition of his mind, he commanded that a certain young woman named Daria be brought from Athens. She was a very beautiful and learned maiden, and also an idolater, and Chrysanthos' father wedded him to her so that he might be drawn away from the Faith of Christ because of his love for her. Instead of this however, Chrysanthos drew Daria unto piety, and both of them boldly proclaimed Christ and received the crown of martyrdom in 283, during the reign of Numerian, when they were buried alive in a pit of mire.

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## **March 20**

### **Cuthbert the Wonderworker, Bishop of Lindisfarne**

Saint Cuthbert was born in Britain about the year 635, and became a monk in his youth at the monastery of Melrose by the River Tweed. After many years of struggle

as a true priest of Christ, in the service both of his own brethren and of the neglected Christians of isolated country villages, he became a solitary on Farne Island in 676. After eight years as a hermit, he was constrained to leave his quiet to become Bishop of Lindisfarne, in which office he served for almost two years. He returned to his hermitage two months before he reposed in peace in 687. Because of the miracles he wrought both during his life and at his tomb after his death, he is called the "Wonderworker of Britain." The whole English people honoured him, and kings were both benefactors to his shrine and suppliants of his prayers. Eleven years after his death, his holy relics were revealed to be incorrupt; when his body was translated from Lindisfarne to Durham Cathedral in August of 1104, his body was still found to be untouched by decay, giving off "an odour of sweetest fragrancancy," and "from the flexibility of its joints representing a person asleep rather than dead." Finally, when the most impious Henry VIII desecrated his shrine, opening it to despoil it of its valuables, his body was again found incorrupt, and was buried in 1542. It is believed that after this the holy relics of Saint Cuthbert were hidden to preserve them from further desecration.

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## March 20

### Photini the Samaritan Woman

Saint Photini lived in 1st century Palestine and was the woman that Christ met at Jacob's Well in Samaria as recorded in the

Gospel according to John (4:4-26). After her encounter with Christ, she and her whole family were baptized by the Apostles and became evangelists of the early Church. Photini and her children eventually were summoned before the emperor Nero and instructed to renounce their faith in Christ. They refused to do so, accepting rather to suffer various tortures. After many efforts to force her to surrender to idolatry, the emperor ordered that she be thrown down a well. Photini gave up her life in the year 66.

St. Photini is commemorated on three occasions during the year: February 26 (Greek tradition), March 20 (Slavic tradition), and the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman on the 5th Sunday of Pascha.

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## Hymns of the Day



### Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin;

for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

### 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.

**Tone 8 Troparion (St Gregory Palamas)**

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation,  
O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians,  
O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace,//  
always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

**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.

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

**Tone 8 Kontakion (St Gregory Palamas)**

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, together we sing your praises, O God-inspired Gregory.  
Since you now stand before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father,// so that we may sing to you: "Rejoice, preacher of grace!"

*now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 4 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)**

Now is the time for action!  
Judgment is at the doors!  
So let us rise and fast,  
offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:  
"Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea;  
but forgive us, O Master of all,//  
so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!"

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

**Hymn to the Theotokos**

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

**Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!  
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

**Prokeimenon. 5th Tone. Psalm 11.7,1.**  
You, O Lord, shall keep us and preserve us.  
Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the godly man  
has failed.

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to  
the Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3.**

IN THE BEGINNING, Thou, Lord, didst  
found the earth in the beginning, and the  
heavens are the work of thy hands; they will  
perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow  
old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt  
roll them up, and they will be changed. But  
thou art the same, and thy years will never  
end." But to what angel has he ever said,  
"Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies  
a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all  
ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the  
sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Therefore we must pay closer attention to  
what we have heard, lest we drift away from  
it. For if the message declared by angels was  
valid and every transgression or  
disobedience received a just retribution, how  
shall we escape if we neglect such a great  
salvation? It was declared at first by the  
Lord, and it was attested to us by those who  
heard him.

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### Gospel Reading

## Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas The Reading is from Mark 2:1-12

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it  
was reported that he was at home. And  
many were gathered together, so that there  
was no longer room for them, not even about  
the door; and he was preaching the word to  
them. And they came, bringing to him a  
paralytic carried by four men. And when  
they could not get near him because of the  
crowd, they removed the roof above him; and  
when they had made an opening, they let  
down the pallet on which the paralytic lay.  
And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to  
the paralytic, "My son, your sins are  
forgiven." Now some of the scribes were  
sitting there, questioning in their hearts,  
"Why does this man speak thus? It is a  
blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God  
alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in  
his spirit that they thus questioned within  
themselves, said to them, "Why do you  
question thus in your hearts? Which is  
easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are  
forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet  
and walk? But that you may know that the  
Son of man has authority on earth to forgive  
sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you,  
rise, take up your pallet and go home." And  
he rose, and immediately took up the pallet  
and went out before them all; so that they  
were all amazed and glorified God, saying,  
"We never saw anything like this!"

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Take up your bed. Carry the very mat that once carried you. Change places, so that what was the proof of your sickness may now give testimony to your soundness. Your bed of pain becomes the sign of healing, its very weight the measure of the strength that has been restored to you.

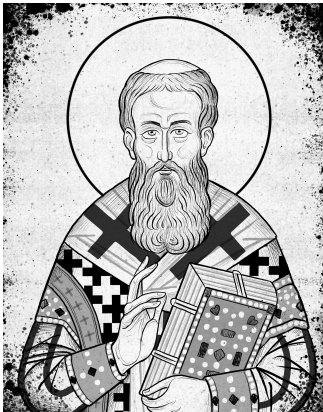
### **St. Peter Chrysologus**

*Homily 50.6. Taken from: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Vol. 2: Mark. Downers Grove: IntVarsity Press, 2005, p. 27.*

Now Matthew indeed saith, that "they brought him," but the others, that they also broke up the roof, and let him down. And they put the sick man before Christ, saying nothing, but committing the whole to Him.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 29 on Matthew 9, 1. B#54, pp. 195, 196, 4th Century*



## Beyond the Sermon



At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus Christ gathered His disciples and began traveling throughout the Galilee region, proclaiming the Kingdom of God. They went to a house in Capernaum, on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Many people from the entire region came to

see and hear Him.

On this occasion, so many people gathered to hear Jesus that no one could get close to the door. Meanwhile, a man with paralysis who heard that Jesus was in Capernaum asked his friends to carry him to the house. When they get there, they realize there

is no way to enter. This is when they find a solution to their seemingly impossible challenge. They get onto the roof of the house, remove the top coverings, and let down the pallet on which the man lay. In this way, he is put right in front of the Lord. We read that Jesus marvels at "their" faith, meaning not only the paralytic's faith but also his friends' faith as well. The Lord then addresses the paralytic and says to him, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

This is a surprising statement for a few reasons. First, the paralytic and everyone else expected Jesus to heal him physically. But Jesus starts by forgiving his sins *before* healing him physically. He could then restart his life without the heavy burden of sin dragging him down.

The statement also appears unexpected because Jesus does what only God could do, that is, to forgive sins. Some scribes (public teachers of the Jewish Scriptures) started questioning the Lord in their hearts. "It is blasphemy!" they were thinking, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

The Lord knows what is in their hearts and hears their thoughts without them even uttering a word. They cannot understand who Jesus is and what He came into the world to do. The Lord proceeds to heal the paralytic physically by asking him to take up his bed and go home, which he does. This symbolizes our healing by which the Lord gives us the ability to get up from our spiritual infirmities and walk "home," that is, on the way to eternal life.

Jesus Christ heals the paralytic physically so that they "may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." As the paralytic gets up, he does so by the same power and authority of the One true God who previously declared that his sins are forgiv-

en. Only God can do this, and physical healing testifies to spiritual healing for the benefit of the unbelievers.

Christ came into the world to forgive sins and to free humanity from its bondage. It is sin that drags all of us down and prevents us from seeing clearly. It prevents us from achieving our true potential. *Spiritual healing* is more important than physical healing.

And as the scribes correctly note, God alone can forgive sins. Christ later confers this authority to the Apostles and the Church through apostolic succession. As the paralytic was healed, they were all astonished and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

The people's response to the healing of the paralytic can be used to model our own response as we glorify God before the world. Saint Gregory Palamas says, "Let us stir up all who see us to glorify God as they recognize that this house has Christ within it,

Who gives strength to those whose souls are paralyzed . . . in this way they will go into the house that is really ours."

Faith is indispensable for salvation. God Himself has become Incarnate and has united human and divine nature. When we are mystically united to Him through Holy Baptism and the other Holy Sacraments, we become recipients of His grace and healing. However, this cannot happen without faith. It is through faith that we trust in Him.

And as we put our trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we walk by faith, not by sight. We know that we have been saved by grace through faith, not by our own effort, but as a gift from God.

The question that naturally arises from this Gospel lesson is, what prompts Jesus to heal the paralytic? What does the Gospel say exactly? The Gospel says that Jesus saw “their” faith. Whose faith did He see? It does not say that Jesus saw *his* faith, meaning only the paralytic’s faith. It says that He saw *their* faith. Jesus saw the faith of the people, the faith of the paralytic, and the faith of the paralytic’s friends. The plural is extremely important because it introduces us to an aspect of our faith that cannot be emphasized

enough: that our faith is expressed and lived out in the community with others, not only individually, because we are *all* connected to God and *each other*.

As we see in this passage, the friends of the paralytic joined him in faith and took him to see the Lord. As a community, as the Body of Christ, we believe together, we worship together, we join ourselves to Christ together, and we serve one another. And, as we

pray in the Divine Liturgy, we “commend ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.”

Living in Christ requires a strong personal effort, but Christians live and pray in communities together with others. The most important gathering in the Church — the Divine Liturgy — takes place within the community. Our prayers and the common chalice,

from which we receive Holy Communion, reinforce this community perspective. God Him-

self was revealed in Trinity, in One and Three. There is in God this powerful dimension of diversity and community. And throughout the Liturgy and our prayers, we constantly refer

to God in this way: as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3The Lord heals by the power of His Word. He is the Word of God incarnate. The same Word of God spoke when He created all things is the Word He speaks to us as He leads us closer to His likeness. He calls us by name, forgiving our sins when we hear His voice and follow Him.

Faith is the link between God’s Word and our physical and spiritual healing. Let us trust in the Lord, not sparing any effort to get to know Him, to allow Him to enter our lives, with the confidence that He loves us and that all things are possible with God.

<https://www.goarch.org/documents/32058/66a557-ecac-d151-305b30248987>