



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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**Fr Steven Hosking**

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 23, 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**

#### **Many Thanks!**

Thank you to everyone who participated in this past weekend's Lenten Vespers and repast. I realize that this was an added burden on your time, but your service and hospitality means much.

#### **2025 Vacation Church School at Three Saints Park**

##### **“Saints and Their Animal Friends”**

**When:** July 7-11, 2024. **Where:** Three

Saints Park, 112 Miller Road, Bethany, CT 06524. **Time:** Daily 9am to 4pm with Family Night on Friday starting at 5pm. **Cost:** \$50 per child. Come join us for our week-long Vacation Church School for youth ages 5-15. Your child will experience fun, faith, friendship, swimming, games, bible study, religious education, worship and song. This year's theme will be “Saints and Their Animal Friends”. **Questions?** - Call Fr. Patrick Burns (203) 893-1721 Children of all faiths are welcome! If you are 16 or older and are interested in volunteering, please contact Fr. Patrick for a volunteer application.

#### **To register, go**

**to:** <https://forms.gle/MaJGV8wisVrfQrAG9>

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.

*I strongly encourage you to listen to these podcasts. Fr Steven*

Listen To All For FREE

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Memory Eternal for Archbishop Nikon on the occasion of his Name's Day.

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, William
- 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, Hermon, Sandra, Dorothy, Alan, Phyllis Stormy, Scott, Anne, Noah, Nancy, Sophia, Gregory, Tomas, Nancy, Nicholas, Carol, Vincent, Matthew, Mark, Hermon, Sandra

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone**

**6. Veneration of the Cross.** Martyr Nikon and 199 disciples with him in Sicily (251). Ven. Nikon, Abbot of the Kiev Caves (1088). Martyrs Philetas the Senator, his wife, Lydia, their sons Macedon and Theoprepus, Chronides the Notary, and Amphilocheus the Captain, in Illyria (117-138). Righteous Basil of Mangazea in Siberia (1600). Monastic Martyr Luke of St. Anne's Skete (Mt. Athos—1802).

- 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 23 to March 31, 2025

#### **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

#### **Tuesday, March 25**

Annunciation of the Theotokos  
8:30AM Matins  
6:00PM Vespers Divine Liturgy

#### **Wednesday, March 26**

Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel  
4:00PM Open Doors  
6:00PM PreSanctified Liturgy

#### **Thursday, March 27**

Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica  
8:30AM Matins  
7:00PM FORCC presentation

#### **Friday, March 28**

Hilarion the New

#### **Saturday, March 29**

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

#### **Sunday, March 30**

Sunday of St. John Climacus  
Alla Hamisevich  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
4:00PM Lenten Vespers - Terryville

#### **Monday, March 31**

The Holy Hieromartyr Hypatius, Bishop of Gangra  
Repose of St Innocent

## Saints and Feasts

### March 23

#### Sunday of the Holy Cross

With the help of God, we have almost reached the middle of the course of the Fast, where our strength has been worn down through abstinence, and the full difficulty of the labour set before us becomes apparent. Therefore our holy Mother, the Church of Christ, now brings to our help the all-holy Cross, the joy of the world, the strength of the faithful, the staff of the just, and the hope of sinners, so that by venerating it reverently, we might receive strength and grace to complete the divine struggle of the Fast.

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### March 23

#### The Holy Righteous Martyr Nikon and His 199 Disciples

Saint Nikon was from Neapolis (Naples) in Italy. His father was an idolater and his mother a Christian. At first he was a soldier, but later he went to the East, where he was baptized and in time became a bishop. After some years, he returned to the West and came to Sicily, where he and many of his disciples were put to death by beheading because they would not worship the idols.

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### March 25

#### Annunciation of the Theotokos

Six months after John the Forerunner's conception, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, unto Mary the Virgin, who had come forth from the Temple a mature maiden (see Nov. 21). According to the tradition handed down by the Fathers, she had been betrothed to Joseph four months. On coming to Joseph's house, the Archangel declared: "Rejoice, thou Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." After some consideration, and turmoil of soul, and fear because of this greeting, the Virgin, when she had finally obtained full assurance concerning God's unsearchable condescension and the ineffable dispensation that was to take place through her, and believing that all things are possible to the Most High, answered in humility: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And at this, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her all-blameless womb, and the Son and Word of God, Who existed before the ages, was conceived past speech and understanding, and became flesh in her immaculate body (Luke 1:26-38).

Bearing in her womb the Uncontainable One, the blessed Virgin went with haste from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias had his dwelling; for she desired to find Elizabeth her kinswoman and rejoice together with her, because, as she had learned from the Archangel,

Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. Furthermore, she wished to tell her of the great things that the Mighty One had been well-pleased to bring to pass in her, and she greeted Elizabeth and drew nigh to her. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt her six-month-old babe, Saint John the Baptist, prophesied of the dawning of the spiritual Sun. Immediately, the aged Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized her as the Mother of her Lord, and with a great voice blessed her and the Fruit that she held within herself. The Virgin also, moved by a supernatural rejoicing in the spirit, glorified her God and Savior, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," and the rest, as the divine Luke hath recorded (1:39-55)

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### **March 26**

#### **Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel**

This festive Synaxis is celebrated to the glory of the Archangel Gabriel, since he ministered to the marvelous mystery of God's incarnate dispensation.

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### **March 27**

#### **Martyr Matrona of Thessaloniki**

This martyr was the servant of a certain Jewish woman named Pantilla, the wife of the Governor of Thessalonica. When Matrona refused to follow her mistress into

the synagogue Pantilla beat her so severely that she died in a few days, and thus received the crown of her confession.

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### **March 28**

#### **Hilarion the New**

Saint Hilarion took up the monastic life from his youth and lived in seclusion. Later, as Abbot of the Monastery of Pelecete in Asia Minor (believed to be in Bithynia, not far from Triglia), he suffered much from the Iconoclasts, and reposed in the year 754.

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### **March 29**

#### **Martyr Cyril the Deacon and Those with him**

Saint Cyril was a deacon from Heliopolis in Phoenicia. During the reign of the Emperor Constantius, son of Saint Constantine, he had also broken the idols in pieces. When Julian came to power, Saint Cyril was seized by the idolaters and his belly was ripped open. The other holy Martyrs celebrated today, martyred in Gaza and Ascalon during the reign of Julian, were men of priestly rank and consecrated virgins; they were disemboweled, filled with barley, and set before swine to be eaten. The account of all the above Saints is given in Book III, ch. 3, of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' "Ecclesiastical History."

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## 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 1 Troparion (Cross)**

O Lord, save Your people,  
and bless Your inheritance!  
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians  
over their adversaries;  
and by virtue of Your Cross, //  
preserve Your habitation!

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

### **Tone 7 Kontakion (Cross)**

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the  
gates of Eden;  
it has been mysteriously quenched by the  
wood of the Cross.  
The sting of death and the victory of hell  
have been vanquished;  
for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to  
those in hell: //  
"Enter again into Paradise!"

## **Instead of Holy God...**

Before Your Cross, we bow down in worship,  
O Master, and Your holy Resurrection we  
glorify.

*(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**

The light of Your countenance has shone on  
us, O Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## **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 Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6.**

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

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**Gospel Reading**

**Sunday of the Holy Cross  
The Reading is from Mark 8:34-38; 9:1**

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would

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save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

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**Wisdom of the Fathers**

The key to knowledge is the humility of Christ. The door of the Kingdom of Heaven is open, not to those who only know in their learned minds the mysteries of faith and the commandments of their Creator, but to those who have progressed far enough to live by them.

**St. Bede the Venerable**

*Unknown, 8th century*

To deny oneself means to give up one's bad habits; to root out of the heart all that ties us to the world; not to cherish bad thoughts and desires; to suppress every evil thought; to avoid occasions of sin; not to desire or to do anything out of self-love, but to do everything out of love for God. To deny

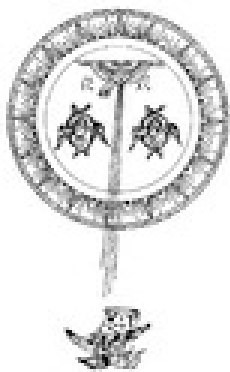


oneself, according to St. Paul means "to be dead to sin. . . but alive to God."

### **St. Innocent of Alaska**

*The Lenten Spring, SVS Press, p. 147, 19th Century*

### **Beyond the Sermon**



Jesus and His disciples were traveling throughout the towns of Galilee, and He asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" The disciples said, "Some say John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets." Jesus replied, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." From this moment on, Jesus began to teach His disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed, and after three days, rise again. When Peter heard this, he objected. Having recognized that Jesus was the Messiah (meaning "Christ", in Greek Χριστός), he could only conceive that the Savior of Israel would triumph over all enemies through the exercise of power and not weakness, much

less death. He could not yet understand that the Cross is the means through which death would be destroyed and all spiritual enemies would be defeated. Therefore, this became the occasion when the Lord taught His disciples that the door to eternal life will always

be open on the other side of the cross. He said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." This is an invitation for us to draw

close to the Lord and become like Him. For if we die with Him, we will also live and reign with Him.

The cross was the Roman Empire's tool for cruel punishment, torture, and execution. However, Christ transforms all things, and He turns even sorrow and pain into paths

towards healing and redemption. He destroys death by death. The most significant symbol of death in the ancient world has become a symbol of life and resurrection for us. The Cross of our Lord was the means through which He triumphed over death and became a

Sacrifice for our redemption. In this way, the cross is, for us, a symbol of our suffering in imitation of Christ and a promise of His victory. The Holy Cross is the sign and sacrament

of the liberation and restoration we have been given because of Christ's sacrifice. By the

Cross, we are united to Him and protected by Him. In the Apolytikion of the Holy Cross, we chant, "Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance; grant victory to the faithful over their adversaries, and protect Your people, by the power of Your Cross." Trials and tribulations are inevitable in this world, but the Holy Spirit gives us His grace to persevere and, through endurance, to acquire faith, hope, and love. Jesus tells us that whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for His sake and the gospel's will save it. As Saint John Chrysostom says, "For your soul, if you lose it, you will have no other soul to give: yea, though you had the world . . . you would not be able, by paying down all earthly goods, with the earth itself, to redeem but one soul." The greatest paradox of Christian living is that when we try to hold on to the things of this world in a selfish way, we lose them. We also lose eternal life because we have made earthly possessions and pleasures our ultimate treasure. On the other hand, paradoxically, when we center our lives on God and do everything to express our love for Christ and our neighbor, we enter into fellowship with God in this life and receive eternal life with Him in heaven as well. We practice self-denial, especially during this time of Great Lent, out of our love for God and obedience to the Gospel. Therefore, taking up our cross is neither a punishment nor an end in and of itself, but rather

how we overcome this fallen world for the Kingdom of God. Cooperating with the grace of God in the Holy Spirit, we crucify our "flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24), and we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit who lives in us so that we can walk by His power and according to His will. We are called to carry our personal cross — a cross of desires, passions, sins, and challenges in life. When we set aside the things that take us farther from God and choose the path of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). The Lord calls us to die to our broken selves so we can be made new in Him. It is important to remember that even if our cross becomes heavy, we know that there is the resurrection behind every cross. The Divine Light of God shines in and through us on the other side of the cross. This is why the Lord revealed that light to His disciples in the Transfiguration, which took place right after He spoke these words. The last sentence of this gospel reading — "there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power" — refers to the Holy Transfiguration. Indeed, Peter, John,

and James saw the Kingdom of God as a power

and as light at the Holy Transfiguration. We can experience this same power and light of the Kingdom of God during the Divine Liturgy and in our personal prayer, especially the

Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.”).

Bearing the cross of Christ takes work. It requires that we deny our selfish will so that we are ready to receive Christ. It requires that we empty our hearts to be filled with

the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we are called to remember to love ourselves as creations of God and to help others who are also creations of God. We learn to live in faith, hope, and love by taking up our cross and following Him. In faith, we know He is with us

even in trials. In hope, we know that the Light of the Resurrection awaits us on the other

side of the cross. In love, we learn that, as it was with Christ, the way to God’s glory is through humility and perseverance.

The only way out is through. The way to glory passes through the cross daily. After having given Himself entirely and without reservation for our redemption, Christ was

seated at the right hand of the Father in glory. We, too, will reign with Him if we take up our cross and follow Him.

<https://www.goarch.org/documents/32058/66e10b-8c50-f4f0-0ec870457e44>

## 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)



# **Three Saint Vacation Church School 2025:** **“Saints and their Animal Companions” July 7<sup>th</sup> thru July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8:30 a.m. - Friday Morning Divine Liturgy  
8:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Friday, (Family night begins at 5:00pm thru 6:30)**

**Located at Three Saints Park: 112 Miller Road, Bethany, CT 06524  
Fee: \$50 per child\* Ages 5 and up (checks payable to Three Saints VCS)**

\*Those that cannot afford this fee, or are unable to supply lunches for their children, are urged to contact Fr. Patrick to discuss other options – **NO ONE will be turned away for financial reasons!**

**This year we are 100% Nut Free – Please send only nut free foods with your children**

***Beginning at 5 pm, Friday Family Night*** will include Vespers sung by children, a Lenten (vegan) potluck cookout and awarding of certificates of completion. Parents and families are responsible for organizing and running Family Night so please speak to **Oana Zarku** at 203-715-0442 [oana.basuzharku@yahoo.com](mailto:oana.basuzharku@yahoo.com). ALL FAMILIES ARE KINDLY ASKED TO PLEASE HELP WITH CLEANUP ON FRIDAY AFTER DINNER.

**Please be sure to register by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Send payment (payable to Three Saints VCS), to Fr. Patrick Burns, 59 Clifton Ave, Ansonia, CT 06401 NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2024. We would prefer you register much earlier if possible to assure your child gets a T-shirt.**

***For more information contact***

***Fr. Patrick Burns (203) 893-1721 or [pnevmaticmotives@gmail.com](mailto:pnevmaticmotives@gmail.com)***

***Each day your child will need: Bathing suits, towels, extra change of clothes, a garbage bag for wet clothes, bug spray and medications (if required). Participants will be responsible for providing their own lunches and water bottles (see Fr. Patrick for assistance if necessary). Refrigerators and freezers are on site for use. Snacks, water and Spray-on Sunscreen provided.***

**PLEASE NOTE –In order to assure your child gets a T-shirt you must have this form completed and turned in no later than June 7<sup>th</sup>.**

***Please be sure your children DO NOT bring the following: ANY nut products, Cell phones, headphones, video games or electrical gadgets of any kind. If any these items are brought, they will be held by a staff member until pickup at the end of the day.***

***Volunteers: Because our program has grown each year, parents or young adults 18 years and older, are welcome to volunteer for our program. Jr. Staff, ages 15-18, as approved by Fr. Patrick, are welcome at a reduced rate of \$25. ALL Potential volunteers must let Fr. Patrick know of their interest in volunteering no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> to request and submit a Volunteer Application so that training and background checks may be completed in a timely manner. **PLEASE NOTE:** Due to state and Church guidelines regarding background checks and training qualifications, requests to volunteer made after June 1st will not be considered.***

***To register, please go to: <https://forms.gle/MaJGV8wisVrfQrAG9>***