



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, March 08, 2026

Welcome



Jesus Christ teaches us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand this, 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:

- Marlene Melesko - President
- Sarah Senetcen - Member at Large
- Boris Doph - Treasurer
- Dierdre Cottergarfield - Vice President

- Luba Martins - Secretary

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 OUTREACH PROJECT: We will be collecting supplies for our local Birthright Agency who provides support for women before and after the birth of their baby. The following is a list of needed items. They request that the items be new and only purchase the brands listed. There are also "shopping list" on the candle desk for your convenience. Contact Marlene Melesko or Maureen Skuby with any questions.

BIRTHRIGHT SHOPPING LIST: Diapers: Pampers Sizes 1, 2 & 3

Wipes: Pampers or Honest brands
Diaper

Bags
Baby

Washcloths & Towels
Baby

Bath Products
Onesies

or Baby Outfits: Sizes Newborn or 0-3 months

Yourth Rally

We hope you are all having a blessed Great Lent. Due to some technical difficulties, diocesan youth rally camper registration for 2026 has been delayed till late March. Please keep an eye on your emails, the diocesan website, and diocesan facebook page for further updates. For those interested in applying to be on staff, that process should be unaffected and will go live on the diocesan website in the next week or so.

We look forward to another exciting and fun year of Youth Rally!

Yours in Christ,
The Youth Rally Team

To Our Guests

Throughout our services, we use the more formal "*thy*" and "*thou*" or what is commonly referred to as *King Jamesean English*. The Lord's Prayer is recited as follows:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,

Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, as on earth as it is in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our **debts**, as we forgive our **debtors**,
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One.

Please join us after Liturgy for refreshments and hospitality.

Filesharing

<https://sites.google.com/stalexischurch.net/prarish/home>

If you are asked to enter a username and password, please contact Fr Steven via email.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



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 and dispossessed, 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, prejudice; pestilence and natural disaster; 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, Fr Vladimir, Fr John, Fr Alexander, Fr David, Fr Sergius
- Catechumen: Jordan, Christiana
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Rosemary, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Victor, Susan, Gregory
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Michael & Zachary Neiss (3/3), Matthew Kuziak (3/18)
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Lynn and her unborn child.
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Nancy, Boris, Glenn, John, Joan, Sharon, William, Alexander

Today's commemorated feasts and saints

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 6. St. Gregory Palamas. Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves Lavra. St. Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia (842-845). Ven. Lazarus (1391) and Athanasius (15th c.), of Múrom. Apostle Hermes of the Seventy (1st c.). Hieromartyr

Theodoretus of Antioch (4th c.). Ven.
Dometius (363).

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 8 to March 16, 2026

Sunday, March 8

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
9:15AM 3rd Hour
9:30AM Divine Liturgy
4:00PM CT Deanery Vespers

Monday, March 9

The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebastia

Tuesday, March 10

Kyra Elliot
8:30AM Matins
11:00AM Office Hours

6:00PM Parish Council

Wednesday, March 11

Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem
3:00PM Office Hours
6:00PM Presanctified Liturgy

Thursday, March 12

8:30AM Matins
11:00AM Office Hours

Friday, March 13

Removal of the relics of Nicephorus,
Patriarch of Constantinople

Saturday, March 14

Third Saturday of Lent
4:00PM Office Hours
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, March 15

Sunday of the Holy Cross
9:15AM 3rd Hour
9:30AM Divine Liturgy
4:00PM CT Deanery Vespers

Monday, March 16

Sabine the Martyr of Egypt

Saints and Feasts

March 08

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.

March 08

Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia

Theophylact was from the East; his native city is unknown. In Constantinople he became a close friend of Tarsius, who afterwards became Patriarch of Constantinople (see Feb. 25). Theophylact was made Bishop of Nicomedia. After the death of Saint Tarsius, his successor Nicephorus (see June 2) called together a number of Bishops to help him in fighting the iconoclasm of Emperor Leo the Armenian, who reigned from 813-820. Among them was Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis (celebrated Dec. 26), who had attended the holy Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 - he was exiled three times for the sake of the holy icons, and for defying the Emperor Theophilus' command to renounce the veneration of the icons, was scourged from head to foot until his whole body was one great wound, from which he died eight days later, about the year 830; Joseph of Thessalonica (see July 14); Michael of Synnada (see May 23); Emilian, Bishop of Cyzicus (see Aug. 8); and Saint Theophylact, who boldly rebuked Leo to his face, telling him that because he despised the long-suffering of God, utter destruction was about to overtake him, and there would be none to deliver him. For this, Theophylact was exiled to the fortress of Strobilus in Karia of Asia Minor, where, after 30 years of imprisonment and hardship, he gave up his holy soul about the year 845. Leo the Armenian, according

to the Saint's prophecy, was slain in church on the eve of our Lord's Nativity, in 820.

March 09

40 Martyrs at Lake Sebaste

These holy Martyrs, who came from various lands, were all soldiers under the same general. Taken into custody for their faith in Christ, and at first interrogated by cruel means, they were then stripped of their clothing and cast onto the frozen lake which is at Sebastia of Pontus, at a time when the harsh and freezing weather was at its worst. They endured the whole night naked in such circumstances, encouraging one another to be patient until the end. He that guarded them, named Aglaius, who was commanded to receive any of them that might deny Christ, had a vision in which he saw heavenly powers distributing crowns to all of the Martyrs, except one, who soon after abandoned the contest. Seeing this, Aglaius professed himself a Christian and joined the Martyrs on the lake, and the number of forty remained complete. In the morning, when they were almost dead from the cold, they were cast into fire, after which their remains were thrown into the river. Thus they finished the good course of martyrdom in 320, during the reign of Licinius. These are their names: Acacius, Aetius, Aglaius, Alexander, Angus, Athanasius, Candidus, Chudion, Claudius, Cyril, Cyron, Dometian, Domnus, Ecdicius, Elias, Eunoicus, Eutyches, Eutychius, Flavius, Gaius, Gorgonius, Helianus, Heraclius, Hesychius,

John, Lysimachus, Meliton, Nicholas, Philoctemon, Priscus, Sacerdon, Severian, Sisinius, Smaragdus, Theodulus, Theophilus, Valens, Valerius, Vivianus, and Xanthias.

March 10

Kodratos the Martyr & his Companions

These Martyrs contested for piety's sake in Corinth during the reign of the Emperor Valerian (253-260).

March 11

Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem

This Saint was born in Damascus. As a young man he became a monk at the Monastery of Saint Theodosius the Cenobiarch in Palestine, where he met John Moschus and became his close friend. Having a common desire to search out ascetics from whom they could receive further spiritual instruction, they journeyed together through Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt, where they met the Patriarch of Alexandria, Saint John the Almsgiver, with whom they remained until 614, when Persians captured Jerusalem (see also Saint Anastasius the Persian, Jan. 22). Saint Sophronius and John Moschus departed Alexandria for Rome, where they remained until 619, the year of John Moschus' death. Saint Sophronius returned

to the Monastery of Saint Theodosius the Cenobiarch, and there buried the body of his friend. He laboured much in defence of the Holy Fourth Council of Chalcedon, and traveled to Constantinople to remonstrate with Patriarch Sergius and the Emperor Heraclius for changing the Orthodox Faith with their Monothelite teachings. After the death of Patriarch Modestus in December of 634, Sophronius was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem. Although no longer in the hands of the Persians, the Holy Land was now besieged by the armies of the newly-appeared religion of Mohammed, which had already taken Bethlehem; in the Saint's sermon for the Nativity of our Lord in 634, he laments that he could not celebrate the feast in Bethlehem. In 637, for the sins of the people, to the uttermost grief of Saint Sophronius, the Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem. Having tended the flock of his Master for three years and three months, Saint Sophronius departed in peace unto Him Whom he loved on March 11, 638.

Saint Sophronius has left to the Church many writings, including the life of Saint Mary of Egypt. The hymn "O Joyous Light," which is wrongly ascribed to him, is more ancient than Saint Basil the Great, as the Saint himself confirms in his work "On the Holy Spirit" (ch. 29). However, it seems that this hymn, which was chanted at the lighting of the lamps and was formerly called "The Triadic Hymn," was later supplemented somewhat by Saint Sophronius, bringing it into the form in which we now have it. Hence, some have ascribed it to him.

March 12

Symeon the New Theologian

Saint Symeon became a monk of the Studite Monastery as a young man, under the guidance of the elder Symeon the Pious. Afterwards he struggled at the Monastery of Saint Mamas in Constantinople, of which he became abbot. After enduring many trials and afflictions in his life of piety, he reposed in 1022. Marvelling at the heights of prayer and holiness to which he attained, and the loftiness of the teachings of his life and writings, the church calls him "the New Theologian." Only to two others, John the Evangelist and Gregory, Patriarch of Constantinople, has the church given the name "Theologian." Saint Symeon reposed on March 12, but since this always falls in the Great Fast, his feast is kept today.

March 12

Gregory Dialogos, Bishop of Rome

Saint Gregory was born in Rome to noble and wealthy parents about the year 540. While the Saint was still young, his father died. However, his mother, Sylvia, saw to it that her child received a good education in both secular and spiritual learning. He became Prefect of Rome and sought to please God even while in the world; later, he took up the monastic life; afterwards he was appointed Archdeacon of Rome, then,

in 579, apocrisiarius (representative or Papal legate) to Constantinople, where he lived for nearly seven years. He returned to Rome in 585 and was elected Pope in 590. He is renowned especially for his writings and great almsgiving, and also because, on his initiative, missionary work began among the Anglo-Saxon people. It is also from him that Gregorian Chant takes its name; the chanting he had heard at Constantinople had deeply impressed him, and he imported many elements of it into the ecclesiastical chant of Rome. He served as Bishop of that city from 590 to 604.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

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

body.

Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.

O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

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 thy praises, O God-inspired Gregory.

Since thou now standest before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father, // so that we may sing to thee: "Rejoice, preacher of grace!"

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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!"

Hymn to the Theotokos

All of creation rejoices in thee, 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 thy body
into a throne,
and thy womb He made more spacious than
the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of
Grace.//
Glory to thee!

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. 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 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.

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!"

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: Intervarsity 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



Recommended Lenten Reading:

In *First Fruits of Prayer: A 40-Day Journey Through the Canon of St. Andrew*, Frederica Mathewes-Green provides a guided entry point into one of the most profound and ancient traditions of Christian repentance.

The book is essentially a "devotional bridge" to the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, a massive 7th-century hymn traditionally chanted during Orthodox Lent.

Core Themes and Structure

1. The Great Canon as a Map

The original Canon is a poetic sweep through the entire Bible—from Adam and Eve to the Apostles. Mathewes-Green breaks this "marathon" of prayer into 40 manageable daily readings. Each day features:

The Text: A portion of the Canon in modern English.

The Commentary: Frederica's insights into the biblical figures mentioned.

The Prayer: A focus on personal "metanoia" (repentance or "change of mind").

2. A "Walking Tour" of the Soul

Unlike modern views of guilt, Mathewes-Green presents repentance as a healing process. She uses the Canon's method of comparing the reader to biblical characters:

When the text mentions Cain, you examine your own resentment.

When it mentions David, you examine your own capacity for betrayal and restoration.

It creates a "mirror" for the soul, showing that our struggles are not new.

3. Deeply Scriptural

A major takeaway of the book is the interconnectedness of the Old and New Testaments. Mathewes-Green shows how St. Andrew of Crete used Old Testament

"types" to illustrate the spiritual life, making the ancient stories feel immediate and personal.

The Tone: "Gentle Rigor"

Mathewes-Green is known for her conversational, witty, and grounded style. She manages to take a heavy, ascetic Byzantine text and make it feel:

Accessible: You don't need a theology degree to follow along.

Urgent: It highlights the "bright sadness" of Lent—the idea that recognizing our brokenness is the first step toward joy.

Practical: She provides historical context for why the prayers are structured the way they are.

"Repentance is not a feeling of being a bad person; it's the realization that there is a much better way to be a human being."

Why It Matters

For those outside the Eastern Orthodox tradition, this book serves as an invitation to a "slower" form of spirituality. For those within it, it's a tool to understand the complex poetry they hear in church.

STEWARDS of the New England Diocese

“Giving Above and Beyond”

Youth Activities

Annual Youth Rally continues to grow. 60 youth attended in 2025.

Seminaries/Seminarians

3 seminarians receiving scholarships. Seminaries also supported.

Missions

Help us grow new mission parishes with your donations.

Charities

Donations enable the diocese to help where needed.



Donate Online: <https://dneoca.org/>