



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

Address: PO Box 134, 108 E Main St, Clinton,
CT 06413-0134

Phone: 860-664-9434

Web: <http://www.stalexischurch.org>

Email: stalexis@ dneoca.org

Fr Steven Hosking

Rector

Phone: 860-866-5802 (Message)

Email: frsteve@stalexischurch.org

Dn Timothy Skuby

Attached

Phone: (808) 341-1813

Email: dntimothy@stalexischurch.org

Services Schedule

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

Bulletin for Sunday, September 19, 2021

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:

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary
Carolyn Neiss - Vice President
Marlene Melesko - Council Member at Large
Kyle Hollis - President
Roderick Seurattan - Treasurer

Pastoral Care - General Information

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, 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

Book Study

I would like to start a new book study to be held throughout the Nativity Fast (beginning a bit before). The book I would like to use is the following: *The Singing Heart: A Book of Quiet Reflections* by Ivan Ilyin (Author), Alexandra Weber (Translator). It is available on Amazon.

The Singing Heart: A Book of Quiet Reflections is a collection of reflections on human nature and morality; the beauty of nature and its relationship with man as created being and God as creator; man's duties, responsibilities, and destiny in life; and the interplay of heart, mind, and soul. These reflections from a "singing heart" are beautifully written in a language steeped

in love for Russia and the Orthodox faith and provide a glimpse into the soul of a man who refused to be beaten by the cruelty of his time but found beauty in the darkest of days.

This will be an evening session (to be determined), and I would like a minimum of seven people to commit to this study if we are going to go through with it. Please let me know if this is something you would like to participate in. Thank you.

Thank You

Many thanks to all of you for the well-wishes, "Many Years" and congratulations offered up on this, the occasion of the anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Archpriest Dennis,
Archpriest Michael,
Deacon Timothy, Evelyn,
Katheryn, Anne, Aaron,
Veronica, Richard,
Nancy, Susanne, Carol,
Alexander, Gail, Vincent,
Nina, Ellen, Maureen,
Elizabeth, Christopher,
Joshua, Jennifer, Petra,
Olivia, Jessica, Sean,
Sarah, Justin, Dayna,
Daniel and Gregory.

Many Years to John Skrobat on the occasion of his Name's Day; and to Ayrton Seurattan on the occasion of his birthday.

Memory Eternal for Zoey Anselmo

- 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.
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Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. Sunday after Elevation. Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius, and Dorymedon of Synnada (276). Rt. Blv. Theodore, Prince of Smolensk and Yaroslavl' (1299), and his children, Ss. David and Constantine. Martyr Zosimas, Hermit, of Cilicia (4th c.). St. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (ca. 690).

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

September 19 to September 27, 2021

Sunday, September 19

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 21

Luft - A

6:30PM Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 22

4:30PM Open Doors

6:30PM Catechumens

Thursday, September 23

8:30AM Akathist to St John the Baptist

Friday, September 24

The Commemoration of the Miracle of the Theotokos Myrtidiotissis in Kythira

Ayrton Seurattan - B

New Martyrs of Alaska, Hieromonk Juvenaly & Peter the Aleut

8:30AM Akathist to Saints of America

Saturday, September 25

5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, September 26

The Falling Asleep of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, September 27

Phyllis Sturtevant - B

Saints and Feasts

September 19

Trophimus, Sabbatius, & Dorymedon the Martyrs

In 278, during the reign of Probus, Saints Trophimus and Sabbatius came to Antioch, and seeing the city celebrating the festival of Apollo at Daphne lamented the blindness of the people, and presented themselves as Christians to Atticus the Governor. Saint Trophimus was stripped of his clothing, and was stretched out and beaten until the earth was red with his blood. Then he was hung up, scraped on his sides, and imprisoned in torments. Saint Sabbatius was tortured so savagely that he gave up his spirit in his sufferings. Trophimus was sent to Synnada, wearing iron shoes fitted with sharp iron nails within; he was further tormented without mercy, then cast into prison. Dorymedon, a counsellor, and a pagan, came to the prison and cared for Trophimus. When a certain feast came, Dorymedon was asked why he did not sacrifice to the idols; he proclaimed himself a Christian, for which he was imprisoned, pierced with heated spits, frightfully punished, and finally beheaded with Saint Trophimus.

September 20

Eustathius the Great Martyr, his wife and two children

The holy Martyr Eustathius before his baptism was an illustrious Roman general named Placidus in the days of the Emperor Trajan. While hunting in the country one day, he was converted to the Faith of Christ through the apparition of an uncommonly majestic stag, between whose antlers he saw the Cross of Christ, and through which the Lord spoke to him with a human voice. Upon returning home, he learned that his wife Tatiana had also had a vision in which she was instructed to become a Christian. They sought out the Bishop of the Christians and were baptized, Placidus receiving the name Eustathius, and Tatiana the name Theopiste; their two sons were baptized Agapius and Theopistus. The family was then subjected to such trials as Job endured. Their servants died, all their goods were stolen, and on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem they were scattered abroad, each not even knowing if the others were still alive. By the providence of God, they were united again after many years, and returned to Rome in glory. Nevertheless, when they refused to sacrifice to the idols-a public sacrifice from which no Roman general could be absent-the Emperor Hadrian, who had succeeded Trajan, had them put into a large bronze device in the shape of a bull, which was heated with fire until they died. When their holy bodies were removed, they were found to be without harm. They suffered martyrdom about the year 126.

September 21

Jonah the Prophet

The Prophet Jonah, the son of Amathi, of the

town of Geth-hopher (IV Kings 14:25), was of the tribe of Zabulon; he prophesied during the years 838-810 before Christ. God commanded him to go to Nineveh, the great city of the Assyrians, and to proclaim that its destruction was nigh at hand because of the sins of its people. But he, as a Prophet who knew the great compassion of God, feared that at his preaching the Ninevites would repent; that God, accepting their repentance in His love for man, would not fulfill Jonah' threats; and that he would be branded a false prophet. So he disobeyed the divine command, and boarded a ship and departed elsewhere. Yet, the sudden and fearful sea-storm and the revelation of Jonah' disobedience caused the sailors to cast him into the sea. A great sea-monster appeared straightway by divine providence, and swallowed him up. For three days and nights he was found in its belly and he prayed, saying the words, "I cried aloud in my affliction unto the Lord my God..." (Jonah 2:3, the Sixth ode of the Holy Psalter). The sea-monster then vomited him up on dry land and he again heard God's command. Wherefore, he went and preached, saying, "In three days, Nineveh shall be destroyed." The people became terrified and all repented. The great, the small, babes at the breast, and even the irrational beasts themselves fasted, and thus, having found mercy from God, they were spared His wrath. Jonah' book of prophecy is divided into four chapters, and is placed fifth in order among the twelve minor Prophets. His three-day sojourn in the sea-monster's belly is an image of our Saviour's three-day burial and His life-bringing Resurrection (Matt. 12:39-40). His name means "dove."

September 23

The Conception of St. John the Baptist

This came to pass fifteen months before the birth of Christ, after the vision of the Angel that Zacharias, the father of the Forerunner, saw in the Temple while he executed the priest's office in the order of his course during the feast of the Tabernacles, as tradition bears witness. In this vision, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and said to him, "Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" (Luke 1:13). Knowing that Elizabeth was barren, and that both he and she were elderly, Zacharias did not believe what the Angel told him, although he had before him the example of Abraham and Sarah, of Hannah, mother of the Prophet Samuel, and of other barren women in Israel who gave birth by the power of God. Hence, he was condemned by the Archangel to remain speechless until the fulfilment of these words in their season, which also came to pass (Luke 1:7-24).

September 24

Thecla the Protomartyr & Equal to the Apostles

This saint was from the city of Iconium. When she was eighteen years of age, she was instructed in the Faith of Christ and the hope of the resurrection by the Apostle Paul, whom also she followed, forsaking her betrothed and espousing a life of virginity

for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom.
Having preached Christ in various cities and
suffered many things, she reposed in Seleucia
of Cilicia at the age of 90.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the women
disciples of the Lord
learned from the angel
the joyous message of
Your Resurrection,
they cast away the

ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:
“Death is overthrown!
Christ God is risen, //
granting the world great mercy!”

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!

Tone 8 Troparion (Martyrs)

God praised in Trinity has glorified a trinity of
martyrs:
Trophímus, Sabbátius, and Dorýmedon.
By their faith, they overthrew the adversary. //
Through their prayers, O Christ our God, have
mercy on us!

Tone 4 Kontakion (Resurrection)

My Savior and Redeemer
as God rose from the tomb and delivered the
earth-born from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of hell,
and as Master, //
He has risen on the third day!

Tone 8 Kontakion (Martyrs)

As the foundation of athletes and the
confirmation of piety,
the Church honors and glorifies your brilliant
suffering,
wise and glorious Trophímus, ever-praised
and blessed athlete. //
Together with your fellow sufferers, ask
cleansing for those who hymn you, for you are
invincible.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Cross)

As You were voluntarily raised upon the Cross
for our sake,
grant mercy to those who are called by Your
Name, O Christ God;
make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your
power,
granting them victories over their
adversaries //
by bestowing on them the invincible trophy,
Your weapon of peace!

(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:)

Tone 8

Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross
of the Lord!

You are a mystical Paradise, O Theotokos,

who, though untilled, have brought forth Christ;
through Him the life-bearing wood of the Cross was planted on earth.
Now at its Exaltation,
as we bow in worship before it, we magnify you.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)
The light of Your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord. (Ps. 4:7)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

The Reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house,

send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head

of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Wisdom of the Fathers

Nothing comes without effort. The help of God is always ready and always near, but is given only to those who seek and work, and only to those seekers who, after putting all their powers to the test, then cry out with their whole heart: "Lord, help us."

St. Theophan the Recluse

19th Century

"I force not, I compel not, but each one I make lord of his own choice; wherefore also I say, 'If any man will.' For to good things do I call you, not to things evil, or burdensome; not to punishment and vengeance, that I should have to compel.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 55 on Matthew 16, 1. B#54, p.339., 4th 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



In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

On this the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost the Church presents to us Christ's parable of the wicked tenants in the vineyard. Now

historically, this story refers to the Old Testament kingdoms of Judah and Israel and how they behaved – or, rather, misbehaved – over the course of their covenantal relationship with God. The people were supposed to show forth in themselves the good fruit which God expected of them, but they did not. And when God sent his servants the prophets to them to call them to account for that lack and to recall them to the path which would produce such fruit, well, they were – as St. Theophylact Archbishop of Ochrid in Bulgaria notes in his commentary on this parable – “abused in various ways by the husbandmen, that is, the false prophets and false teachers of those times. One they beat, as they did to Micah when Sedek struck him on the jaw;

another they killed, as they did to Zechariah [the father of the Forerunner St. John the Baptist] between the temple and the altar; another they stoned, as they did to Zechariah the son of Jodae the high priest.”

Metaphorically, however, the meaning of this parable extends to each and every one of us since we too live in a covenantal relationship with God; we too often fail to develop within ourselves and to show the good fruits of the Christian life – joy in living kindness, in giving selfless service to others (and in that giving receiving back multitudes of blessings). And while we don't go around maiming or killing the people God sets in our path to call us back to the righteous life, we do what is perhaps worse, which is to make them of no account at all. For the persecution and the slaying of the prophets indicated that at least they were noticed. But how often do we, on the other hand, simply choose to ignore or to not take advantage of the people and the opportunities that God sends our way as our reminders and means to return to a fulfilling life and the producing of good fruits within it.

There are many different ways in which we can fall short of the mark and fail to produce this good fruit in our lives. I'll focus on one particular way that is given us in the context of this parable. When the householder sent his son to the wicked tenants they said, “Come, let us kill him, that we may receive his inheritance.” What makes this reason truly astounding is that the whole goal of human existence in the life of God's covenanted communities, the Old Testament Church and the New,

is precisely to share in the inheritance of the Son of God. Theosis, deification, the sublime calling of humanity, means nothing else but that we are to become – as the Fathers say – by grace all that God is by nature, except in identity of nature. We are called to become gods by adoption, sons of God by adoption. So the irony is that the wicked tenants killed the Son for something they were already going to receive, had they but waited. And that's the key to their mistake and ours as well, many times. We are impatient; we push for something way too soon, for which we are not yet ready. Because we jump the gun, we often end up seriously compromising or even ruining that good thing for which we should have waited.

Scripture records other stories of this: in the parable of the prodigal son, when he asks for his half of the inheritance, he was not stealing or taking anything that wasn't already coming to him. But while Christ never says in that parable just why the prodigal wasted his substance in riotous living, it's not hard to imagine that it was because he was immature, unable to contain his desires and manage his resources... he was not prepared to receive the inheritance he had claimed.

We see this very thing in the fundamental, primordial sin of all humanity. In the story of Creation and the Fall in Genesis, Adam and Eve are told not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, Now that Tree was right there in the middle of the Garden, in which everything had been created good and uncorrupt. So it too was good. And it can be presumed that they would have been given

to eat of it when they were ready, since they were created to become exactly what Satan said they would when they ate of it: "You will become like God, knowing good and evil." But they were not ready, and so striving for that godhood far too soon led to separation from God and enmity with each other, spiritual and physical death which was the result of - not a punishment for - their sin.

This is perhaps the hardest and most difficult way in which we can fall short of the mark and fail to produce good fruit in our lives. Things which are truly wrong and sinful are often easy to see, even if its not so easy not to do them nevertheless, But situations in which the goal itself is good but the timing is not right, that is hard because too often we let our desires for them get in the way of discerning when the time is truly right and when it is not. We need to pray earnestly to God, then speak with others, whether a spiritual father or mother, Christian brother or sister, or close and trusted friend, to take advantage of our personal prophets whom God sends our way and to share our situations, that we may gain wisdom and temperance along our path to living well and producing good fruit, that we may each of us as human persons body and soul be saved and deified. Amen.

Source:[The Thoughtful Orthodox Blog](#)



Exalting the Cross

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



The readings for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross give us many insights into the meaning of the cross.

The "story" of the feast concerns the Empress Helen, mother of Constantine. For 200 years, pagan emperors had tried to wipe out all evidence of the places where Jesus Christ died and was resurrected. The Emperor Hadrian had been particularly determined, building a pagan temple on Golgotha.

After seeing the sign of the cross in the sky, Emperor Constantine sent his mother on a quest to find the true cross, and she did so despite her advanced age. The year was 326. Nine years later, by Constantine's order, the Church of the Resurrection was built on the site of Golgotha and the Lord's tomb.

The day's epistle is I Corinthians 1:18-24. Saint Paul acknowledges that the story of a God who becomes man, only to die on a cross, is "folly" to some. That is still true for some today. But it's equally true that for others, then as now, it is the opposite of folly. For believers, this story and this cross are the power of God. Paul cannot give a cogent explanation or irrefutable proof of this, and doesn't try. He only says that the "foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The Gospel readings are from the 19th chapter of John's Gospel. Verse 7 gives the reason why Jesus was put to death--He scandalizes the Jewish leaders by claiming to be the Son of God, breaking Jewish law. The cry rings out, "Crucify him!"

Pilate becomes fearful, hearing this, and asks Jesus, "Where are you from?" Who is this man with such an ability to upset people, and who is unafraid to claim divine sonship? Pilate attempts to assert his own power, and reminds the prisoner that he can either free or crucify Him.

Jesus' answer shows His absolute intention to do His Father's will: "You would have no power unless it had been given you from above." By saying this He demonstrates His submission to the power, put by God into men's hands, that will lead Him to the cross. But he also refuses to absolve human beings of responsibility. He accuses those who have handed Him over of "a greater sin." They have perverted their authority, ordained by God, in condemning a righteous man.

In the last painful moments of His earthly life, Jesus commends His mother to the care of the apostle John. This is a pure act of love in the midst of agony, necessitated by the death on the cross because she will be deprived of His physical care.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross leads us to reflect on many aspects of the cross. Most of all it calls us to gratitude for the gifts bestowed on us by Christ's willingness to accept the cross and to break the bonds of death by its power.