



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, July 07, 2024

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:

Greg Jankura - Vice President
Susan Davis- President
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large
Luba Martins - Member at Large
Susan Egan - Treasurer
Dn Timothy Skuby - 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

Ready to Volunteer? Connecticut Hospice Wants You!

Volunteers are the heart of The Connecticut Hospice. Founded locally in 1974, the hospice continues to set the standard for home and inpatient hospice and palliative care.

Our mission to serve the needs of our patients and their families is made possible by our dedicated team of volunteers. Our staff is very welcoming and all training is provided for you.

Our volunteer openings include these roles:
Homecare Volunteers: Roles include providing companionship, quiet presence, light housekeeping, and respite for family members to run errands. These patients are either in their own homes or living in an

Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing Facility. We have patients who need such care in both New Haven and Fairfield Counties.

- Weekend Reception: Weekly 4-hour shifts greeting families and checking them in. Minimal computer skills required.
- Data Entry/Clerical: We have open roles to fill in several departments at our Branford facility.
- Musicians: Flexible hours to play in our lobby or in our Branford in-patient care unit. To find out more, please contact Joan Cullen, Director of Volunteers for The Connecticut Hospice, at 203-315-7510 or via jcullen@hospice.com.

Tentative Vacation Schedule

With the Bishop's blessing, I will be taking some time off. Tentatively this would be July 19th through August 2nd. While I am away, Dn Timothy will lead all scheduled services and will be your contact should any situation arise. Should you need a priest, please do not make arrangements on your own, but contact Dn Timothy to coordinate with our Dean and priests of the Deanery.



Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many years! to John Skrobat on the occasion of his birthday, and to David Miller and Gabriella Neiss on the occasion of their Name's Days.

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: Dennis, Galina, Olga
- Clergy and their families: Fr Sergei,
- Catechumen: Robert, Abbie,

- Matthew, Joseph, Mary, and Kevin
- Individuals and Families: Luba, Suzanne, Gail Galina, Evelyn, Rosemary, John, Daniel & Dayna, Kristen, Charles
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: John Skrobat, Glenn Penkoff, Ledbeck
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Lynn, David and their unborn child, Gregory and Elizabeth and their unborn son, Timothy
- Traveling: Michael, Lucy
- Sick and those in distress: Thomas, Sheri, Joanna, Joshua, Remy, Stormy, Scott

2nd SUNDAY AFTER

PENTECOST — Tone 1. All Saints of America (All Saints of Russia). Ven.

Thomas of Mount Maleos (10th c.). Ven. Acacius of Sinai, who is mentioned in *The Ladder* (6th c.). Ven. Eudoxia, in monasticism Euphrosyne, Grand Duchess of Moscow (1407). Martyrs Peregrinus, Lucian, Ompeius, Hesychius, Papius, Saturninus, and Germanus, of Dyrrachium in Macedonia (2nd c.). Martyr Evangelus, Bishop of Tomi (Constanța) in Romania (3rd-4th c.). Martyr Cyriaca of Nicomedia (4th c.). Saint Prosper of Aquitaine (4th c.).

- 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

July 7 to July 15, 2024

Sunday, July 7

2nd Sunday of Matthew
9:30AM Divine Liturgy
4:00PM Akathist for All Saints of North America (Salisbury)

Monday, July 8

Sitka Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos
The Holy Great Martyr Procopius

Tuesday, July 9

The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily
8:30AM Matins

Wednesday, July 10

‡ 45 Holy Martyrs of Nikopolis, Armenia

Thursday, July 11

Euphemia the Great Martyr
St. Olga, Princess of Russia
8:30AM Matins

Friday, July 12

‡ Proclus & Hilary the Martyrs of Ancyra
John Skrobat - B

Saturday, July 13

Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, July 14

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, July 15

St. Vladimir Equal to the Apostles
The Holy Martyrs Cyricus and His Mother Julitta

Saints and Feasts

July 07

Synaxis of the Saints of North America

On the second Sunday after Pentecost, each local Orthodox Church commemorates all the saints, known and unknown, who have shone forth in its territory. Accordingly, the Orthodox Church in America remembers the saints of North America on this day.

Saints of all times, and in every country are seen as the fulfillment of God's promise to redeem fallen humanity. Their example encourages us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us" and to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). The saints of North America also teach us how we should live, and what we must expect to endure as Christians

Although it is a relatively young church, the Orthodox Church in America has produced

saints in nearly all of the six major categories of saints: Apostles (and Equals of the Apostles); Martyrs (and Confessors); Prophets; Hierarchs; Monastic Saints; and the Righteous. Prophets, of course, lived in Old Testament times and predicted the coming of Christ.

The first Divine Liturgy in what is now American territory (northern latitude 58 degrees, 14 minutes, western longitude 141 degrees) was celebrated on July 20, 1741, the Feast of the Prophet Elias, aboard the ship Peter under the command of Vitus Bering. Hieromonk Hilarion Trusov and the priest Ignatius Kozirevsky served together on that occasion. Several years later, the Russian merchant Gregory I. Shelikov visited Valaam monastery, suggesting to the abbot that it would be desirable to send missionaries to Russian America.

On September 24, 1794, after a journey of 7,327 miles (the longest missionary journey in Orthodox history) and 293 days, a group of monks from Valaam arrived on Kodiak Island in Alaska. The mission was headed by Archimandrite Joasaph, and included Hieromonks Juvenal, Macarius, and Athanasius, the Hierodeacons Nectarius and Stephen, and the monks Herman and Joasaph. Saint Herman of Alaska (December 13, August 9), the last surviving member of the mission, fell asleep in the Lord in 1837.

Throughout the Church's history, the seeds of faith have always been watered by the blood of the martyrs. The Protomartyr Juvenal was killed near Lake Iliamna by natives in 1799, thus becoming the first Orthodox Christian to shed his blood for Christ in the New World. In 1816, Saint

Peter the Aleut was put to death by Spanish missionaries in California when he refused to convert to Roman Catholicism.

Missionary efforts continued in the nineteenth century, with outreach to the native peoples of Alaska. Two of the most prominent laborers in Christ's Vineyard were Saint Innocent Veniaminov (March 31 and October 6) and Saint Jacob Netsvetov (July 26), who translated Orthodox services and books into the native languages. Father Jacob Netsvetev died in Sitka in 1864 after a life of devoted service to the Church. Father John Veniaminov, after his wife's death, received monastic tonsure with the name Innocent. He died in 1879 as the Metropolitan of Moscow.

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, an event of enormous significance for the North American Church took place. On March 25, 1891, Bishop Vladimir went to Minneapolis to receive Saint Alexis Toth (May 7) and 361 of his parishioners into the Orthodox Church. This was the beginning of the return of many Uniates to Orthodoxy.

Saint Tikhon (Bellavin), the future Patriarch of Moscow (April 7, October 9), came to America as bishop of the diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska in September 1898. As the only Orthodox bishop on the continent, Saint Tikhon traveled extensively throughout North America in order to minister to his widely scattered and diverse flock. He realized that the local church here could not be a permanent extension of the Russian Church. Therefore, he focused his efforts on giving the American Church a diocesan and parish structure which would help it mature and grow.

Saint Tikhon returned to Russia in 1907, and was elected as Patriarch of Moscow ten years later. He died in 1925, and for many years his exact burial place remained unknown. Saint Tikhon's grave was discovered on February 22, 1992 in the smaller cathedral of Our Lady of the Don in the Don Monastery when a fire made renovation of the church necessary.

Saint Raphael of Brooklyn (February 27) was the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America. Archimandrite Raphael Hawaweeny was consecrated by Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York on March 13, 1904. As Bishop of Brooklyn, Saint Raphael was a trusted and capable assistant to Saint Tikhon in his archpastoral ministry. Saint Raphael reposed on February 27, 1915.

The first All American Council took place March 5-7, 1907 at Mayfield, PA, and the main topic was "How to expand the mission." Guidelines and directions for missionary activity, and statutes for the administrative structure of parishes were also set forth.

In the twentieth century, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, countless men, women, and children received the crown of martyrdom rather than renounce Christ. Saints John Kochurov (October 31) and Alexander Hotovitzky (December 4 and August 7) both served the Church in North America before going back to Russia. Saint John became the first clergyman to be martyred in Russia on October 31, 1917 in Saint Petersburg. Saint Alexander Hotovitzky, who served in America until

1914, was killed in 1937.

In addition to the saints listed above, we also honor those saints who are known only to God, and have not been recognized officially by the Church. As we contemplate the lives of these saints, let us remember that we are also called by God to a life of holiness.

July 08

Prokopios the Great Martyr & his mother Theodosia the Martyr

The holy Martyr Procopius was born of a pious father named Christopher, but his mother Theodosia was an idolater. After Christopher's death, she presented Neanias - for this was the Saint's name before - to Diocletian, who was at Antioch in Syria. Diocletian made him Duke of Alexandria, and sent him there to punish the Christians. On the way to Alexandria, our Lord spoke to Neanias as once He had to Saul, and turned this new persecutor to faith in Him. Neanias turned back to Scythopolis, and preached Christ. He was betrayed by his own mother, and was arrested and tormented in Caesarea of Palestine. While he was in prison, the Lord appeared to him again and gave him the new name of Procopius (which is derived from the Greek word meaning "progress, advancement"). He was brought out of prison and taken to worship the idols, but at his prayer, the idols fell; many then believed in Christ and suffered martyrdom, among them certain soldiers, twelve women of senatorial rank, and the Saint's own mother, Theodosia. Saint Procopius, after

further torments and imprisonment, was beheaded about the year 290.

July 11

the All-Praised Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Princess of Kiev

Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (see July 15). She reposed in peace in 969.

July 11

Euphemia the Great Martyr

In 451, during the reign of the Sovereigns

Marcian and Pulcheria, the Fourth Ecumenical Council was convoked in Chalcedon against Eutyches and those of like mind with him. After much debate, the Fathers who were the defenders of Orthodoxy, being 630 in number, agreed among themselves and with those who were of contrary mind, to write their respective definitions of faith in separate books, and to ask God to confirm the truth in this matter. When they had prepared these texts, they placed the two tomes in the case that held Saint Euphemia's relics, sealed it, and departed. After three days of night-long supplications, they opened the reliquary in the presence of the Emperor, and found the tome of the heretics under the feet of the Martyr, and that of the Orthodox in her right hand. (For her life, see Sept. 16.)

July 11

Sophrony the Athonite of Essex

July 12

Veronica, the woman with the issue of blood who was healed by Jesus

July 13

Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

It is believed that the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel was transferred to this day from March 26 so that it could be celebrated more festively than in the period

of the Great Fast; and, in fact, all the miracles of the Archangel are celebrated on this feast day, which has been listed here in the church books since the ninth century.

Hymns of the Day



Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,

You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your Kingdom!// Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

Tone 8 Troparion (All Saints of America)

As the bountiful harvest of Your sowing of salvation, the lands of North America offer to You, O Lord, all the saints who have shone in them. By their prayers keep the Church and our land in abiding peace through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

Tone 1 Kontakion (Resurrection)

As God, You rose from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself.

Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished.

Adam exults, O Master!

Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You://

“You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

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

Tone 3 Kontakion (All Saints of America)

Today the choir of Saints who were pleasing to God in the lands of North America now stands before us in the Church and invisibly prays to God for us.

With them the Angels glorify Him, and all the Saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them;// and together they all pray for us to the Pre-eternal God.

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Steadfast Protectress)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, ☐Constant Advocate before the Creator; despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, ☐but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. ☐Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, ☐O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you!

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise

befits the just! Alleluia (3X)

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 67.35,26.

God is wonderful among his saints.

Verse: Bless God in the congregations.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5.

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those

who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Gospel Reading

2nd Sunday of Matthew

The Reading is from Matthew 4:18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

Wisdom of the Fathers

Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian practices, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this end. The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit: Chapter 3, The Little Russian Philokalia Vol. 1; Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood pg. 79, 19th century

Within the visible world, man is as it were a second world; and the same is true of thought within the intelligible world. For man is the herald of heaven and earth, and of all that is in them; while thought interprets the intellect and sense perception, and all that pertains to them. Without man and thought both the sensible and the intelligible worlds would be inarticulate.

Ilias the Presbyter

Gnomic Anthology IV no. 112, Philokalia Vol. 3 edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Ware; Faber and Faber pg. 61

Beyond the Sermon



The Gospel reading describes how Christ calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. He calls the first disciples to leave their families and work behind to become fishermen of souls. Jesus takes the first disciples with Him as He teaches and preaches His Gospel — the Good

News of God’s plan for the salvation of the world — healing people along the way.

What the Gospel is describing can seem rather strange to us. Leaving everything behind and following the Lord may seem disconnected from our daily reality, which is filled with family and professional responsibilities. However, we see the correlation between what the disciples did professionally and what they are called to do in their ministry. In both cases, they are fisherman. First, they were fishers of fish, and now they will be fishers of men.

Similarly, our ministry in the Church may be a spiritual transfiguration of our secular vocation. Sometimes, the change is doing our daily work out of love for Christ and not selfish ambition, giving glory to God and not ourselves. This shift of focus can be enough of a transformation of our being and life to become an apostle. Saint John Chrysostom remarks, “He who casts his net into the water knows not what fishes he shall take, so the teacher casts the net of the divine word upon the people, not knowing who among them will come to God.”

There is a tremendous gift in being presented with concrete examples of disciples who followed Christ and left everything behind to preach the word of God. Some 2,000 years later, we are also asked to reflect on our own calling to follow Him. We are called to consider how we may respond to His invitation and how we can participate in the mission of the Church. As disciples, we are called to follow Christ by living

the Gospel. As apostles, we are sent by Christ to spread the Gospel into the world.

It may be tempting to think that this call to discipleship and apostleship only applies to some. Perhaps it relates only to those called to serve the Church in a more specialized capacity, such as priests or monastics. However, the call to discipleship and apostleship is universal and applies to all of us without exception. The Church offers each of us specific invitations to participate in its apostolic mission. We might mistakenly think that only clergy truly participate in the ministry of the Holy Church or that clergy are more valuable than the laity — nothing could be further from the truth.

Saint Paul the Apostle tells the Corinthians that “...there are varieties of services but the same Lord...” (1 Corinthians 12:5). We are all called to participate in the ministry of the Church, not just the clergy. The clergy administer the Holy Sacraments, celebrate the Divine Liturgy, and serve at the Holy Altar as the leaders of the eucharistic community. But this does not mean the ministries of altar servers, chanters, Philoptochos, parish councils, religious education, youth, and so on are inferior to the clergy. We are one “laity” in the one Body of Christ. The very word “laity” comes from the Greek word “laos” (λαός), which means people. We are all the “laos” — the people of God — both those who are ordained and those who are not. In fact, in the word “liturgy” (λειτουργία in Greek), the first part is derived from the word “laos” (λαός). Liturgy means “the work of the people” (λαός + ἔργον

= λειτουργία). Some serve in the Sanctuary, and others in the nave, narthex, refectory or at the “psaltiri” (chanting stand). All are performing “the work of the people.”

Saint Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians that “Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body” (1 Corinthians 12:14-15). To the Ephesians, he says: “Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians, 4:7,12). He explains that we cannot all have the same ministry in the Holy Church because the Lord’s Church needs a variety of ministries to make it whole.

Our Lord’s Church needs clergy, of course, and it just as equally needs the rest of the Body of Christ to participate in ministry, in the service to which God has called us. Without the laity (laos), the people, the Body of Christ is not complete. Each of us is invaluable to the Church and God.

Just as our Lord called Peter, James, John, and Andrew, He now calls each of us to offer our talents to the Holy Church. Let us ask ourselves what we can do to participate in the Church’s ministry, and to serve our parish. What are we good at professionally? How about academically? Or what hobbies do we excel in? The point is that the Church most definitely needs each of us, just as it needs the clergy, just as the Church needed the Holy Apostles. We, though many,

are one Body in Christ, with diverse and critical ministries in our parishes so that the evangelization of the Holy Gospel can continue to spread unhindered throughout the world.

God bestows everything on us. He provides for all of creation. Our very selves and everything around us come from God. Participating in the Body of Christ means reconciling ourselves with God. It means uniting ourselves to Christ. This is what happens when we receive the Holy Eucharist. We are not only united to Christ, but also to each other as one body, as we partake from the one Holy Chalice. We are all called to ministry through the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, through our initiation into the faith. We are all called, not

in general terms, but specifically. Christ calls everyone to a role. If you are unsure how you can help, pray on it, ask your spiritual father, or speak with one of the numerous ministries in the Church. Most importantly, God calls us to live our faith — not only in Church but every- where we go, with everyone we meet — to be shining examples, to be disciples of Christ.

We preach the Gospel best with our actions, which are more powerful than our words. As Christ says, everyone will know you are My disciples because of your love for each other (John 13:35). Finding our place in the Church means opening ourselves up to all the blessings and resources the Church makes available to us. Living in Christ means being active in Christ's Body, the Church. Being one with Him is not reserved for heaven but our life here on earth.

As persons created in the image and likeness of God, we are blessed with a certain potential. Christ came into the world to help us unlock this potential, not only for our benefit but also for the benefit of those around us and society. God is love, perfect love.

Therefore, salvation cannot be viewed merely as a personal matter. Salvation is not only something we receive but also something we give away— the love of God we offer to others. With all the suffering in the world, it is easy to see that we are all in this together. Let us take the opportunity and try to understand better what the Church is presenting to us in terms of how we approach life, others, and God Himself. Let us open ourselves to discerning our specific role in the Church's apostolic mission. Let us answer the Lord's call to follow Him just like the first disciples, to become fishers of souls, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

