PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, March 18
St. John of the Ladder
Orthros & Divine Liturgy 8:45 AM
Sunday School/Theology 101 12:00 PM

Monday, March 19
Crossroads Ministry Luncheon 11:00 AM
Great Compline 6:30 PM
Basics of Orthodoxy Class: 7:30 PM
Holy Mysteries I

Tuesday, March 20
Bible Study - Gospel of St. Luke 10:00 AM
Parish Council Meeting 7:00 PM

Wednesday, March 21
Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 AM
Great Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 PM
No Potluck

Friday, March 23
Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 AM
Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos 6:30 PM

Saturday, March 24
Choir Practice 4:00 PM
Great Vespers 5:00 PM
Young Professionals Dinner 6:30 PM
at the Contes home

Sunday, March 25
Annunciation of the Theotokos
Orthros & Divine Liturgy 8:45 AM
Sunday School/Theology 101 12:00 PM

SERVICES ON WEDNESDAY are different this week, than in weeks past. Presanctified Liturgy will be in the morning at 8:00 am and the Great Canon of St. Andrew will be in the evening at 6:30 pm. There will be no potluck.

CROSSROADS POTLUCK LUNCHEON is tomorrow at 11:00 am. Fr. Timothy will speak about repentance.

MISSIONS POSSIBLE (formerly Mochas for Missions) helps small parishes on the West Coast achieve sustainability. Please consider giving to this worthy cause. We have collected **$356** so far towards our goal of $10,000. See Eleni for details.

PASCHA PICNIC AND PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON: Visit the table during fellowship to purchase tickets: $10 per person; $30 per family.

VISIT YOUR BROTHERS & SISTERS IN CHRIST: Some of our parishioners aren't able to get out much; a visit could brighten their day. If you would like to visit someone, please see the new "Weekly Visits" sign-up sheet in the church office. A regular commitment is encouraged, but not required - even once helps! This initiative is brought to you by Philoptochos.

HOLY FRIDAY YOUTH RETREAT, for K-5th Graders (no Pre-K this year) is on Friday, April 6, 12:45-2:45 pm. The theme is *A Sense of the Resurrection,* and we will use each of our five senses to learn about and prepare for Pascha! (No lunch will be provided.) Advance online registration is required: the link is in the weekly email bulletin. To volunteer, see Kendall Muzik.

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to reach out and welcome all people to live an Orthodox Christian life, grow spiritually, and become disciples of Jesus Christ through serving others.

PC: Chiprout/Weick/Crosby **Altar Servers Team D**: Alexander, Athanasios, Basil VS., Wade, Owen, Simon
G: Gebrehiwot/Weick **Clean up Team 4**: Buckley, Gebreeyesus, Blankenstein, Clary, Agrawal

St. John the Baptist
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Historical Christian Church

Rev. Father Matthew Swehla churchoffice@stjohngoc.org
Rev. Father Timothy Pavlatos 503.644.7444 • www.stjohngoc.org
Deacon Innocent Duchow-Pressley 14485 SW Walker Rd, Beaverton, OR 97006

March 18, 2018

Sunday of the St. John Climacus (of the Ladder)

Today, in the narthex we see the icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent. This icon depicts the spiritual writing—of the same name—by St. John Climacus, a monk who lived 14 centuries ago in the desert of Sinai. Both the icon and the book show the Christian life to be a step by step progression away from a world of sin and our own inner world of the passions upward toward union with Christ. Each step on the Ladder of Divine Ascent represents a step closer to God. With each step up the ladder, St. John teaches us that the passions that inhibit our free will must be submitted to God for healing and transfiguration. This is a struggle characterized by the ascetic life of obedience to Christ's commandments. As we ascend this ladder by God's grace, we begin to see ourselves as we truly are in relation to Christ, and how much our heavenly Father values us, loves us and wants to set us free from the slavery to sin.

The concept of a ladder ascending into heaven is not unique to St. John and his great spiritual work. It has its roots in the Old Testament, where Jacob saw a great ladder stretching from earth up into heaven. "And Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!" (Gen.28:12) Many of the Holy Fathers of the Church interpreted this vision of the ladder to be a type of the Theotokos who was to come. She forms the ladder whereby God unites Himself to our nature and bows the heavens to the earth. It is from this background that we have a context to better understand the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St. John Climacus of Sinai.

The icon of the Ladder is an icon of life: a life which is dynamic and dangerous. It reminds us of the words of Christ, "Strive to enter in through the narrow gate rather than the wide highway which leads to destruction." As a Christian gradually ascends, the force of spiritual and ascetical labors lifts him on high and places him into closer and closer communion with God. But, if the Christian, stops ascending the ladder of Christ-likeness by ceasing to focus on God and becomes distracted by the world or becomes prideful and self-sufficient, he will fall off the ladder and his soul will undergo corruption. This icon reminds us that we must utterly depend upon God as we ascend, for it is in Him and through Him that we are able to conquer death and inherit eternal life.

WELCOME VISITORS to the original Christian Church. At St. John the Baptist you will experience the sacred worship of God as it has taken place for 2,000 years. Our community is a dynamic witness of authentic Christianity, and we welcome all people.

Please note that Holy Communion is reserved **only** for baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared—through prayer, fasting and regular Confession—to receive the Sacrament. However everyone may receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy. If you have any questions about your experience, please see our visitors table during fellowship or speak with one of our clergy.

SMALL ENTRANCE HYMNS

Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal Fourth Mode)
From on high did You descend, O Merciful Lord. For us did You endure three days in the tomb, that we may be released from passions in this world. You who are our resurrection and our life, glory unto to You, O Lord.

Ex ipsus katilthes, o Efsplagnos. Tafin katethexo triimeros, ina imas eleftherosis ton pathon. I zoi ke i anastasis imon, Kirie, thoxa Si.

Hymn of St. John Climacos (Plagal Fourth Mode)
With the steams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold in labors; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O John our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Hymn of St. John the Baptist (Second Mode)
The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner; for thou hast proved to be truly more venerable than the Prophets, since thou wast granted to baptize in the stream Him Whom they proclaimed. Wherefore having contested for the truth, thou didst rejoice to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God hath appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting to us great mercy.

Kontakion for this Sunday (Plagal Fourth Mode)
To thee, the Champion Leader we thy flock dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving, as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos. But as thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do thou deliver us, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, thou Bride unwedded.

EPISTLE READING

Hebrews 6:13-20 (Sunday of St. John of the Ladder)
Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 9:17-31 (Sunday of St. John of the Ladder)
At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying, "Teacher, I brought my son to You, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And He answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if You can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible for him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had entered the house, his disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And He said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And He would not have any one know it; for he was teaching His disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He is killed, after three days He will rise."

The LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT is celebrated on the Sundays of Great Lent, which means that the priestly prayers are different, and the megalynarion, "It is truly meet," is replaced with the following hymn:

In you, who are full of grace, all creation rejoices, both the congregations of angels and the human race. O consecrated temple and spiritual paradise, the boast of virgins, from you was God incarnate and became a child—He, our God Who existed before the ages. For He made your womb a throne, and He made you more spacious than the heavens. In you, who are full of grace, all creation rejoices. Glory be to you.

A silent man is a son of wisdom and is always gaining great knowledge.

Your tongue longs to jump into arguments, but restrain it. It is a tyrant, and you must fight it daily seventy times seven.

The proud man wants to be in charge of things. He would feel lost otherwise.

Humility is constant forgetfulness of one's achievements.

Anyone who freely chooses to be simple and guileless provides the devil with neither the time nor the place for an attack.

– St. John Climacus (of the Ladder)