BENEVOLENCE FUND CARDS: Beautiful, hand-crafted Christmas cards can be "purchased" by giving a donation of any amount to the Benevolence Fund. These cards were designed by a St. John parishioner and will be available during fellowship today and Sunday, December 16 only. Help support those in need with your donation!

NATIVITY FAST: Please make attending the morning Liturgies a part of your Nativity Fast, and take part in the Sacrament of Confession.

THEOLOGY 101 EXPLORES THE LITURGY: Beginning today, Theology 101 Adult Education with study the Divine Liturgy. Please be on time (at 12:00 pm) as we learn about the most important sacrament in the life of an Orthodox Christian.

MEN'S OUTING: Today at 1:30 pm, trap and skeet shoot with men from the parish and have dinner afterward. Meet at Hillsboro Trap & Skeet Club (33295 NW Wren Rd, Hillsboro). Or just come for dinner at 4:15 pm at Helvetia Tavern (10275 NW Helvetia Rd, Hillsboro). Contact Paul or Brandon for info on the cost and to RSVP—or just show up!

MOTHERHOOD MINISTRY BOOK AND TEA EXCHANGE: On Wednesday, December 12 at 10:00 am bring a used or new spiritual book (or an Orthodox children's book) and a box of your favorite tea—gift wrapped together—and exchange gifts with your fellow mothers. A brief discussion will follow. Refreshments and childcare are provided.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY: Your stewardship pledge cards will be blessed next Sunday, December 16. Please turn in your pledge card by placing it in the offering basket, in the church office, or in the stewardship box in the narthex.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS: Elections have been moved to next Sunday, December 16 after Liturgy. All stewards of the church are encouraged to vote.

JR. GOYA BREAKFAST & CHRISTMAS PARTY is Saturday, December 15 at 9:00 am.

GOYA FIRESIDE CHAT will be on Saturday, December 15 after Great Vespers at 6:00 PM.

ASA CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE—*UNPACKING THE NATIVITY:* On Friday, December 14 at 6:30 pm enjoy a performance by the students of Agia Sophia Academy. Come support the kids and enjoy a delightful evening!

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 B: Christos, Elias, Judah, Makarios, Vanya
G: Lubliner/Black Clean-Up Team 6: Ketrenos J&K, Rusinaru, Ketrenos B, Knight, Davis

St. John the Baptist
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Historical Christian Church

Rev. Father Matthew Swehla (503) 644-7444 • www.stjohngoc.org
Deacon Innocent Duchow-Pressley 14485 SW Walker Rd, Beaverton, OR 97006

December 9, 2018

Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos • Hannah the Righteous, Mother of the Prophet Samuel

Saint Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married Saint Joachim, who was a native of Galilee. For a long time Saint Anna was childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be the parents of a daughter, Who would bring blessings to the whole human race. The Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna took place at Jerusalem. The many icons depicting the Conception by Saint Anna show the Most Holy Theotokos trampling the serpent underfoot. Saints Joachim and Anna are often depicted with hands folded in prayer; their eyes are also directed upward as they contemplate the Mother of God.

The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was conceived "immaculately"—exempt from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.). Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless, as Saint Ambrose of Milan (commemorated on December 7) teaches in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in Her mortality and in being subject to temptation, although She committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, She would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from Her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share fully in our human nature, then our salvation is not possible.

The Righteous Hannah dwelt in marriage with Elkanah, but she was childless. Elkanah took to himself another wife, Phennena, who bore him children. Hannah grieved strongly over her misfortune, and every day she prayed for an end to her barrenness, and vowed to dedicate her child to God. Once, as she prayed fervently in the Temple, the priest Heli thought that she was drunk, and he began to reproach her. But the saint poured out her grief, and after she received a blessing, she returned home. Hannah then conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel (which means "Asked from God"). When Samuel reached the age of boyhood, Hannah herself presented him to the priest Heli, and Samuel remained with him to serve before the Tabernacle. (See 1 Kings and 1 Samuel 2:1-21.)

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 (Third Mode)
Let all things above in heaven rejoice; let all things below on earth be glad. With all the might and strength of His arm, an eternal deed the Lord did perform. Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death. And firstborn of the dead has He become. From the depths of Hades has He delivered us, and to all the world has granted His great redeeming mercy.

Effrenestho ta urania, agalliastho ta epigia, oti epi-ise kratos en vrahioni aftu o Kyrios. Epatise to thanato ton thanaton, prototokos ton nekron eyeneto, ek kilias Adthu erisato imas ke paresche to kosmo to mega eleos.

Hymn of the Conception of St. Anna (4th Mode)
Today the bonds of childlessness are loosed; for God hearkened to Joachim and Anna. And though it was beyond hope, He clearly promised them that they should bear a divine child, from whom was born the Uncircumscribable One Himself Who became a mortal, and through an Angel commanded them to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

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 of the Conception of St. Anna (4th Mode / *On this day Thou hast appeared*)
All the world celebrates Anna's conception on this day with festive joy, because it came to pass through God; for by divine grace she has conceived her that beyond words conceives the Word of God.

EPISTLE READING

Galatians 4: 22-27 (Tenth Sunday of Luke)
Brethren, Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married."

GOSPEL READING

Luke 13: 10-17 (Tenth Sunday of Luke)
At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As He said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Do good, and evil will not find you. Prayer is good with fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A few prayers with righteousness are better than many with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: For almsgiving rescues one from death, and it will wash away every sin. Those who give alms and are righteous will be full of life: But those who sin are enemies to their own life.

– *Archangel Raphael, from* Tobit 12:7-10

PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, December 9
- **Orthros & Divine Liturgy** 8:45 AM
- Sunday School 12:00 PM
- Theology 101 Adult Education 12:00 PM
- Men's Outing: Trap & Skeet Shoot and Dinner 1:30 PM

Monday, December 10
- **Liturgy (with Communion Prayers)** 6:30 AM

Tuesday, December 11
- Bible Study 10:00 AM

Wednesday, December 12
- **Orthros & Divine Liturgy for St. Spyridon the Wonderworker** 6:30 AM
- Motherhood Ministry Morning Fellowship: Book/Tea Exchange 10:00 AM

Thursday, December 13
- **Orthros & Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska** 6:30 AM

Friday, December 14
- ASA Christmas Performance 6:30 PM

Saturday, December 15
- Jr GOYA Breakfast and Christmas Party 9:00 AM
- Choir Practice 4:00 PM
- **Great Vespers** 5:00 PM
- GOYA Fireside Chat 6:00 PM

Sunday, December 16
- Stewardship Sunday
- **Orthros & Divine Liturgy** 8:45 AM
- **Artoklasia for Stewardship Sunday** 11:45 AM
- Parish Council Elections 12:00 PM
- Sunday School 12:00 PM
- Theology 101 Adult Education 12:00 PM