NATIVITY FAST CONTINUES: As we prepare for our Lord's Nativity, we have a season of increased fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Please come to as many morning services as you can, and take part in the sacrament of Confession.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS TODAY: All pledged stewards are encourage to vote.

LAST CHANCE TO FOR CHRISTMAS CARDS: The Benevolence Fund Christmas Cards are going fast! Beautiful hand-crafted cards can be "purchased" by giving a donation (of any amount) to the Benevolence Fund—today only!

CHILDREN'S BOOK SALE—LAST DAY: Purchase books today for the children in your life. All proceeds benefit Agia Sophia Academy through the Parent Teacher Partnership.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS … will have dinner at N&K Lubliner's home on Thursday, December 19 at 7:00 pm.

JR. GOYA (6th-8th) CHRISTMAS BRUNCH: On Saturday, December 21 at 10:00 am at the Rushes will host the annual Jr. GOYA brunch.

GOYA SERVICE FOR FAMILY PROMISE: On Saturday, December 21 at 5:00 pm, the GOYAns will offer their time and talent to help the families in need who are staying at St. John.

SERVICES FOR THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: On December 24, 7:00 am Royal Hours; 8:30 am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great; 10:00 pm Orthros; 11:00 pm Divine Liturgy for the Nativity, with Artoklasia and a Finger Food Potluck following.

SAVE THE DATE—PARISH FEAST DAY DINNER: Our parish will host a pan-Orthodox dinner celebration for our beloved patron, St. John the Baptist, on the eve of his feast day, Monday, January 6 at 7:30 pm (after Vespers).

SUPPER FOR SIX SIGN-UPS: Couples from our parish—married, pre-married, or just friends or family—can get to know other couples. Three couples will be grouped and share a meal monthly for three months. Groups schedule themselves, and each couple hosts once. Sign up on the church bulletin board by January 5.

WOMEN'S RETREAT COORDINATOR NEEDED: Our annual women's retreat has not happened for a two years. If you would like to have an away retreat in 2020, then please consider becoming the retreat coordinator. Contact the church office or Fr. Matthew if you would like to serve in this capacity.

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: Corazza/Dale/Perlmutter Altar Servers Team A: Noah, Athanasios, Basil VS, Peter, Owen, Judah, John
G: Gebrehiwot & Moffit Clean-Up Team 7: Lindgren, Lubliner J&D, Lubliner N, Wehlitz E., Anderson

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 15, 2019

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of Christ • The Holy Hieromartyr Eleftherios

The Holy Hieromartyr Eleftherios was from the city of Rome and at very young age was orphaned of a father, having only a mother, whose name was Anthia. She had been taught by the Apostle Paul the Faith in Christ. When he was a child he was offered by his mother to Bishop Anicetus of Rome. From him he learned sacred letters, and was numbered among those in the clerical order, becoming a reader. When he was fifteen years old he was ordained a deacon. At the age of eighteen he was ordained a priest, and at the age of twenty he was ordained Bishop of Illyricum, having worked many miracles beforehand due to his exceeding virtue. Having converted many Greek pagans to the faith of Christ through his teachings, for this reason he was brought before Emperor Hadrian. There he proclaimed Christ as the true God, and at the order of the emperor he was placed on a fiery brazen gridiron, underneath which were lit coals. Then he was laid out over a very fiery altar. After this he was placed in a fiery cauldron full of oil, pitch and resin. By the grace of God however he was kept unharmed from all these. At the order of the prefect Coremun a furnace was built, which had sharp spits on either side. However Coremun, having confessed Christ as God and being full of the Holy Spirit, was the first to enter this furnace. Emerging unharmed from this, he was beheaded, and received the crown of martyrdom. When Saint Eleftherios was placed in the furnace, the fire was immediately extinguished, and he emerged whole and unharmed. Then he was thrown in prison. After this he was bound to a chariot and pulled by wild horses, but he was unbound by a divine Angel. He then went up to a high mountain, where he dwelt with wild animals. They were calm when the saint meditated on the words of God. Soldiers were sent to capture him, but the saint admonished them, and they returned to faith in Christ and were baptized—not only them, but many other Greek pagans, up to five hundred of them, believed in Christ. He was brought to the emperor and given over to the beasts to be devoured, but he was kept whole and unharmed. Finally he was killed by two soldiers at the order of the emperor in the year 117. His mother Anthia embraced the dead relic of her son, and as she kissed it, she was killed by the sword. This happened after her son received the crown of martyrdom.

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 (1st Mode)
The stone had been sealed before Your tomb by the Jews, and the soldiers guarding did watch o'er Your pure and sacred body. O Savior, the third day You arose, and unto all the world did You give life. Whereby all the heavenly powers did proclaim that You are the giver of life. Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your dispensation, O You alone Who loves all.

Tu líthu sfrayistheéndos ipó ton Iudtheón, ke stratiotón filassóndon to ahrandón Su sóma. Anéstis triímeros Sotír, dthorúmenos to kósmo tin zoín, dthiá túto e dthinámis ton uranón evó-on Si zöodthóta. Dthóxa ti Anastási Su Christé. Dthóxa ti vasilía Su. Dthóxa ti ikonomía Su, móne Filánthrope.

Hymn of the Holy Forefathers (2nd Mode)
By faith You justified the Forefathers, when through them You betrothed Yourself aforetime to the Church from among the nations. The saints boast in glory that from their seed there is a glorious fruit: she who bore You seedlessly. By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Hymn of St. Eleftherios (Plagal 1st Mode ~ *"Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit")*
Being comely adorned in thy sacred priestly robes and newly drenched with the streams of thy pure and sanctified blood, thou didst soar aloft to stand before thy Master, Christ; hence never cease to intercede for those honoring with faith thy mighty and blessed contest, thou overthrower of Satan, O wise and blessed Eleftherios.

Hymn of St. John the Baptist (2nd 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 Forefeast of Nativity (2rd Mode)
On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

EPISTLE READING

II Timothy 1:8-18 (St. Eleftherios)
Timothy, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the Gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this Gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me—may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesos.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 14: 16-24 (Eleventh Sunday of Luke)
The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, December 15
Family Promise Week
Orthros 8:45 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM
Parish Council Elections 11:45 AM
Sunday School 12:00 PM
NO Theology 101 Adult Education

Monday, December 16
Liturgy with Pre-Communion Prayers 6:30 AM

Tuesday, December 17
Orthros 6:30 AM
Divine Liturgy for the Prophet Daniel and the Three Youths 7:30 AM
Bible Study 10:00 AM
Parish Council Meeting 7:00 PM

Wednesday, December 18
Wednesday Evening Study 7:00 PM

Thursday, December 19
Liturgy with Pre-Communion Prayers 6:30 AM
Young Professionals Dinner at N&K Lubliner's Home 7:00 PM

Friday, December 20
Orthros 6:30 AM
Divine Liturgy for St. Ignatius of Antioch & St. John of Kronstadt 7:30 AM

Saturday, December 21
Jr. GOYA (6th-8th) Christmas Brunch at the Rush Home 10:00 AM
Choir Practice 4:00 PM
Great Vespers
GOYA Service: Family Promise 5:00 PM

Sunday, December 22
Orthros 8:45 AM
Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM
No Sunday School/Theology 101