STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARDS: By the end of the year, please return your stewardship commitment cards. You may mail them to the church office or place them in the box in the narthex anytime you're at the church. You may also give them to any Parish Council member.

BIBLE STUDY ... is on break for the holidays until January 8.

HOSTING SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP: Share your *philoxenia* "love for strangers" through a snack or a meal. (Up to $150 can be reimbursed.) Sign up here or in the weekly email or on the kitchen clipboard:

EASY "HOW TO HOST" GUIDE: Feeding the masses can feel pretty daunting! Don't worry, it's easier than you think. Just scan this QR code to find our handy hosting guide, complete with FAQ's and even sample menus. No experience necessary!

JR GOYA (6th-8th) GIFT EXCHANGE: Come ***tonight,*** 6:30-8:30 pm, to the Jungwirth's home for dinner, discussion, and a white elephant gift exchange!

CAROLING OUTING FOR TEENS ... AND EVERYONE: Our teens will sing carols at the homes of our seniors on Saturday, December 21, 6:30-9:00 pm. Come and join in the blessing of Christmas cheer!

MOM'S N TOTS PLAYDATE ... is 9:30-11:00 am on Thursday, December 19.

YOUNG MEN'S GROUP: On Friday, December 20, 6:00-9:00 pm the men will meet at Joseph L's home. Questions? Email jlubliner92@gmail.com.

SERVICES FOR THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: On ***December 24,*** 7:00 am Royal Hours; 9:00 am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great; 6:00 pm Nativity Vigil Service (Great Compline, Vespers, & Orthros) On ***December 25,*** 8:30 am Pre-Communion Prayers; 9:00 am Divine Liturgy.

PROJECT MEXICO: If you already plan to join our Project Mexico homebuilding team this summer, July 8-14, please register ***TODAY*** to receive a $100 discount on registration. Use the QR code or visit projectmexico.org.

VISIT THE CHURCH NEW PROPERTY ... whenever you're driving by or want to have a moment of prayer and stillness. Read the Akathist to St. John or say any other prayers—in the Forerunner Chapel or at the Icon Stand along the driveway. Every prayer helps to sanctify our new church home: 10050 NE Walker Road, Hillsboro!

DONATE ICONS & RELIGIOUS BOOKS FOR THE BUILDING FUND! Thanks to all participants. November sales though the Logos Bookstore have raised over $400, making total donations more than $2,500! Any parishioner can contribute by bringing used Icons and Orthodox items to the Bookstore, clearly marked "Building Fund." May God bless our efforts!

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.

Parish Council: Nordling (open) and Chosvig (close) Greeter: Athena and Julie
Cleanup Team 2: Bourquin, Braden, Brunson, Wilson, Dahl, Chosvig

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, 2024

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 canonically 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 speak with one of our clergy.

HYMNS OF THE SMALL ENTRANCE

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 You, O Lord.

Ex ípsus katílthes, o éfsplanghnos, tafín katedthéxo tri-ímeron, ína imás eleftherósis ton pathón. I zoí ke i Anástasis imón, Kýrie, dthóxa si.

Hymn of the Forefathers (Second Mode)
By faith You justified the Forefathers, having through them betrothed to Yourself the Church that came out of the nations. The saints are boasting in glory; for the glorious fruit, the Virgin who without seed gave birth to You, is from their progeny. At their entreaties, O Christ our God, save our souls.

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

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 you, O Forerunner; for you have proved to be truly more venerable than the Prophets, since you were granted to baptize in the stream Him Whom they proclaimed. Therefore, having contested for the truth, you rejoiced to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God has appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting to us great mercy.

Kontakion of the Forefeast of Nativity (Third Mode / *On this day the Virgin)*
On this day the Virgin * comes 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

2 Timothy 1:8-18 (Eleventh Sunday of Luke)
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
Orthros 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Fellowship, Sunday School & Theology 101 follow
Jr. GOYA (6th-8th) Gathering 6:30 pm

Monday, December 16
Liturgy (with Pre-Communion Prayers) 5:30 am

Tuesday, December 17
Prophet Daniel & St. Dionysios of Zakynthos
Orthros 7:15 am
Divine Liturgy 8:15 am
Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, December 18
Liturgy (with Pre-Communion Prayers) 5:30 am
at the Forerunner Chapel, 10050 NE Walker
No Bible Study until January 8
Wednesday Coffee Hour 11:00 am
Paraklesis to the Theotokos 6:00 pm

Thursday, December 19
Liturgy (with Pre-Communion Prayers) 5:30 am
Akathist to the Mother of God 9:00 am
Nurturer of Children
Mom's n Tots Playdate 9:30 am

Friday, December 20
Forefeast of the Nativity of the Lord
Orthros 7:15 am
Divine Liturgy 8:15 am
Young Men's Group 6:00 pm
at J. Lubliner's home

Saturday, December 21
Liturgy (with Pre-Communion Prayers) 7:00 am
Great Vespers 5:00 pm
Teen Caroling Outing 6:30 pm

Sunday, December 22
Orthros 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Fellowship follows Liturgy