

PARISH FEAST DAY! Take time off for the feasts—come celebrate with our community our beloved patron St. John’s annual feast, as well as the great feast of the Theophany of our Lord.

· **Theophany, January 6:** 7:45 am Orthros; 8:45 am Great Blessing of the Waters; 9:30 am Divine Liturgy; 6:30 pm Great Vespers for St. John the Baptist.

· **St. John’s, January 7:** 8:30 am Orthros; 9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Memorial for Departed St. John Parishioners; Potluck Feast Day Meal following.

Note: If you can’t take work off, then come to Vespers on January 6. If your child needs a excusal letter to be excused from school, please contact Fr. Matthew.

FEAST DAY FISH POTLUCK: Celebrate our beloved patron, St. John the Baptist, with a festal potluck brunch on Wednesday. It is a fish fasting day, so please bring a fast-appropriate dish to share.

PLEASE RETURN HOLY WATER BOTTLES ... washed, dried, and ready for use on January 5 and 6!

HOST A SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP ... using this QR Code or on the kitchen clipboard.



SENIOR MINISTRY HOLIDAY TEA... at the Chapel House on Thursday, January 8 at 1:00 pm. Join us for the festivities as we ring in the new year! If you would like a ride from our current property to the new property, please contact Morwenna E.

JR. GOYA (6th-8th) MEETING ... at Thomas and Georgiana S’s house on Saturday, January 10, 6:15-8:15 pm—games, dinner, and a spiritual talk!

HAVE YOUR HOUSE BLESSED: It is traditional to have your house (or business) blessed after Theophany. Please contact the church office to schedule a time. All that’s needed are an icon and a bowl of water. (Basil/rosemary sprigs, a candle, and incense are encouraged as well.) If you’d like to have coffee or lunch with Fr. Matthew when he visits, just let Barbara know, so that she can schedule extra time.

OUTDOOR BLESSING OF THE WATERS! Join us next Sunday, January 11 at 12:30 pm at Commonwealth Lake (965 SW Huntington Ave Portland, OR 97225) for a brief service to bless the waters of creation. Umbrellas and jackets may be needed.

COME WORK FOR THE FUTURE OF ST. JOHN: We’ll have an “all hands on deck” work party at the new church ropery (10050 NE Walker Rd, Hillsboro) on Saturday, January 17, 11:30 am to 2:30 pm.

PAN-ORTHODOX FILM NIGHT: Come see the award-winning new film, *American Orthodox: Finding the Ancient Faith in the Modern World*, on Saturday, January 17 at Holy Trinity. We will have 5:00 pm Vespers, followed by the screening, refreshments and a Q&A with the writer/director, Robert John Hammond. The film celebrates the holiness present in our land through the lives of saints such as St. Herman of Alaska, St. Sebastian of Jackson, St. Raphael of Brooklyn, St. John of San Francisco, and others! Scan the QR code to RSVP.



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: Makarounis (open) and Efird/Moffitt (close) Greeter: Catherine (Maggie) and Vasiliki (Sandy)
Cleanup Team 7: Marnul, Moore, Ferrarini, Henry-Hall, Moffitt, Stinman, Efird



St. John the Baptist
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Historical Christian Church

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

January 4, 2025

Sunday before the Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ

Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Holy Trinity to the world, through the Baptism of the Lord. God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son; the Son was baptized by Saint John the Forerunner; and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine “those who sat in darkness,” and “in the region of the shadow of death” (Matthew 4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind. The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in *The Apostolic Constitutions*. All the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany. The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. Saint John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but “to bury human sin by water,” to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify

“the nature of water” and to offer us the form and example of Baptism. On the Feast of Theophany, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons.

The Synaxis of St. John the Baptist is celebrated on January 7, the day after Theophany. Our Lord and Savior taught that St. John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born of a woman. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb, and was called by God to be the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first prophet of the New Testament. From his youth, St. John lived ascetically in the wilderness. After more than 20 years of preparation, God called him out of the desert to preach repentance and prepare the way for the Messiah. Many thought that he was the Messiah or Elijah raised from the dead; but in his humility, he refused these titles and insisted that One greater than he was coming, Who would introduce the Kingdom of God and baptize not with water but with fire and the Holy Spirit. God used St. John to open the hearts of many, including some of the apostles, so that they would be able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. After baptizing Jesus in the Jordan, St. John was arrested by King Herod and martyred.

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 1st Mode)
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit is the Word, Who of a Virgin was begotten for our salvation. As the faithful we both praise and worship Him, for in the flesh did He consent to ascend unto the Cross, and death did He endure. And He raised the dead unto life through His glorious resurrection.

Ton sinánarhon Lógon Patrí ke Pnévmati, ton ek Parthénu tehthénda is sotirian imón. Animnísomen pistí ke proskinísomen, óti ivdthókise sarkí, anelthín en to Stavró, ke thánton ipomíne, ke eyíre tus tethneótas en ti endthóxo Anastási aftú.

Hymn of the Forefeast of Theophany (4th Mode / Joseph was amazed)
O Zabulon, prepare, and be ready, Nephthalim. * Jordan River, hold your course, and exultantly receive * the Master who is coming to be baptized. * Adam leap for joy with Eve the Foremother. * No longer hide yourselves, as once in Paradise; * for having seen you naked He has appeared * to clothe you in your former vesture. * The Christ has appeared, wishing to renew * the entire creation.

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 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 Forefeast of Theophany (4th Mode / On this day You have appeared)
In the running waters of the Jordan River, on this day the Lord of all cries out to John, "Be not afraid and hesitate not to baptize Me, for I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

EPISTLE READING

Timothy 4:5-8 (Sunday before Theophany)
Timothy, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:1-8 (Sunday before Theophany)
The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' John was baptizing in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by

him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes He who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Today, the season to celebrate is upon us. In church with us is the host of Saints. Angels and humans celebrate together. Today, the grace of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon the waters. Today, the unsetting Sun arose, and the world is brightened by the light of the Lord. ... Today, the Uncreated is intentionally touched by the hand of His creature. ... Today, by the presence of the Lord, the Jordan's waters are transformed into cures. Today, all creation is watered by mystical streams. Today, people's sins are wiped out in the waters of the Jordan. Today, Paradise is opened to people, and the Sun of Righteousness shines on us. Today, the bitter water encountered by Moses in the wilderness is made sweet for the people, because of the Lord's presence. ... Today, we are rescued from the darkness, and we are illumined by the light of divine knowledge. ... Today, the brilliant light from on high shines on all creation. ... Today, the heavens celebrate with the earth, and the earth converses with the heavens. Today, the sacred assembly of the Orthodox is resoundingly celebrating. Today, the Master comes to be baptized, in order to lift human nature to heaven. Today, the unbowed Master bows before His servant, in order to free us from slavery. Today, we have purchased the kingdom of heaven. The Lord's kingdom shall have no end. Today, earth and sea share the joy of the world, and the world is filled with gladness.

- Prayer from the Great Blessing of the Waters

PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK	
SUNDAY, JANUARY 4	
St. Nikiforos the Leper	
Orthros	8:45 am
Divine Liturgy	10:00 am
Basil & Mary McAfee Welcome Fellowship; No Sunday School or Theology 101	
MONDAY, JANUARY 5	
Eve of Theophany ~ Strict Fast Day	
Royal Hours	7:15 am
Vesperal Divine Liturgy	9:00 am
Great Blessing of the Waters	10:30 am
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6	
Theophany of our Lord	
Orthros	7:45 am
Great Blessing of the Waters	8:45 am
Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
Vespers (Artoklasia & Akathist) for the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist	6:30 pm
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7	
Synaxis of St. John the Baptist—Parish Feast Day	
Orthros	7:45 am
Divine Liturgy	8:30 am
Memorial for St. John Departed	10:00 am
Feast Day Fish Potluck Fellowship	10:15 am
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8	
Akathist to the Mother of God Nurturer of Children	9:00 am
Senior Ministry Holiday Tea at the Chapel House	1:00 pm
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10	
Baptism – Nikolina Knight	1:30 pm
Memorial – Ted Papas (40 days)	5:00 pm
Great Vespers	5:00 pm
Jr. GOYA (6th-8th) Meeting	6:15 pm
SUNDAY, JANUARY 11	
Orthros	8:45 am
Divine Liturgy	10:00 am
Parish Council Oath of Office Fellowship follows	11:45 am
No Sunday School or Theology 101	
Outdoor Blessing of the Waters at Commonwealth Lake Park	12:30 pm