

ALL HANDS FOR PARISH FAMILY CLEANUP!
On Saturday, February 28, 12:00-4:00 pm, everyone is invited (including children) to help make our church beautiful prior to Basil’s ordination. ***We need your help!***—even if you can only spare 30 minutes. We will have fasting food available as well.

PHILOPTOCHOS DONATION DRIVE: Help fund philanthropy our St. John’s philanthropic arm, Philoptochos. Look for the table during Fellowship

MT. ATHOS PILGRIMAGE, SEPTEMBER 2026: Fr. Matthew is making preliminary plans for a trip in the second half of September. If you are interested of have questions, please read the email regarding this pilgrimage and contact him. ***Reply by today!***

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY BEGINS THIS WEEK
... with the following services:

- Monday, February 23**
Great Compline, Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 24**
Great Compline, Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 PM
- Wednesday, February 25**
Ninth Hour, Presanctified Liturgy 6:15 PM
followed by Lenten Potluck
- Thursday, February 26**
Great Compline, Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 PM
- Friday, February 27**
Ninth Hour, Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 AM
Salutations to the Theotokos 6:30 PM
- Saturday, February 28**
Orthros, Divine Liturgy, Koliva Prayer 8:30 AM
Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. George 5:00 pm
NO Vespers at St. John’s

Kali Sarakosti ~ Blessed Lent!
 **SHOW YOUR PHILOXENIA** “Love for strangers” and sign up to host a Sunday Fellowship. Just click the QR code.

KICK-OFF DINNER FOR STARTING A FOCUS CENTER IN PORTLAND: This Saturday, February 28 we will have a pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. George’s (2101 NE 162nd Ave, Portland), followed by a dinner (and a presentation by Steve Christoforou, Exec. Dir. of FOCUS North America. The Orthodox clergy of Portland hope to establish a FOCUS Center in the Portland area—which will be dedicated to serving those in need in our greater community. Please RSVP:



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S ORATORICAL FESTIVAL will take place after Divine Liturgy next Sunday, March 1 at 1:15 pm. This event is open to 7th-12th graders. For more information on registration, topic selection, and prizes please reach out to Basil McAfee at youthdirector@stjohnnoc.org.

SUMMER CAMP IS ALMOST FULL!! Week 3 of summer camp has only a few spaces left. Please decide soon if your children (ages 8-18) will go to camp, then register at the QR code here, then tell Basil once you’ve registered. Financial assistance is also available—talk to Fr. Matthew.



ORDINATION GIFTS: Let’s clothe Basil with the essential implements of the priesthood, giving him gifts that befit a priest of God. As a newly-ordained priest, he will need liturgical vestments, robes, liturgical books, a blessing cross, and other items to fulfill his priestly ministry. Symeon (William) E. will collect donations toward this cause through his Venmo. Donations in excess of the needed implements will be given as a financial gift to the McAfee family.



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

February 22, 2025

Forgiveness Sunday • Cheesefare Sunday

This Sunday is **Cheesefare Sunday**, it is the last day that we eat dairy products until Holy Pascha. Tomorrow begins the Great Lenten Fast. It is important for each of us who are in good health and old enough to understand the purpose of fasting and to be obedient to the guidelines our Church gives to us. Fasting is necessary if we desire to be pure and truly become followers of Christ. We must learn to direct our appetites toward God and not seek always to immediately satisfy ourselves; thus we may be healed and experience freedom from our sins and passions. Fasting is a profound spiritual “exercise” (*ascesis*) which, when it is done rightly, transforms, little by little, our fallen humanity into the likeness of the divine image within us. We become unenslaved, unburdened, enlightened by the grace of God more and more. Fasting restores us to that state of life in paradise, before Adam and Eve rejected the fast given to them by God and instead ate from the Tree. Let us enter the Great Fast with humility and a focus upon our loving Lord, who desires our healing and salvation.

Today is also **Forgiveness Sunday**. A basic truth of Christ’s teaching is that access to Him is closed if we are not willing to forgive our neighbor. Today’s Gospel reading makes this clear: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father

also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” With this in mind, the Church seeks to remind us to begin our Lenten Journey by not only seeking God’s forgiveness through the Sacrament of Confession, but also by seeking to forgive one another. This is why our Church offers **Forgiveness Vespers today at 12:15 pm.**

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption. Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.



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: Blankenstein (open) and Agrawal (close) Greeter: Athena and Elizabeth (Lisa)
Cleanup Team 2: Bourquin, Braden, Brunson, Wilson, Dahl, Swehla, Agrawal

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 (Fourth Mode)

When the tidings of the resurrection from the glorious angel were proclaimed unto the women disciples and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished, to the Apostles with boasting did they proclaim that death is vanquished evermore and Christ our God has risen from the dead and granted to the world His great mercy.

To fedthrón tis anastáseos kírigma, ek tu anggélou mathúse e tu Kyríu mathítrie, ke tin progonikín apófasin aporrípsase, tis Apostólis kafhómene élegon: Eskílefte o thánatos, iyérthi Christós o Theós, dthorúmenos to kósmo to méga éleos.

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 Forgiveness Sunday (Plagal 2nd Mode)

O guide unto wisdom, bestower of prudence, instructor of the foolish, and defender of the poor, establish and grant understanding unto my heart, O Master. Grant me speech, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not keep my lips from crying unto You, "Have mercy, O Merciful One, on me who have fallen."

EPISTLE READING

Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4 (Cheesefare Sunday)

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 6:14-21 (Cheesefare Sunday)

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees

in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

We were expelled of old, O Lord, from the Garden of Eden,for wrongly eating from the tree. But, O my God and Savior, You once again have restored us through Your Cross and Your Passion. Thereby, O Master,fortify and enable us purely to finish Lent and to worship Your divine resurrection, Pascha our saving Passover, by the prayers of Your Mother.

~ Exapostilarion Hymn from Orthros

The stadium of virtue is now open; those who wish to compete, enter therein, girded for the good contest of Lent, for those who compete according to the rules shall receive their laurels rightfully. Taking up the full armor of the Cross, let us do battle against the Enemy. As an impregnable wall, we have the Faith, prayer as our breastplate, and acts of mercy as our helmet. Instead of sword, there is fasting, which cuts every evil from the heart. He who does this shall attain a true crown from Christ, the King of all, on Judgment Day.

Sticheron Hymn from Orthros

PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Forgiveness Sunday – Cheesefare Sunday
Orthros 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am
Fellowship follows
Forgiveness Vespers 12:15 pm

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Clean Week – Great Lent Begins
Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 pm

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

John the Baptist: 1st & 2nd Finding of His Head
Bible Study 10:00 am
Wednesday Coffee Hour 11:00 am
Presanctified Liturgy with 9th Hour 6:15 pm
Lenten Potluck 8:00 pm

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Akathist to Mother of God, Nurturer of Children 9:00 am
Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew 6:30 pm

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

St. Ephraim of Katounakia
Presanctified Liturgy with 9th Hour 8:00 pm

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

St. Theodore the Recruit & Koliva Miracle
Orthros 8:30 am
Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
Prayer for the Blessing of Koliva 11:00 am
Parish Family Cleanup Day 12:00 pm
Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. George 5:00 pm
Antiochian Church in Portland
Kick-Off Dinner for FOCUS Center in PDX 6:00 pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Sunday of Orthodoxy
Orthros 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy followed by 10:00 am
40-Day Churching of Simeon Armas
Procession with Holy Icons 11:45 am
Fellowship follows
St. John Oratorical Festival 1:00 pm