

Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church
THE WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2018

Κυριακή 7η Ιανουαρίου 2018

ΣΥΝΑΞΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΟΥ

Αποστ: Πράξ. 19:1-8

Ευαγγ: Ιωαν. 1:29-34

Synaxis (Gathering) of St. John the Baptist

Today's Readings

Epistle: Acts 19:1-8

Gospel: John 1:29-34



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST- THE ONE WHO PREPARED THE WAY OF THE LORD

Many centuries before Jesus came, the prophet Isaiah had foretold that the Messiah would be preceded by a messenger: "Behold, I send my messenger before my face, who will prepare my way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..."

God does not visit His people without proclaiming His coming. His coming was not unexpected. There were definite prophecies that He would be born in Bethlehem of a virgin mother, that He would live in Nazareth, that He would lay down His life as an offering for His people's sins, that He would be born of the lineage of David, and that a messenger would precede Him to prepare the way for His coming.

Who was to be this messenger? St. Luke writes, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod Tetrarch of Galilee in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 1:1-2). The messenger who was to prepare the way for Jesus was none other than John, the son of Zechariah. This verse gives us the exact historical date when John began preaching. Actually it is the only fixed and precise date given in the New Testament. We know from other sources that "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" was the year 28-29 A.D. From this date we are able to calculate other dates in the life of our Lord. The abundance of historical information given in this verse about the beginning of the ministry of John shows the great importance which the early Christians attached to this date, for it marked, as we read in Acts 1:22, the beginning of the salvation of the world, the very starting point of Christ's public ministry. It shows also that the coming of Christ is a factual event that took place at a specific time in history.

The man who we commemorate today, St. John the Baptist, was more than an ordinary prophet, he was the messenger and the forerunner (prodromos) who was to prepare the way for the coming of the King. In John 3:29 John the Baptist refers to Jesus as "the bridegroom" and to himself as "the friend of the bridegroom." The friend of the bridegroom played an important role at early weddings. He arranged the wedding and acted as liaison between the bride and the groom. He sent out the invitations and presided at the wedding feast. He brought the bride and groom together. This was exactly the task of John: to bring this world and Jesus together. In a sense, John made the connection and then stepped back and leaves us in direct contact with Christ. John's one aim was to connect us with the One who was mightier than him, the One of whose sandals he was not worthy to stoop down and tie.

Continued on Page 2

For three hundred years the voice of prophecy had been silent. It was then that God sent John who was recognized as the voice and the authority of a prophet. All the people of Jerusalem came out to hear him and greet him. He came as the last and the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He came to point out Him whom all of Israel expected: the Messiah, the Saviour, the Light of the World. Of all the prophets to proclaim the Messiah, John was the only one privileged to point to Him and say, "Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." That is why St. John's icon is given a position of honor next to Christ on the icon screen of all Orthodox Churches. In him, the entire Old Testament bears witness to Christ as the promised Saviour. In icons, his finger is shown pointing to Christ which expresses the main purpose of his ministry, which is the pointing out of Christ as the expected Savior.

The greatness of John lay in his faithful witness to Christ as the Messiah. As he was given the privilege of running before the chariot of the King and saying, "Christ has come." He was a humble person seeking no honor or glories for himself. Considering himself unworthy, he said, "He must increase. I must decrease." He had the moral courage to stand up before King Herod who was living with his brother's wife and say: "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." In the end this greatest of all prophets was beheaded by Herod at the request of Salome. All his life John had borne witness to Jesus. Upon learning of his death, Jesus bore witness to John. He said of him: "I tell you, among those born of women, none is greater than John" (Luke 7:28).



At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)



Apolytikion of Theophany

As You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, then the worship of the Trinity became manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming You the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ God, who appeared and illumined the world, glory to You.



Apolytikion of Synaxis of John the Forerunner

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 even more venerable than the Prophets, since you were granted to baptize in the running waters Him Whom they proclaimed. Having contested for the truth, you did 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 us great mercy.

Save the Date

A Nite with the Bouzoukia

Saturday February 10, 2017

At 7:00pm In the East Room / Music by Rythmos

Adults: \$45.00

Children up to 16 years of age \$20.00

Sponsored by our

St Helen Women's Philoptochos

Details forthcoming

ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΥ



Την επομένη ημέρα των Θεοφανίων καθιερώθηκε να εορτάζουμε, τη μνήμη του πανίερου προφήτη Ιωάννη Προδρόμου. Ο Ιωάννης ήταν γιος του ιερέα Ζαχαρία και της Ελισάβετ. Μέχρι τα τριάντα του χρόνια, ζει ασκητική ζωή στην έρημο της Ιουδαίας, αφιερωμένη ολοκληρωτικά στην προσευχή, τη μελέτη και την πνευματική και ηθική τελειοποίηση. Το ρούχο του ήταν από τρίχες καμήλας, στη μέση του είχε δερμάτινη ζώνη και την τροφή του αποτελούσαν ακρίδες και άγριο μέλι. Με μορφή ηλιοκαμένη, σοβαρός, αξιοπρεπής και δυναμικός, ο Ιωάννης φανέρωνε αμέσως φυσιογνωμία έκτακτη και υπέροχη. Είχε όλα τα προσόντα μεγάλου και επιβλητικού κήρυκα

του θείου λόγου. Έτσι, με μεγάλη χάρη κήρυττε «τα πλήθη». Κατακεραύνωνε και χτυπούσε σκληρά τη φαρισαϊκή αλαζονική έπαρση, που κάτω από το εξωτερικό ένδυμα της ψευτοαγιότητας έκρυβε τις πιο αηδιαστικές πληγές ψυχικής σκληρότητας και ακαθαρσίας. Γενικά, η διδασκαλία του συνοψίζεται στη χαρακτηριστική φράση του: «Μετανοείτε· ήγγικε γαρ ή βασιλεία των ουρανών», προετοιμάζοντας, έτσι, το δρόμο του Κυρίου μας Ιησού Χριστού για το σωτήριο έργο Του. Όταν ο Χριστός άρχισε τη δημόσια δράση του, ο κόσμος άφηνε σιγά-σιγά τον Ιωάννη και ακολουθούσε Αυτόν. Η αντιστροφή αυτή, βέβαια, θα προκαλούσε μεγάλη πίκρα και θα γεννούσε αγκάθια ζήλεια και φθόνου σ' έναν, εκτός χριστιανικού πνεύματος, διδάσκαλο ή φιλόσοφο. Αντίθετα, στον Ιωάννη προκάλεσε μεγάλη χαρά και ευφροσύνη. Η γιορτή αυτή του Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου, για τον όποιο ο Κύριος είπε ότι κανείς άνθρωπος δε στάθηκε μεγαλύτερος του, καθιερώθηκε τον 5ο μ.Χ. αιώνα.

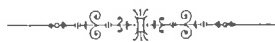
Επίσης, σήμερα εορτάζουμε και το γεγονός της μεταφοράς στην Κωνσταντινούπολη της τιμίας Χειρός του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Προδρόμου, που έγινε κατά τον ακόλουθο τρόπο: Όταν ο Ευαγγελιστής Λουκάς πήγε στην πόλη Σεβαστή, όπου τάφηκε ο Πρόδρομος, παρέλαβε από τον τάφο του το δεξί του χέρι, το μετέφερε στην Αντιόχεια, όπου χάριτι Θεού επιτελούσε πολλά θαύματα. Από την Αντιόχεια, το Ιερό χέρι, μετακομίστηκε στην Κωνσταντινούπολη το 957, από τον διάκονο Ιώβ. Εκεί ο φιλόχριστος αυτοκράτορας, αφού την ασπάστηκε με πολύ σεβασμό, την τοποθέτησε στα βασιλικά ανάκτορα. Η σύναξη των πιστών, σε ανάμνηση του γεγονότος της μετακομιδής της τιμίας Χείρας του Προδρόμου στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, ετελείτο στην περιοχή του Φορακίου (ή Σφωρακίου). Πηγή: www.saint.gr

Απολυτίκιον

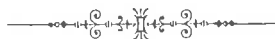
Μνήμη δικαίου μετ' έγκωμίων· σοί δέ άρκέσει ή μαρτυρία τοῦ Κυρίου Πρόδρομε·
άνεδείχθης γάρ όντως καί Προφητῶν σεβασμιώτερος,
ότι καί έν ρείθροις βαπτίσει κατηξιώθης τόν κηρυττόμενον·
όθεν τῆς άληθείας υπεραθλήσας, χαίρων εὐηγγελίσω καί τοῖς έν ἄδη, Θεόν φανερωθέντα
έν σαρκί, τόν αίροντα τήν άμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, καί παρέχοντα ήμῖν τό μέγα έλεος.

Απολυτίκιον - ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ

Έν Ιορδάνη βαπτιζόμενον σου Κύριε, ή τῆς Τριάδος έφανερώθη προσκύνησις,
τοῦ γάρ Γεννήτορος ή φωνή προσεμαρτύρει σοί, άγαπητόν σε Υἱόν όνομάζουσα,
καί τό Πνεῦμα έν είδει περιστεράς, έβεβαίου τοῦ λόγου τό άσφαλές
Ό έπιφανεῖς Χριστέ ό Θεός, καί τόν κόσμον φωτίσας δόξα σοί.



Κυριακή 14η - ΑΠΟΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΙΩΝ
Ώρα 8:00 π.μ - 11:15 π.μ Ὁρθρος καί Θεία Λειτουργία



ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Monday, January 8:

Koraes School Classes Resume
Cutting of the Vasilopita for the New Year
7:30 p.m. GOYA

Tuesday, January 9:

7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting
7:00 p.m. High School Boys B-Ball practice

Wednesday, January 10:

3:30 p.m. Youth Choir
6:30 p.m. 3rd/4th Bidy/Grade School
B-Ball practice

Thursday, January 11:

6:00 p.m. Girls B-Ball Practice

Friday, January 12:

9:30 a.m. Toddler Play Group
5:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Rookies Camp #5
6:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Mighty Mights Game #5
7:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Minors Game #5
8:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Majors Game #5

Saturday, January 13:

GOAL Games (Home)
2:30 p.m. H.S. Boys vs. St. Nick's/St. Spyridon
3:30 p.m. Girls Game vs. St. Demetrios Chicago

Sunday, January 14: Apodosis of Theophany

8 – 11:15 a.m. Orthros and Divine Liturgy

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2018 Offering Envelopes are available in the Church Office for those who are interested.

13th District AHEPA Scholarship Foundation

Applications for 2018 Awards are available in the church office or by visiting the District webpage at www.ahepa.org/ and follow the prompts to District 13. Application deadline is March 15, 2018.



See you...

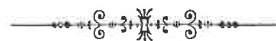
...Next SUNDAY!

MEMORIALS

5 Years George Pappas
15 Years Lucille Pappas
† May their memory be eternal. †

BAKE SALE

Today's Bake Sale is hosted by our Koraes Afternoon School PTA Please support them!



2018 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Let us all do our Best for Our Home...

Stewardship is giving to "Our Home" our best, which is a portion of the many gifts that our Lord gives to us. "Our Home" needs our support to maintain and grow its vital ministries. Stewardship is a spiritual offering that appeals to our generosity.

Our parish is committed to an open stewardship program, without minimums or dues. We ask that everyone search their hearts (those who are able) to increase our Stewardship 2018 Commitment which will enable us to expand our programs and address capital improvements.

Everything we have is a result of the many blessings from God. "Our Home" needs our support in many ways. The life and success of "Our Home" relies on everyone's commitment and participation to the many activities that we offer.

To make a One-Time Gift:

Online Giving: Via PayPal or Easy Tithe; go to www.stconstantinehelen.org

In Person: Stop into the Church Office and you may pay by Cash, Check or Credit Card;

Use the Kiosk located in the Lobby of the Church complex and pay by Credit Card

By mail: Mail your check or credit information to the Church office (do not mail cash!)

By phone: Call (708) 974-3400 and provide the necessary information

To set up Recurring Giving:

Online Giving: Set up recurring contributions via Paypal or Easy Tithe; go to www.ssch.us; (Options include monthly intervals and selection of days of giving)

