

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America - www.saintjohnnewken.org

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29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4. The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (379)

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12 (Circumcision); 2 Timothy 4:5-8 (Sunday before Theophany)

Gospel: Luke 2:20-21,40-52 (Circumcision); Mark 1:1-8 (Sunday before Theophany)

Parish Schedule This Week

Wed. Jan. 4th

6:30 PM Royal Hours for the Feast of Theophany (No bible study)

Thurs. Jan. 5th

9:30AM Vesperal Liturgy

6:30 PM Great Compline w/Litya

Friday Jan. 6th The Theophany of our Lord and God and Savior

Jesus Christ

9:30AM Divine Liturgy & blessing of waters

Sat. Jan. 7th

5:00 PM Great Vespers, followed by confessions

Orthodoxy Class resumes

Sun. Jan. 8th

Hours @9:40; Liturgy, 10:00AM, followed by rectory blessing &

Fellowship meal next door

Blessed New Year!

Altar Candles decorative candles offered by Mark Kennedy in memory of Alan Kennedy, Stanley & Pearl Zalupski, Jay Rinebolt & Judith Goldberg.

Next Sun. Jan. 8th in place of coffee hour in the hall, Fr. John & Matushka will host a house blessing and fellowship meal in the Parish Rectory. All are welcome. Please consider hosting a Sunday social Luncheon on the sign up list. Team up and prepare some food and drink items, as a way of promoting true fellowship outside of worship.

Sun. Jan. 15th join us following liturgy to bless the River at noon, at the Tarentum Boat

docks.

Bulletin and Website Information Please email saintjohnnewken@gmail.com with any information you need printed in the bulletin and/or uploaded to the parish website, ie Sarris candy orders, youth group activities, etc., by the Friday before.

The Preaching of John the Baptist (Today's Gospel)

The Lord's Forerunner did not guide men just to the starting point of repentance, which is keeping away from evil things and profitable contrition of heart, but also sought fruits worthy of repentance. What are these? Firstly, confession, as practiced by those who came to him at that time (Matt. 3:5-6). Next, he looked for righteousness, almsgiving, moderation, love, truthfulness, telling them, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you", "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely" (Lk. 3:13,14), and "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Lk. 3:11). "For every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low" (Luke 3:5). What is brought low? Exactly what the Lord says plainly, "Every one that be exalteth himself shall be abased; and he the humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 18:14).

The Baptist also says, "The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Lk. 3:5-6). Lying, deceit, and slander are crooked, and the rough paths are anger, hatred, envy and remembrance of wrongs, all of which are made straight and level when transformed by the works of repentance.

And so, "all flesh", that is, every person of every nation and race who straightens and smooths himself out through repentance, "shall see the salvation of God (Lk. 3:6).

*As I speak these words to you brethren, I feel no small pain in my soul, that **we who were long ago granted Christian baptism have not yet accomplished those very things which John demanded of those approaching his own baptism.***

*The Spirit comes upon us at Baptism.... He **stays with those who live in repentance, and even if they sin does not leave them, as we have seen from David (cf. 2 Sam. 12:1), but forsakes those who sin without repenting.** So may we all, clinging to the works, words and thoughts of repentance, have Him always dwelling within us, and grant us heavenly salvation now and forever and unto the ages of ages, Amen." - St. Palamas -*