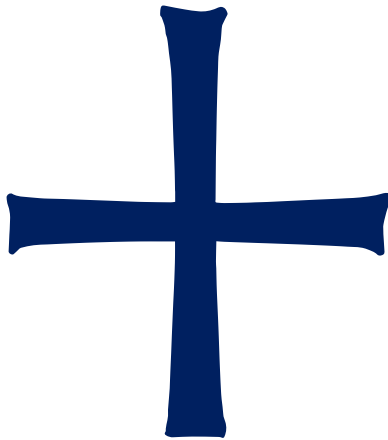


SAINT ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday Bulletin

January 7, 2024—31st Sunday After
Pentecost. Sunday After Theophany.



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Welcome to St. Elizabeth

WELCOME VISITORS! We are delighted you are here. It is our sincere desire that your participation today in the Divine Liturgy will draw you closer to Christ and His Church. Please join us after the service for coffee and refreshments in our fellowship hall. If you have questions about any facet of Orthodox worship, our priest—Father John Strickland—would be very happy to meet and assist you in any way possible.

If you are not familiar with the Orthodox Church, you may see some things that are new to you—icons and incense, the sign of the cross, veneration of the saints, and a lot of standing. These elements have been part of traditional Christian worship from ancient times. They reflect the heavenly nature of the Church.

If you would like to learn more about Orthodoxy, we have a small bookstore where Orthodox publications may be purchased and a lending library where many Orthodox books and periodicals can be borrowed. If you would like to learn more about our parish, please visit our website at <https://stelizabethorthodox.org>. There, you can find a link to our parish YouTube page where you can view Father John's Sunday homilies.

Please note that Orthodox priests may serve Communion only to baptized and chrismated members of the Orthodox Church. The Eucharist is the paramount expression of unity among Christians; but the reality today is that many Christians are not united in matters of doctrine and practice. While some Christians are content to agree to disagree, we believe true unity will occur only when modern Christians are reconciled to the ancient Church, with its faith and life delivered “once, and for all.” In light of this, we respectfully request that rather than partaking of the Eucharistic Chalice, our non-Orthodox guests join us in receiving the *antidoron*—or blessed bread—served at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Please feel free to contact Fr. John any time at (360) 598-9700 or rector@stelizabethorthodox.org.

—Thank you for joining us today. Glory to Jesus Christ!

Bulletin News

- ✦ Meal Teams Need Your Help!—Our meal teams are in dire need of help. With so many families leaving over the past year, and others away during winter, our parish is struggling to maintain our traditional meal together after Liturgy. If you can help out, please contact Joy at whitetigerofjoy@gmail.com to join a team.
- ✦ Barrel Vault Iconography—The council has contracted with our iconographer, Brian Whirledge, a full length icon for our barrel vault ceiling for \$35,100. We currently need \$17,729 for this beautification of our temple. We will be receiving a sketch soon.

This Week at St. Elizabeth

- Jan. 8th—Monday
6:30pm Catechesis
- Jan. 9th—Tuesday
6:30pm Women's Fellowship
- Jan. 10th—Wednesday
6:30am Vespers & Orthodox Studies
- Jan. 13th—Saturday
9:00am Men's Fellowship
4:00pm Choir Practice
6:00pm Great Vespers

Today's Hymns

31st Sunday After Pentecost—Tone 6. Sunday After
Theophany. **Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner and Baptist John. Sunday after
Theophany.**

Tone 6 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, //
glory to Thee.

Tone 1 Troparion *(Feast)*

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son;
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself //
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Tone 2 Troparion *(Forerunner)*

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner.
Thou wast shown in truth to be the most honorable of the
Prophets,
for thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the
Jordan Him Whom they foretold.
Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy,
thou didst proclaim to those in hell God Who appeared in the flesh,
Who takes away the sin of the world, //
and grants us great mercy.

Glory . . .

Tone 6 Kontakion *(Forerunner)*

The river Jordan trembled, and was driven back,
filled with fear at Thy coming in the flesh,
while John drew back in awe
as he fulfilled the ministry of the Spirit.
The ranks of Angels stood amazed
when they beheld Thee baptized in the stream.
And we who were in darkness are filled with light. //
We praise Thee, O God made manifest, as Thou dost
enlighten all.

Now and Ever . . .

Tone 4 Kontakion *(Feast)*

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises:
“Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, //
O unapproachable Light.”

Today’s Scripture Readings

Epistle Reading—Ephesians 4:7–13 & Acts 19:1–8

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended” – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.



And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them,

and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Gospel Reading—Matthew 4:12–17 & John 1:29–34

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper'na-um by the sea, in the territory of Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"The land of Zeb'ulun and the land of Naph'tali,
toward the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles –
the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."



The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Today's Commemorations

Saint John the Baptist

Because John's main role in his life was played out on the day of the Theophany (Epiphany), the Church has from earliest times dedicated the day following Theophany to his memory. An incident with the hand of the Forerunner is also linked to this feast. The Evangelist Luke desired to remove the body of John from Sebaste, where the great prophet was beheaded by Herod, to Antioch, his place of birth. He succeeded, though, in acquiring and translating only one hand, which was preserved in Antioch until the tenth century. After this it was transferred to Constantinople, where it disappeared during the time of the Turks.

Feasts of St. John are celebrated several times throughout the year, but this day, January 7, has the most Svečara. Among the Gospel personalities who surround the Savior, John the Baptist occupies a totally unique place by the manner of his entry into the world, and by the manner of his life in this world; by his role in baptizing people for repentance; by his baptizing the Messiah; and, finally, by his tragic departure from this life. He was of such moral purity that, in truth, he could be called an angel--as Holy Scripture calls him--rather than a mortal man. St. John especially differs from all other prophets in that he had that privilege of being able, with his hand, to show the world Him about Whom he prophesied.

It is said that every year on the feast of the saint, the bishop brought the hand of St. John before the people. Sometimes the hand appeared open and other times the hand appeared clenched. In the first case it signified a fruitful and bountiful year, and in the second case it meant a year of unfruitfulness and famine.

The Holy Martyr Athanasius

This martyr of Christ was a man simple and poor, but rich in faith and wise through the Spirit of God. Once, Athanasius unintentionally entered into a debate about the Faith with a certain Turk. The Turk was educated and adroit with words, but Athanasius endeavored with all his strength to emphasize and establish the truth of the Christian Faith and its superiority over Islam. After that they departed. The next day Athanasius was summoned before the judge. This Turk stood there as his accuser. When the judge called upon Athanasius to deny the Faith of Christ, as he had

supposedly done before his companion the previous day, and to embrace Islam, Athanasius cried out: "I would rather die a thousand deaths than renounce the Faith of Christ." For this, he was condemned to death and beheaded in the year 1700 A.D., in Smyrna. His body was buried in the Church of St. Parasceva in the same city.

Homily

"Thy will be done, in earth as in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Blessed be John the Baptist, for he fulfilled the Gospel before the arrival of the Gospel! Going into the wilderness, he gave himself up completely to the will of God, both body and soul. The will of God was carried out in his body on earth as well as in the heaven of his soul. Neither hunger nor wild beasts did harm to his body throughout the many years that he spent in the wilderness. His soul was harmed neither by despair in loneliness nor by pride in heavenly visions. He sought neither bread nor knowledge from man. God granted him everything that was necessary for him, because he gave himself up completely to the will of God.

He directed his footsteps neither into the wilderness nor away from the wilderness. An invisible rudder from on high steered his life. For when it was necessary for him to depart from the wilderness and go out to meet the Lord, it is said: The word of God came unto John (Luke 3:2). Like an innocent youth, John spoke simply about his communication with the powers of heaven: And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God (John 1:33-34). How tenderly and simply he speaks about heavenly things! How terrifying like a lion he is when he speaks out against the injustice of men, against Herod and Herodias! The lamb and the lion dwell in him together. Heaven is as close to him as a mother is to her child. The will of God is as accessible and clear to him as it is to the angels in heaven.

O Lord, most wise, direct the lives of us sinners in the wilderness of this life according to Thy will, as Thou didst direct the life of St. John the Baptist.

—*Prologue of Ohrid*

The Nicene Creed: the Symbol of Faith (sung together)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages: Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; and He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets.

In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Pre-Communion Prayers (said together)

I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first. I believe also that this is truly Thine own pure Body, and that this is truly Thine own precious Blood. Therefore I pray Thee: have mercy upon me and forgive my transgressions both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, of knowledge and of ignorance. And make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thy most pure Mysteries, for the remission of my sins, and unto life everlasting. Amen.

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies, neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss; but like the thief will I confess Thee: Remember me, O Lord in Thy Kingdom.

May the communion of Thy Holy Mysteries be neither to my judgment, nor to my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body. Amen.

