

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Department of  
**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

## A Truly Inspired Woman

On September 5<sup>th</sup> Church remembers Elizabeth, who was privileged to give birth to the last and greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist. She also was privileged to be inspired – visited by the Holy Spirit – in some special ways.

But the years before John's birth were certainly not a time of privilege. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah, were "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6-7). But they had no children—the greatest of misfortunes. Still worse, their hopes of having a baby were slim because "both were advanced in years."

So when the angel Gabriel told Zechariah that they would have a child, and that this child would "make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (1:17), Elizabeth was deeply grateful. Unlike her husband, who foolishly doubted the archangel's word, she thanked God by saying, "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men" (1:25).

The next extraordinary event in Elizabeth's life was the visit of her cousin Mary, who told Elizabeth that she, too, was going to have a baby. Elizabeth, at this, was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and her own baby leaped in her womb. Again, she was overwhelmed with gratitude and exclaimed, "And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (1:43).

Elizabeth's words "mother of my Lord" are very important. They are Biblical precedent for the Orthodox practice of referring to Mary as "Theotokos" or "Mother of God." This is another way in which the Spirit visited Elizabeth in a special way—she is the one privileged to give Mary this title.



September 6, 2015

14<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: 2 Cor. 1:21-2:4  
Gospel: Mt. 22:1-14
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 – NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**

6:00pm - Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Vespers & Litya for the Feast of Elevation of the Holy Cross

## Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, but we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Among them are:

Genevieve Bobenko, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

The meeting with Mary was a private event – just the two women, two cousins, rejoicing in their impending births and in the goodness of God. But Elizabeth would soon be inspired again, this time at a very public moment. That came when she gave birth, and "her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and rejoiced with her" (1:57). On the eighth day after the birth, preparations were made to circumcise the newborn child and it was assumed that he would carry on his father's name of Zechariah.

But to everyone's surprise, Elizabeth spoke up decisively and said, "Not so; he shall be called John." The people around her noted that there was nobody in the family named John. The unspoken question in their minds was, of course, where this name could come from, since it had no place in the parents' family history. The episode shows us that again Elizabeth was given the privilege of expressing God's will by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We know that other barren women, like Hannah the mother of Samuel, suffered from the same kind of "reproach among men" that Elizabeth endured. But God is full of surprises, as Elizabeth, the elderly mother of John, was delighted to discover.

## Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Alyssa Mayer**, who celebrates her birthday this Saturday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



## Announcements

◆ Our first **Trustees' Meeting** after the summer break will be on Tuesday, September 15 at 7:00pm. All trustees are urged to attend.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, **November 10 & 11, 2015** at Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ. As a special guest, His Eminence has invited His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada to the Assembly. For more information visit our Diocesan website [nynjoca.org](http://nynjoca.org).

◆ Helen Baron, our **Food Pantry** Coordinator, is reminding us that the fall season tells us that Thanksgiving will soon be right around the corner. Time to look for store specials and to start planning ahead! Of course, food pantry items are in need throughout the year and help is necessary always for those in need.

## Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.