

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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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

The Good Son of a Bad Father

The righteous Hezekiah, king of Judah was the son of the previous king, Ahaz.

Perhaps Hezekiah, who became king at the age of 25, felt compelled to make up for the actions of his notorious father, who would never listen to the prophet Isaiah and who shut down the Temple in Jerusalem, instead revering the gods of the Assyrians.

Hezekiah labored intensely to reinstate worship of Israel's God. At the beginning of his reign he ordered the Temple to be reopened, directing the priests and Levites to "carry out the filth from the holy place" (2 Chronicles 29:5). They did so, and were able to report to the king that "All the utensils which King Ahaz discarded in his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and sanctified; and behold, they are before the altar of the Lord" (29: 19). Hezekiah and the people brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and "thus the service of the house of the Lord was restored" (29:36).

To celebrate, Hezekiah sent couriers all over the kingdom with a decree that the priests and people should come to Jerusalem and observe Passover together. Scripture candidly records that in some places the couriers were laughed to scorn and mocked, and that "only a few of the men of Asher, of Manasseh, and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem" (30:11).

Nevertheless, a great assembly did come for the feast, including some people who had not properly prepared themselves, and who "ate the Passover otherwise than as prescribed" (30: 18). Hezekiah, obviously a forgiving and loving man, had prayed that God would "pardon every one who sets his heart to seek God, the Lord the God of his fathers, even though

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Michael Bzik, Andrew & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness" (30:19).

Hezekiah's efforts strengthened and helped unite the people, but they still faced external threats. When Sennacherib, the powerful king of Assyria, attacked Judah, Hezekiah's first response was not a noble one. Panicked, he offered Sennacherib huge sums of money to withdraw. In order to pay, he gathered all the silver in the Lord's house, and even "stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord" (2 Kings/4 Kingdoms 18:16).

But the Assyrian couldn't be bought off, so Hezekiah did something better – he built up and reinforced his people's walls and defenses. He also returned to reliance on God rather than money, and told everyone not to be "afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him; for there is one greater with us than with him" (2 Chronicles 32:7). He and Isaiah prayed, and God answered their prayers by destroying the Assyrian warriors.

Close to death, Hezekiah had to repent of an episode of pride before God. He was not a perfect person, but Scripture compares him to King David, another man who greatly pleased God in spite of many missteps, weaknesses, and faults.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Andrea Shaker**, who celebrates her birthday today, and to **Betty Czech**, this Saturday. May God grant both you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ Save the date: on Saturday, September 15, 2018 there will be a **Liturgical Music Workshop**, hosted by Holy Trinity Church in Rahway, NJ. This workshop will provide tools necessary for beginning singers and conductors with limited experience. The instructor is Dr. David Drillock, the Chairperson of the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations of the OCA. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** is scheduled to be convened on Tuesday, October 30 and Wednesday, October 31, 2018 at the Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation, 70 Van Zile Road, Brick, NJ 08724. The guest speaker is Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy is on Tuesday, October 30 at 9:00am. Registration is from 8:00am to 8:45am and during lunch. The Assembly will begin at 1:00pm. The schedule for Wednesday will be published when it becomes available.

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.



August 26, 2018

13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 16:13-24
Gospel: Mt. 21:33-42
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29 – BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

9:00am - Divine Liturgy