

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN 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
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Ezekiel the Watchman and Warner

On July 21 the Church remembers the prophet and priest Ezekiel, known as a visionary who had many vivid dreams.

But he was also stern and unyielding in his insistence on Israel's responsibility to God, having been given a forehead "like adamant harder than flint" by the Lord (3: 9). He would need to be adamant in the first years of his ministry because, as God told him, he would be dealing with "all the house of Israel", who were "of a hard forehead and of a stubborn heart" (3: 7).

One of Ezekiel's famous visions came as he began his ministry. He saw a kind of chariot or wagon on four wheels, full of brightness and flashing fire, drawn by four fantastic-looking creatures. It came from the north, in a great cloud and driven by a rush of wind. The chariot was topped by a throne, on which was a seated figure. Ezekiel couldn't describe any of this in clear terms; he could only say, "Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (1:28).

Ezekiel is so overwhelmed that he falls on his face, but God graciously calls him to rise so that they can speak face to face. Ezekiel needs help from the Spirit to be able to stand up, but he does so, and is told that he must go and prophesy to the "impudent and stubborn" people of Israel.

The prophet spent the years from 593 to 586 in Jerusalem. He saw shocking things going on in the Temple itself: people were worshipping the pagan sun-god and practicing other pagan rites. When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586, Ezekiel was devastated but hardly surprised. He had warned the people that God would let it happen; they had not listened.



July 20, 2014

6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah

- 8:50am – Hours
 - 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
- Epistle: Rom. 12:6-14
James 5:10-20(Prophet)
- Gospel: Mt. 9:1-8
Lk. 4:22-30(Prophet)
- Fellowship – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

- THURSDAY, JULY 24
11:00am - Baptism of Sofia Kseniuk
- SATURDAY, JULY 26
5:30pm - Great Vespers
- SUNDAY, JULY 27
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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:

Michael, Mary and Max Bakaletz, Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

By 587, Ezekiel had joined the Babylonian exiles. He felt compassion for them, and took very seriously the Lord's words: "So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth you shall give them warning from me" (33: 7). Ezekiel reminded the exiles that his job was to watch and warn, but that each person was personally responsible before God.

Ezekiel also reassured the exiles that the foreign conquest of Jerusalem did not mean that God had abandoned His people, as some of them feared. His visions continued, including the vision of a valley full of dry bones that are renewed to life by God's word. This is a prophecy of the restoration of Israel, but also a foretelling of the new life given by Jesus Christ, which is why it is part of the Orthodox Church's worship during Holy Week.

Ezekiel had a vision of Israel once again living in its land, and worshipping God in the restored Temple. He also prophesied in a way that anticipates Christ's loving words: "I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over" (34: 16).



Announcements

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Church School Conference** for NJ Deanery is scheduled for Saturday, August 2. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Youth Day** at Six Flags Great Adventure is scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2014. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Helen Baron**, who celebrates her birthday July 22, and to **Kathy Petrow** and **Mary Ellen Ahmadi**, both on July 24. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Deepest Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy to family and friends of our former parishioner, newly departed **Ann Wintonak**. Funeral Service at the Bizubquinlan Funeral Home is scheduled for Monday, July 21 at 10:30am. Memory Eternal!

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.