

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

Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

On December 31 we remember Saint Melania of Rome, who offered wonderful service to God. Among other things, she was able to succeed where the great Saint Augustine had failed, converting a staunchly pagan uncle to the Christian faith. Melania also copied manuscripts, founded monasteries for men and women, and supported both the Church and those in need by donating the immense wealth she had inherited.

But Melania endured the greatest loss in human life: the death of one's children. Both the boy and girl to whom she gave birth died very early. This loss was extremely difficult for her to accept; she said to her husband that God had taken their little ones "at an untimely hour."

For people in our own day who face the same kind of loss, the 2009 book entitled Naming the Child by Jenny Schroedel is a wonderful resource. The book's subtitle is "Hope-filled Reflections on Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Death", and that is exactly what the author provides. The book makes the central point that every child, no matter whether born dead or having only a very short life, should receive a name from his or her parents. Mrs. Schroedel writes, "Perhaps naming the baby is the most transcendent act available to us. Long after mementos from the pregnancy or birth are put away, long after the insanity and intensity that marks the first year of grief, the baby still has a name, and we can still speak it."

Giving a child a name also gives that little person a solid place in the family. When speaking to others, parents can talk about "our son Philip, who died" rather than referring to "the son we lost" or

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, Mary Fechisin, Andrew & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

"the baby who died." The name makes the child's presence real.

The author also stresses the importance of parents of a very ill or stillborn child making sure that, if possible, they hold or touch their child, rather than allowing hospital personnel to whisk the baby away as a means of sparing the parents pain. Again, touching and holding makes the baby's presence real. As the author writes, "By holding their baby, the parents claim him or her as their own. In the chaos and confusion after [the baby's] death, against the stark backdrop of a hospital room with its beeping machines and fluorescent lights, the parents can say with their bodies—this precious baby is mine." She also writes about the value of keeping objects, such as blankets and hospital tags, that have touched or enwrapped the baby's body.

The book also offers practical guidance, with suggestions for handling many situations that grieving parents face, as well as addresses of organizations and support groups, and helpful written and visual materials. It ends with the author's statement of belief: "God is in the delivery room, in the stairwell, in the tomb, and in the womb. God is the one who holds every memory of every child tightly, tenderly against the backdrop of eternity."

Schedule of Services

(continued from previous page)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26 – 2ND DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY – **SYNAXIS OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS.**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27 – 3RD DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY – **HOLY PROTOMARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

12:30pm - Great Vespers

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2018 - CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Molieben for the beginning of Civil New Year

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Elizabeth Hook**, who celebrates her birthday this Wednesday. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ **Wall Calendars for 2018** are available in the narthex. Please take one per household.

◆ **Envelopes for 2018** are available in the candle room. Please pick up your set and continue to support our parish which does rely on your support! May the Lord bless you hundredfold for your generosity!

◆ **Winter weather alert:** in case of necessity to cancel or delay any particular service at the church due to weather conditions, the information about cancellation will be posted on the parish website as well as on our Facebook page at least 1 hour before the scheduled time. If the weather is bad and you are not sure if the service will be served, please call rectory to verify.



December 24, 2017

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ
EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Heb. 11:9–10, 17–23, 32–40

Gospel: Mt. 1:1–25

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

• 4:30pm – **Nativity Vigil & Anointing** with Holy Myrrh from Basilica of Nativity of Christ in Bethlehem

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy, followed by the traditional Christmas Social & Children's Concert.