

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Orthodox Church of America

A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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July 11, 2021

*Anniversary: Rejoicing the All-
praised St. Olga Princess of Rus*

• 9:10 am - Hours

• 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Rom. 5:1-10

Gospel: Matt. 6:22-33

• **Coffee Hour** – Church Hall. Everyone is invited for a fellowship followed the service.

Schedule of Services

Saturday, July 17

• 3:30 pm – The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, followed by Great Vespers

Sunday, July 18

• 9:10 am - Hours

• 9:30 am – Divine Liturgy.

♦ We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for coffee hour after the service. Please note that reception of the Holy Eucharist is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.



WEEKLY BIBLE MESSAG

St. Olga Princess of Rus

Saint Olga (born c. 890 died July 11, 969, Kiev) was a Pskov woman of Varangian extraction who married the future Igor of Kiev, arguably in 903. The Primary Chronicle gives 879 as her date of birth, which is rather unlikely, given the fact that her only son was probably born some 65 years after that date. After Igor's death, she ruled Kievan Rus as regent (945-c. 963) for their son, Svyatoslav.

At the start of her reign, Olga spent great effort to avenge her husband's death at the hands of the Dreylians, and succeeded in slaughtering many of them and interring some in a ship burial, while still alive. She is reputed to have scalded captives to death and another, probably apocryphal, story tells of how she destroyed a town hostile to her. She asked that each household present her with a dove as a gift, then tied burning papers to the legs of each dove which she then released to fly back to their homes. Each avian incendiary set fire to the thatched roof of their respective home and the town was destroyed. More importantly in the long term, Olga changed the system of tribute gathering (poliudie) in what may be regarded as the first legal reform recorded in Eastern Europe.

She was the first Rus ruler to convert to Christianity, either in 945 or in 957. The ceremonies of her formal reception in Constantinople were minutely described by Emperor Constantine VII in his book De Ceremoniis. Following her baptism she took the Christian name Yelena, after the reigning Empress Helena Lekapena. The Slavonic chronicles add apocryphal details to the account of her baptism, such as the story how she charmed and "outwitted" Constantine and how she spurned his matrimonial proposals. In truth, at the time of her baptism, Olga was an old woman, while Constantine had a wife. Seven Latin sources document Olga's embassy to Emperor Otto I in 959. The continuation of Regino of Prüm mentions that the envoys requested the Emperor to appoint a bishop and priests for their nation.

The chronicler accuses the envoys of lies, commenting that their trick was not exposed until later. Thietmar of Merseburg says that the first archbishop of Magdeburg, before being promoted to this high rank, was sent by Emperor Otto to the country of the Rus (Rusciae) as a simple bishop but was expelled by pagans. The same data is duplicated in the annals of Quedlinburg and Hildesheim, among others.

Olga was one of the first people of Rus to be proclaimed a saint, for her efforts to spread the Christian religion in the country. Because of her proselytizing influence, the Orthodox Church calls St. Olga by the honorific Isapóstolos, "Equal to the Apostles". However, she failed to convert Svyatoslav, and it was left to her grandson and pupil Vladimir I to make Christianity the lasting state religion. During her son's prolonged military campaigns, she remained in charge of Kiev, residing in the castle of Vyshgorod together with her grandsons. She died soon after the city's siege by the Pechenegs in 968.

Parable. A Merchant and His Donkey:

One beautiful spring morning, a merchant loaded his donkey with bags of salt to go to the market in order to sell them. The merchant and his donkey were walking along together. They had not walked far when they reached a river on the road. Unfortunately, the donkey slipped and fell into the river and noticed that the bags of salt loaded on his back became lighter.

There was nothing the merchant could do, except return home where he loaded his donkey with more bags of salt. As they readied the slippery riverbank, now deliberately, the donkey fell into the river and wasted all the bags of salt on its back again.

The merchant quickly discovered the donkey's trick. He then returned home again but reloaded his donkey with bags of sponges.

The foolish, tricky donkey again set on its way. On reaching the river he again fell into the water. But instead of the load becoming lighter, it became heavier.

The merchant laughed at him and said: "You foolish donkey.... Your trick had been discovered, you should know that, those who are too clever sometimes over reach themselves."

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, Barbara Bogart, Michael Bzik, Mary Ann Dolak, Barbara Kary, Margaret Kovalycsik, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Patricia Galley.

Birthday Greeting

Happy Birthday go out this week to **Paggy Kovalycsic** – July 11; and **Vladimir Nehrebecki** – July 15. May God continue to enrich their life with the fullness of joy and happiness for many years – Mnogaya Lyeta!

Announcement

♦ Upcoming **Panikhida** service: Next Sunday, July 18, in memory of **Michael Hilko** our church former Choir Director. 47 years anniversary of his repose.

♦ **Sacrament of Holy Confession.** Anyone wishing to schedule an appointment for confession may do so by contacting Fr. Maryan at church or phone (908-930-2274). As our Holy Orthodox Church teaches, confession is an opportunity to cleanse our souls in a second baptism. We should all consider regular participation in this sacrament as a priority in our lives as followers of Jesus Christ.

