

# THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT ELIZABETH THE NEW-MARTYR

Volume XXI

Number 04

23 September / 6 October 2019

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (*Tone 7*)

Commemoration of the Conception of St John the Baptist

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES THIS WEEK

### 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (*Tone 7*)

**Conception of St John the Baptist**

*Saturday, 5 October (22 September, o.s.)*

6:00 PM Vigil Service;

Confessions

*Sunday, 6 October (23 September, o.s.)*

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

### 17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (*Tone 8*)

**Hieromartyr Gregory of Armenia**

*Saturday, 12 October (29 September, o.s.)*

6:00 PM Vigil Service;

Confessions

*Sunday, 13 October (30 September, o.s.)*

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

12:30 PM Parish Council Meeting

## SCRIPTURE READINGS Week of 6 October

Su	16th Sunday after Pentecost	
	<i>5th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: Luke §113 (24:12-35)</i>	
	2 Cor. §181 (6:1-10)	Luke §17 (5:1-11)
17TH WEEK after PENTECOST		
<i>M</i>	Eph. §219 (1:22-2:3)	Luke §16 (4:37-44)
<i>Tu</i>	Eph. §222 (2:19-3:7)	Luke §18 (5:12-16)
<i>W</i>	Eph. §223 (3:8-21)	Luke §21 (5:33-39)
<i>Th</i>	Eph. §225 (4:14-19)	Luke §23 (6:12-19)
<i>F</i>	Eph. §226 (4:17-25a)	Luke §24 (6:17-23a)
<i>Sa</i>	1 Cor. §156 (14:20-25)	Luke §19 (5:17-26)
Su	17th Sunday after Pentecost	
	<i>6th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: Luke §114 (24:36-53)</i>	
	2 Cor. §182a (6:16b-7:1)	Luke §26 (6:31-36)

## FASTING DAYS Week of 6 October

Day of Week	Date	Commemoration and Type of Fast
<i>Wednesday</i>	9 October (26 Sept, o.s.)	Apostle John the Theologian Fish, Wine, & Oil permitted
<i>Friday</i>	11 October (28 Sept, o.s.)	St Chariton of Palestine Wine & Oil permitted

## THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

**During October we will have a Special Collection** to help cover our contribution to the Diocese of Eastern America and New York. All parishes are required to give ten percent of their regular income to the Diocese. This special collection will help to minimize the impact of our parish's obligation on our General Fund. Please give generously.

**Many Thanks** to those who made the Parish Picnic such a success! Special thanks are due to the Yanovsky family who offered their yard for us to use for the picnic. Thanks to all who brought food, drink, condiments, and themselves! Thanks to those who set up the picnic, to those who manned the grills, and to those who remained to clean up! This time of fellowship and fun is very important in building up our little parish.

**Many thanks to those who donated funds** to adorn the Cross and the church with flowers on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

**The Feast of St Sergius of Radonezh** is celebrated on 8 October. St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Howell (Lakewood), New Jersey, will be having services to celebrate the memory of this important Russian Saint. Vigil will be served on the eve of the Feast at 6:30 p.m.. Divine Liturgy will be served on the morning of the Feast at 9:30. All of St Elizabeth's parishioners are invited to Lakewood to celebrate St Sergius' Day with our sister Parish.

**The Cathedral of St Alexander Nevsky** is located at 200 Alexander Avenue in Howell, New Jersey 07731. For additional information, the Cathedral's website is: <http://www.stalexandernevskycathedral.org>

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Concerning the observance of Halloween**, a pious Orthodox priest wrote to his parishioners: 'Please remember that Halloween is a pagan festival and that trick-or-treating comes from the Druid worship of the dead. Our Christian ancestors suffered martyrdom and torment rather than burn a pinch of incense to the Roman gods, yet many parents willingly let their children participate in a ceremony of pagan worship. Please come and pray in

church in honour of a great modern Christian Orthodox Saint whose eve coincides with the pagan Halloween.’

**The Feast of St John of Kronstadt’s Glorification** falls on 1 November (19 October, o.s.) in our Russian Church Abroad, the day on which the Saint was glorified (canonized) by the Synod of Bishops, which also happens to be the date of his birth in 1829 and his Nameday, the Feast of St John of Rila, his heavenly patron. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia was the first part of the Russian Orthodox Church to glorify St John of Kronstadt. This occurred in 1964, 56 years after the righteous priest’s repose in 1908, and 26 years before the Church in Russia would be free to glorify the Saint on 8 June 1990. As is usual with the Saints, we also celebrate the date of St John’s repose on 2 January (20 December, o.s.), but that day is also the Forefeast of the Nativity of the Lord and the commemoration of St Ignatius the God-bearer. The autumn feast of St John of Kronstadt gives us the opportunity to celebrate his memory without the additional commemorations necessary during his winter feast. But the Bishops of our Russian Church Abroad had an additional reason for instituting this second commemoration of St John of Kronstadt: the Vigil of the Feast falls on the evening of Halloween and provides those of us in the Anglo-Saxon world with an opportunity to celebrate this great Saint, while others around us are knowingly or unknowingly celebrating a demonic pagan feast. The Bishops felt that Orthodox Christian children should be in church keeping a holy Vigil to this modern spiritual struggler, who reposed at the beginning of the 20th century, while Halloween is being observed by the society around them.

**We will have a full schedule of services** at St Elizabeth’s for the Feast of St John of Kronstadt: on the Eve of the Feast, 31 October, the Vigil Service begins at 6 o’clock and on the morning of the Feast, 1 November, the Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30, preceded by the Hours at 9:10.

## **Hand Gestures in Orthodox Icons**

Have you ever wondered why figures depicted in religious icon paintings make certain hand gestures? Do you know what they mean? These gestures are not common for modern people, so don’t worry if you cannot understand them.

The truth is that most of the gestures we see in Orthodox icons appeared in ancient Rome and Greece long before Christianity arrived on the scene. They come from a quite complex hand-gesture system used by rhetoricians and orators. Being a matter of public knowledge, such gestures were understood by almost everyone at that time, but they remain a secret language for modern people. However, with just a little effort, you can also learn these important hand gestures depicted in Orthodox Christian icons of Jesus Christ and His saints.

### **1. Blessing hand**

One of the most commonly used hand gestures depicted in Eastern Orthodox icons is a so-called ‘blessing hand.’ As you can see in the photo above, it represents a specific arrangement of fingers that form the letters ‘IC XC,’ which stands for the first and the last letters of the Greek words IHCOYC XPICTOC, meaning Jesus Christ. Thus, the hand that blesses reproduces the Name of Jesus. However, since this gesture comes from ancient times, it is often associated with classical oratory and means that the speaker is going to say something important, which can also be applicable to all icons of Jesus Christ and His saints.

### **2. Arms crossed over the chest**

This gesture looks like the St Andrew’s cross and is similar to the one used by Eastern Orthodox Christians when going up to receive Holy Communion. It means repentance, submission, and humility. The perfect example of such a gesture is the religious icon of St Mary of Egypt, whose ascetic life was a feat of repentance.

### **3. Hand on heart**

The hand-on-heart gesture can be found in the icon of St Seraphim of Sarov, the icon of St Reverend Siberian Basilisk, and many other holy icons of saints. It means that the depicted person spent much time in heartfelt prayer to God, which puts them on a par with ancient hermits.

### **4. Open palms**

Open palms held at chest height have two meanings. The first one is a prayer to God; the second is the acceptance of grace. This gesture can be seen in the religious icon paintings depicting the Righteous Anna, the Mother of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Righteous Forefather Abraham, the Holy Great Martyr Anastasia the Roman, and other saints.

### **5. Palm of the righteous**

Those who lived holy and righteous lives are often depicted with a characteristic gesture: an open palm facing the prayer. They are open up to people, with no trace of secret evil thoughts or feelings in their hearts. For example, the ‘palm of the righteous’ can be found in the Orthodox icons of the Holy Blessed Matrona of Moscow, St Theodore Ushakov, and the Holy Princes of Russia Boris and Gleb.

This symbolism has stood the test of time and, therefore, is worth investigating. However, except for hand gestures, religious icons are also filled with many other important symbols. Some of them are hidden in objects held by Saints; others are in colours used in Eastern Orthodox iconography.

<https://russianicon.com/hand-gestures-orthodox-icons>