

If the Lord is God, Follow Him



This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://ccc.oca.org>.



Thursday of this week we remember the Holy Prophet Elijah. He appears, with no introduction, at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter of First Kings (3 Kingdoms in the Orthodox Study Bible.) We see that Elijah certainly is a prophet by the way he speaks God's word, but we also see that he is both the beneficiary and the performer of miracles.

The miracle from which Elijah benefits saves his life. It's a time of famine, and God tells him to go to the brook Cherith that flows into the Jordan, and drink water from the brook. God says, "I shall command the ravens to feed you there."

When the brook dries up, God prepares Elijah to perform a life-giving miracle for someone else, telling him to go to Zarephath, where a widow will take care of him.

Elijah finds the widow, who readily gives him a cup of water. But when he asks for bread, she tells him that she has so little that she and her son will probably soon die. Elijah prophesies that the Lord will furnish her with sufficient flour and oil, and just as he says, "the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry."

But the widow's son dies, and she bitterly confronts Elijah: "You came to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son." God answers Elijah's plea to restore the son's life. With that, the widow is able to say, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

As God's prophet, Elijah does much good, but he must also confront evil. When he meets King Ahab, Elijah reminds the king that he has forsaken the worship of the true God and followed after the false gods, the Baals, of his wife Jezebel. He has thrown the people into uncertainty, which Elijah challenges: "How long will you be undecided between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal, follow him." Then Elijah shows in spectacular fashion that God triumphs over all false deities. Victorious, he orders the execution of all 450 of Baal's prophets.

Events like this execution make some see God as brutal, even murderous. But this alien religion of Baal—powerfully patronized by the queen, Jezebel—had moved "into the very heart of Israel, contaminating and corrupting the people from one end of the Northern Kingdom to the other", writes Norman Podhoretz in his book *The Prophets*. The Old Testament shows us that God protects His people and His truth, sometimes by destroying unrepentant, dangerous and arrogant enemies like the prophets of Baal.

Elijah appears to the disciples at the Transfiguration. He is alive in Christ, as we all will be if we overcome the temptation to be "undecided between two opinions", and follow the Lord because He is God.

Troparion - Tone 4

An angel in the flesh and the cornerstone of the prophets, the second forerunner of the coming of Christ, Glorious Elijah cast grace from on high to Elijah, to dispel diseases and to cleanse lepers. Therefore, he pours forth healings on those who honor him.

St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

Scripture Readings

Romans 12:6-14

Matthew 9:1-8

Commemorations

Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils.

Hieromartyr Athenogenes, Bishop of Heracleopolis, and his ten disciples (ca. 311).
Martyrs Paul and two sisters, Chionia (Thea) and Alevtina (Valentina), at Caesarea in Palestine (308).
Martyr Antiochus, Physician, of Sebaste (4th c.).
Virgin Martyr Julia of Carthage (ca. 440 or 613).



Welcome to our Guests

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy and services. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to participate in our prayers and hymns and to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Please sign our guest card and join us for refreshments and fellowship after the services.

Feel free to ask questions before or after the services. Any member of our Council or Congregation are glad to assist you. Literature about the Orthodox faith and this parish can be found in the narthex (back of the Church).

Our Parish Council Representatives are:

- President - Susan Hayes
- Vice President - Deborah Bray
- Secretary - SubDeacon Joseph Brubaker
- Treasurer - Susan Egan
- Member at Large - James Pepitone
- Member at Large - Demetra Tolis

Information

Rev. Steven Hosking, attached
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Please continue to pray for...

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Deborah, Robert, Ann, Daria, Dori, John, Evelyn, June, Nina, Joan, John, Alex, Alan, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Glenn, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Dionysian, Elena, Jevon, Ivan and Joscean. And for... John, Jennifer, Nicholas, Isabel, Elizabeth, John, Jordan, Michael, Lee, Eva, Neil, Gina, Joey, Michael, Madelyn, Sofie, Katrina, Olena, and Valeriy.

This week we celebrate:

Marie Christine who celebrates her Name's Day (Mary Magdalen)

This week's services and events

Monday, July 17, 2017

10a - Funeral for Ann (Susan Egan's mother)
St Nicholas Orthodox Church, Norwich

Tuesday, July 18, 2017

8:30a - Akathist to
St Elizabeth the New Martyr
followed by Study - *The Sacrament*

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

4:30p - Open Doors and
Blessing of cars, trucks and motorcycles
6:30p - Akathist to the Prophet Elijah

Thursday, July 20, 2017

8:30a - Daily Matins
7:00p - Study of *The Sacraments*

Saturday, July 22, 2017

5:30p - Great Vespers

Sunday, July 23, 2017

9:30a - Divine Liturgy
Buildings and Grounds Ministry
Red House *ad hoc* committee
4:30p - Three Saints, Ansonia
Recognition of the service of Archpriest
Nicholas Timko and the presentation of his Mitre.

Announcements

This Wednesday, July 19th, I will be blessing vehicles from 4:30 to 6:30, in honor of the Feast of the Prophet Elijah. Why not get the best "insurance" there could be for your car?

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils.

In the Ninth Article of the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." By virtue of the catholic nature of the Church, an Ecumenical Council is the Church's supreme authority, and possesses the competence to resolve major questions of church life. An Ecumenical Council is comprised of archpastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the local Churches, from every land of the "oikumene" (i.e. from all the whole inhabited world).

The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils:

The *First Ecumenical Council* (Nicea I) (May 29, and also on seventh Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicea in Bithynia under Saint Constantine the Great, Equal of the Apostles.

The *Second Ecumenical Council* (Constantinople I) (May 22) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonias, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The *Third Ecumenical Council* (Ephesus) (September 9) was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The *Fourth Ecumenical Council* (Chalcedon) (July 16) was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The *Fifth Ecumenical Council* (Constantinople II) (July 25) "Concerning the Three Chapters," was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The *Sixth Ecumenical Council* (Constantinople III) (January 23) met during the years 680-681, to fight the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The fact that the *Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Nicea II) is not commemorated today testifies to the antiquity of today's celebration. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene.

The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as "lights upon the earth," guiding us to the true Faith. "Adorned with the robe of truth," the doctrine of the Fathers, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, has established one faith for the Church. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible.

The Orthodox Church's conciliar definitions of dogma have the highest authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15: 28).