



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
 a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov, Priest-in-Charge, 323-851-7989, nkhalimonov@yahoo.com
 Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, Dec 2, 9
Great Vespers: 5pm

**Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra
 December 6**

Sunday, Dec 3, 10
Divine Liturgy: 10am
**Coffee and fellowship
 will follow the service**

*The above services are
 at St. Olympia Church
 34 North Main Street
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
 St. Olympia Orthodox
 Church PO Box 122
 Canton, NY 13617*



**Venerable John of Damascus
 December 4**

*You were shown forth in Myra as an officiant of the sacred rites, for you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ,
 O Venerable Nicholas, by laying down your life for your people, and saving the innocent from death.
 Therefore, you were sanctified as a great initiate of God's grace.*

Kontakion

*Let us sing praises to John, worthy of great honor, the composer of hymns, the star and teacher of the
 Church, the defender of her doctrines: through the might of the Lord's Cross he overcame heretical
 error and as a fervent intercessor before God he entreats that forgiveness of sins may be granted to
 all.*

Kontakion

**The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God
December 9**

*Today the bonds of barrenness are broken; God has heard Joachim and Anna. He has clearly promised them that beyond hope, they would bear a divine child, by whom the uncircumscribable One was born as a mortal Man, Who commanded the angel to cry to her:
“Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you!”*

Today the world keeps festival at Anna’s conceiving, wrought by God; for she bore her who inexpressibly conceived the Word of God.



**Prophetess Hannah, the mother of the Prophet Samuel
December 9**

The Holy Prophetess Hannah dwelt in marriage with Elkanah, but she was childless. Elkanah took to himself another wife, Phennena, who bore him children. Hannah grieved strongly over her misfortune, and every day she prayed for an end to her barrenness, and vowed to dedicate her child to God.

Once, as she prayed fervently in the Temple, the priest Heli thought that she was drunk, and he began to reproach her. But the saint poured out her grief, and after she received a blessing, she returned home. After this Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel (which means “Asked from God”).

When the child reached the age of boyhood, the mother herself presented him to the priest Heli, and Samuel remained with him to serve before the Tabernacle (1 Kings/1 Samuel 2: 1-21).

Enlightened by the Spirit, your pure heart became the dwelling place of most splendid prophecy; for you saw things far off as if they were near. Therefore, we honor you, blessed and glorious Prophetess Hannah.

Kontakion

Venerable John of Damascus

December 4

Saint John of Damascus was born about the year 680 at Damascus, Syria into a Christian family. His father, Sergius Mansur, was a treasurer at the court of the Caliph. John had also a foster brother, the orphaned child Cosmas (October 14), whom Sergius had taken into his own home. When the children were growing up, Sergius saw that they received a good education...After the death of his father, John occupied ministerial posts at court and became the city prefect.

In Constantinople at that time, the heresy of Iconoclasm had arisen and quickly spread, supported by the emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717-741). Rising up in defense of the Orthodox veneration of icons [Iconodoulia], Saint John wrote three treatises entitled, "Against Those who Revile the Holy Icons." The wise and God-inspired writings of Saint John enraged the emperor. But since the author was not a Byzantine subject, the emperor was unable to lock him up in prison, or to execute him. The emperor then resorted to slander. A forged letter to the emperor was produced, supposedly from John, in which the Damascus official was supposed to have offered his help to Leo in conquering the Syrian capital.

This letter ... [was] sent to the Saracen Caliph by Leo the Isaurian. The Caliph immediately ordered that Saint John be removed from his post, that his right hand be cut off, and that he be led through the city in chains. That same evening, they returned the severed hand to Saint John. The saint pressed it to his wrist and prayed to the Most Holy Theotokos to heal him so that he could defend the Orthodox Faith and write once again in praise of the Most Pure Virgin and Her Son. After a time, he fell asleep before the icon of the Mother of God. He heard Her voice telling him that he had been healed, and commanding him to toil unceasingly with his restored hand. Upon awakening, he found that his hand had been attached to his arm once more. Only a small red mark around his wrist remained as a sign of the miracle.

Later, in thanksgiving for being healed, Saint John had a silver model of his hand attached to the icon, which became known as "Of the Three Hands." Some unlearned painters have given the Mother of God three hands instead of depicting the silver model of Saint John's hand. The Icon "Of the Three Hands" is commemorated on June 28 and July 12.

When he learned of the miracle, which demonstrated John's innocence, the Caliph asked his forgiveness and wanted to restore him to his former office, but the saint refused. He gave away his riches to the poor, and went to Jerusalem with his stepbrother and fellow-student, Cosmas. There he entered the monastery of Saint Savva the Sanctified as a simple novice. It was not easy for him to find a spiritual guide, because all the monks were daunted by his great learning and by his former rank. Only one very experienced Elder, who had the skill to foster the spirit of obedience and humility in a student, would consent to do this. The Elder forbade John to do anything at all according to his own will. He also instructed him to offer to God all his labors and supplications as a perfect sacrifice, and to shed tears which would wash away the sins of his former life.

Once, he sent the novice to Damascus to sell baskets made at the monastery, and commanded him to sell them at a certain inflated price, far above their actual value. He undertook the long journey under the searing sun, dressed in rags. No one in the city recognized the former official of Damascus, for his appearance had been changed by prolonged fasting and ascetic labors. However, Saint John was recognized by his former house steward, who bought all the baskets at the asking price, showing compassion on him for his apparent poverty.

One of the monks happened to die, and his brother begged Saint John to compose something consoling for the burial service. Saint John refused for a long time, but out of pity he yielded to the petition of the grief-stricken monk, and wrote his renowned funeral troparia ("What earthly delight," "All human vanity," and others). For this disobedience the Elder banished him from his cell. John fell at his feet and asked to be forgiven, but the Elder remained unyielding. All the monks began to plead for him to allow John to return, but he refused. Then one of the monks asked the Elder to impose a penance on John, and to forgive him if he fulfilled it. The Elder said, "If John wishes to be forgiven, let him wash out all the chamber pots in the lavra, and clean the monastery latrines with his bare hands."

John rejoiced and eagerly ran to accomplish his shameful task. After a certain while, the Elder was commanded in a vision by the All-Pure and Most Holy Theotokos to allow Saint John to write again. When the Patriarch of Jerusalem heard of Saint John, he ordained him priest and made him a preacher at his cathedral. But Saint John soon returned to the Lavra of Saint Savva, where he spent the rest of his life writing spiritual books and church hymns. He left the monastery only to denounce the iconoclasts at the Constantinople Council of 754. They subjected him to imprisonment and torture, but he endured everything, and through the mercy of God he remained alive. He died in about the year 780, more than 100 years old.

Saint John of Damascus was a theologian and a zealous defender of Orthodoxy. His most important book is the *Fount of Knowledge*. The third section of this work, "On the Orthodox Faith," is a summary of Orthodox doctrine and a refutation of heresy. Since he was known as a hymnographer, we pray to Saint John for help in the study of church singing.

Greatmartyr Barbara

December 4

By devoutly following Him Who is praised in Trinity, O revered Passion-Bearer, you forsook the shrines of the idols, and contested in the midst of the arena, O Barbara, not cowering before the tyrants' threats, you cried out in a loud voice: "I worship the Trinity in one Godhead."

Kontakion



PARISH WISH LIST

A wish list to help our parish grow!

SPECIAL, one-time needs or items

A Changing Table for our newly remodeled, accessible restroom

RECURRING needs:

Paper Plates (small and large), **Paper Bowls**, **Hot Cups**

Napkins

Plastic Utensils, especially **Forks**

Paper Towels

Toilet Paper

Holy Mother Olympia, pray to God for us!

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

Diocesan Council Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 11 AM

Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville, NY

UPCOMING NATIVITY SERVICES

Saturday, December 23

5 PM

Vespers

Sunday, December 24

10 AM

Divine Liturgy

Monday, December 25

10 AM

Divine Liturgy of the Nativity

WEEKDAY VESPERS 5 PM AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com

or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.



Kontakion of the Nativity of Christ

*Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!*

The wise men journey with a star!

Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!