

**24 JUNE (Ascensiontide)
+ Birthday of John the Baptist**

VESPERS

Lord I have cried

Tone 4

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

O Lord, listen to me.

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

Note the voice of my plea when I cry to you.

O Lord, listen to me.

² Let my prayer be directed before you like incense,
the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

O Lord, listen to me.

S8: O Lord, I have cried to you from the depths;

O Lord listen to my voice.

S7: Let your ears note the voice of my plea.

John is born and he ends Zachariah's silence. The father cannot keep silent when his son, the voice of the Lord, is born. When at first, he did not believe, his tongue was silenced, but now John has been born to free his father. He is the voice of the Word, the Forerunner of Light, who always intercedes for our souls. *X2*

S6: O Lord, if you mark offences, who will stand?

But there is forgiveness with you.

Today the voice of the Word is born and releases the voice of Zachariah. He reveals the harvest of the Church and frees the bonds of infertility. The candlestick of the Light is approaching. The ray of the sun proclaims his coming for the edification of all and the salvation of our souls.

S5: O Lord, I have waited for you for your name's sake;

my soul has waited for your word,

my soul has hoped in the Lord.

The messenger of God's Word comes from the womb. He is the greatest among those born of women and the highest among the prophets. Wonderful events precede the divine mystery. *There was* a fruitfulness beyond age, followed by a conception without seed. You have worked miracles for our salvation. Glory to you!

S4: Let Israel hope in the Lord

from morning watch until night,

from morning watch.

Today the great Forerunner comes from the infertile womb of Elizabeth. He is the great prophet of prophets; none is greater than he. *He is* the radiant candlestick of the Light; the voice of the Word and the friend of the Bridegroom. He prepares the Lord's chosen people by purifying them with water before the coming of the Spirit. *He is* the flower of the desert, the preacher of repentance, the purification for offences. He announced the resurrection even to those in Hades and always prays for our souls.

S3: For there is mercy with the Lord

and abundant redemption with *him*.

He will redeem Israel from all his offences.

Today the prophet and Forerunner appears from the womb. *He is* John the baptiser of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he saw the Queen come to her servant, carrying in her womb the timeless God, he leapt in his mother's womb and sang for joy.

S2: Every nation, praise the Lord;

every people, acclaim him!

Most glorious wonder! Zachariah asked the angel of the Word, "How can Elizabeth conceive and bear a son? I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years." For his unbelief, he was condemned to silence. Yet today he sees the birth and resumes his speech. He enters into joy, and cries out, "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for

he has visited and redeemed his people; he has granted the world great mercy."

S1: For his mercy is strengthened over us
and the truth of the Lord remains for ever.

Most praised John, universal Apostle, you are the good news of Gabriel, the fruit of infertility, the holy and just flower of the desert and the dear friend of the Bridegroom, Christ. Plead with him to save our souls.

Glory: Tone 6

Today the Forerunner heralds the coming of the Word of God; today Zachariah's tongue is freed from silence, for the father cannot remain silent at the birth of the Forerunner who will boldly proclaim the world's rescue.

Both now:

Elizabeth conceived the Forerunner of grace, while the Virgin conceived the King of glory. Both mothers greeted each other with a kiss. The infant leapt in the womb and praised his Master. His mother was amazed and cried, "Why is this granted me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? He will save the forsaken people, since he possesses great mercy."

Entrance

Phos Ilarón

P/D: Wisdom! Stand upright!

O Jesus Christ, joyful light of the holy glory
of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father,
when we come to the setting of the sun
and see the light of evening,
we praise God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For it is right at all times to worship you

with voices of praise,

O Son of God *and* Giver of life.

Therefore the world glorifies you.

Prokeimenon

Of the Day

Prophecy 1

From the Book of Genesis (17:15-17, 19, 18:11-14, 21:1-8) NEW God said to Abraham: Sarai your wife - her name will not be called Sarai, *but* Sarah will be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, give you a son from her, and I will bless him and he will become nations, and kings of nations will come from him. ¹⁷ And Abraham fell on his face, and laughed; he spoke in his heart, saying: Can there be a child to one who is a hundred years old, and can Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth? ¹⁹ But God said to Abraham: Indeed, see, Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you must call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to him and to his seed after him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in days, and the custom of women had ceased with Sarah. ¹² So Sarah laughed in herself, saying: The thing has not as yet happened to me, even until now, and my lord is old. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abraham: Why is it that Sarah has laughed in herself, saying: Can I then indeed give birth, for I have grown old. ¹⁴ Can anything be impossible with the Lord? At this time I will return to you in season, and Sarah will have a son. ¹ So the Lord visited Sarah, as he said, and the Lord accomplished for Sarah, as he had spoken. ² So she conceived and bore to Abraham a son in old age, at the set time according as the Lord had spoken to him. ³ And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. ⁴ Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said: The Lord has made laughter for me, for whoever hears will rejoice with me. ⁷ And she said: Who can say to Abraham that Sarah suckles a child,

for I have given birth to a child in my old age.⁸ The child grew and was weaned, so Abraham made a great feast the day that his son Isaac had been weaned.

Prophecy 2

From the Book of Judges (13:2-8, 13-14, 17-18, 21)

In those days there was a man from the tribe of Dan, whose name was Manoah; his wife was infertile and did not bear children.³ An angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her: See, you are infertile and have not given birth, but you will conceive a son.⁴ And now be careful; drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean,⁵ for see, you are with child and will give birth to a son. No razor must come near his head, for the child will be a Nazarite to God from the womb.⁶ Then the woman went in and spoke to her husband, saying: A man of God came to me and his appearance *was like* an angel of God, very awesome.⁷ He said: See, you are with child and will give birth to a son. Now be careful; drink no wine or strong drink, and eat no unclean thing, for the child will be holy to God from the womb until the day of his death.⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the Lord and said: I pray you, O Lord my lord, *about* the man of God whom you sent; let him now come to us once more and teach us what we shall do to the child about to be born.¹³ And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah: About everything which I spoke to the woman, she must be warned.¹⁴ She must eat nothing that comes from the vine yielding wine, let her not drink wine or strong liquor.¹⁷ And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord: What *is* your name, so that *when* your word comes to pass, we may glorify you?¹⁸ Then the angel of the Lord said to him: Why do you ask this about my name, for it is wonderful?²¹ The angel appeared no more to Manoah and his wife.

Prophecy 3

3: From the Prophet Isaiah (40 ff Composite)

Thus says the Lord: Comfort, comfort my people, says God.² Speak, O priests, to the heart of Jerusalem. Comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished and her sin is put away, for she has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins.³ A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God.⁴ Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be brought low. All the crooked *ways* will become straight, and the rough *places* plains, and all flesh will see the salvation of God.⁹ Go up to a high mountain, O you bringing glad news to Zion. Raise your voice with strength, O you bringing glad news to Jerusalem. Raise it, do not fear. I the Lord God, I the God of Israel will hear, and will not forsake them;¹⁸ but I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of plains: I will make the desert into pools of water, and a thirsty land into watercourses.⁸ Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds shower justice. Let the earth bring forth, bloom with mercy, and also bring forth justice. Cry aloud with a voice of joy, proclaim it to the end of the earth, and let this be made known. Say: The Lord has delivered his servant Jacob.²¹ And if they thirst, he in the desert, he will bring water to them from the rock. Rejoice, O infertile woman, who does not give birth; break out and cry, O one who has not been in labour. For the children of the desolate, are more than those from the one with a husband.

Ekteni

Prayer

O Lord, allow us this night to be guarded from sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers! Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. O Lord, let your mercy be on us, for we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, O Holy *One*; enlighten me with your statutes. O Lord, your mercy lasts for ever; do not overlook the work of your hands. To you belongs worship, to you belongs praise, to you belongs glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

Plirotiká

Prayer

P: Peace be with you all. R: And with your spirit
D: Bow down your heads to the Lord. R: To you, O Lord.

P: blessed and glorified is the power of your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

Liti

Tone 5

Today Elizabeth joyfully gives birth to the last of the prophets and the first of the apostles. *He is* the earthly angel and the heavenly man, the voice of the Word, the soldier and forerunner of Christ. He rejoiced in the presence of the Promised *Lord* of Israel and announced the Son of Justice before his own birth. The aged Zachariah is filled with amazement when he sets aside the yoke of silence. As the father of the voice he openly prophesies, "My child, you will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. O prophet, Baptist, apostle, messenger, soldier, forerunner, herald of repentance, you serve as a guide to the Light *and* the voice of the Word, therefore continually plead before him for those of us who faithfully celebrate your memory.

Apósticha

Tone 2

Let us praise John with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. He is the prophet of prophets, the flower of infertility, the citizen of the desert and the greatest among those born of women. O Baptist and Forerunner of the Saviour, since you have boldness before Christ in your birth, plead with him to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

S1: Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel. Lk 2
The voice of the Word of grace has come, the preacher of the Light of light; he is born from the infertile womb of Elizabeth. O people, rejoice; he comes to prepare the way of salvation for us. He leapt in the womb and worshipped his Master, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and grants us great mercy.

S2: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. Today John blossoms from his mother's infertile womb and becomes the last of the prophets. He boldly announces the coming of the Lord, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Glory: Tone 8

Today the voice of Isaiah the prophet is fulfilled in the birth of John, the greatest of prophets. He said, "See, I will send my angel before your face to prepare your way." Now the warrior of the heavenly King has come; he will truly prepare the way for our God. He is a man by nature, but an angel in manner of life. He embraced purity and chastity for ever; now they are his by nature. O faithful people, let us greet him and cry, "Pray for us, that our souls may be saved."

Both now:

Elizabeth greeted the Virgin Mary, "Why is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? You bear the King, and I, his soldier. You bear the Lawgiver, and I, the herald. You bear the Word, and I, the voice, which preaches the Kingdom of Heaven.

Song of Simeon

B/P: O Master, now let your servant depart in peace
according to your word,
² for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before all peoples,
³ a light of revelation for *the* nations
and *the* glory of your people Israel.

Triságion Prayers**Apolytikia**

Tone 4

O prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, although we cannot praise you worthily, we honour you in love on your birthday. For by it you ended your father's silence and your mother's infertility; you proclaimed to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

Tone 4

O Christ *our* God, you have ascended in glory and granted joy to your disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit. They were assured through the blessing that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Dismissal**ORTHROS****God is the Lord Ps 117**

R: God is the Lord and has appeared to us.

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. *Ps 117*

S1: Thank the Lord, for he is good,
for his mercy lasts for ever.

S2: All the nations surrounded me,
but I opposed them in the Lord's name.

S3: This *is* the Lord's doing
and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Apolytikia

Tone 4

O prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, although we cannot praise you worthily, we honour you in love on your birthday. For by it you ended your father's silence and your mother's infertility; you proclaimed to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

Tone 4

O Christ *our* God, you have ascended in glory and granted joy to your disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit. They were assured through the blessing that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Kathisma 1

Tone 4

Today the bud of Zachariah has bloomed for us and brings joy to the minds and spirits of the faithful. He is the adornment of the desert and support of the prophets. Therefore he has been revealed as Christ's Forerunner and witness of his coming. Let us then cry out to the Baptist in unity as we sing songs of the Spirit. "O prophet and herald of the truth, intercede that we may be saved."

Glory: Both now:
Of the Pentecostarion

Kathisma 2

Tone 8

O far-famed John, first among prophets, you were most gloriously born as the true herald of the coming of Christ, far-famed John. As the voice of the Word you cried, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." You prepared the way for the Lord and were revealed to the ends of the earth as the Forerunner of grace, the

Baptist and Apostle. Plead with Christ our God to grant forgiveness of sins to those of us who lovingly celebrate your holy memory.

Glory: Both now:
Of the Pentecostarion

*Polyeleos***Kathisma 3**

Tone 8

Rejoice, O father! Be joyful, O mother! Today you have given birth to the Forerunner, who was chosen and named by God in accordance with the promise to the prophet. The infertile mother nourishes the Baptist, her new-born child. Zechariah rejoices and says to the infant, "O lampstand of the Light, my tongue has been freed by your coming on earth. Truly this is an amazing miracle.

Glory: Both now:
Of the Pentecostarion

Small Litany

P: For blessed is your name, and glorified is your kingdom, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

Anaváthmi Ps 128 Tone 4

1: Many passions have fought against me from my youth,
but help me and save me, O my Saviour. *X2*

2: Those who hate Zion will be shamed by the Lord;
they will be withered like grass by the fire. *X2*

Glory:

3: Every soul lives through the Holy Spirit, is exalted in purity and illuminated by the Triune Unity in a sacred mystery.

Both now:

4: The streams of grace pour out through the Holy Spirit;
they water all creation and produce life.

Prokeímenon Lk 1 Tone 4

R: O child, you will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

S: Blessed is the Lord God of Israel.

Gospel Dialogue

P/D: Let us pray to the Lord. *Lord have mercy*

P: For you, O God, are holy *and* rest in the Holy Place. We send up glory to you, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*.

R: Let everything with breath praise the Lord. *X3*

Praise God in his saints;

praise him in the firmament of his power. *Ps 50*

P/D: And that we may be counted worthy to listen to the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord our God. *Lord have mercy X3*

P/D: Wisdom. Stand up. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

P: Peace be with you all. *And with your spirit*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

P/D: Let us attend

R: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke (1:24-25, 57-68, 76, 80)
In those days Zechariah's wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, ²⁵ "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men." ⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechari'ah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. ⁶³ And

he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. ⁶⁴ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; ⁶⁶ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. ⁶⁷ And his father Zechari'ah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people! ⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. ⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

R: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Psalm 50

O God, have mercy on me in your abundant mercy
and wipe out my offence through your great compassion.
⁴ Wash me thoroughly from my lawless act
and cleanse me from my sin.
⁵ For I know my lawlessness
and my sin is always before me.
⁶ I have sinned against you alone
and done this evil before you
^{6b} so that you might be justified in your words
and overcome when you are judged.
⁷ For see, I was conceived in lawlessness
and my mother gave birth to me in sin.
⁸ For see, you have loved truth
and revealed to me the hidden and secret *things* of your wisdom.
⁹ You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be clean;
you will wash me and I will become whiter than snow.
¹⁰ You will make me hear about joy and gladness;
the humbled bones will rejoice.
¹¹ Turn your face from my sins
and wipe out all my lawlessness.
¹² O God, create a pure heart within me
and renew an upright spirit within me.
¹³ Do not banish me from your presence
or remove your Holy Spirit from me.
¹⁴ Restore the joy of your salvation to me
and make me firm with your directing Spirit.
¹⁵ I will teach the lawless your ways
and the ungodly will return to you.
¹⁶ O God, set me free from the guilt of blood;
O God of my salvation,
my tongue will rejoice in your justice.
¹⁷ O Lord, you will open my lips
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
¹⁸ For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it;
you will not be pleased with burnt offerings.
¹⁹ Sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;
God will not despise a broken and humbled heart.
²⁰ O Lord, be good to Zion in your pleasure
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.
²¹ Then you will be pleased with a sacrifice of justice,
with an offering and burnt sacrifices;
then they will offer calves on your altar.

Glory: Tone 6

O merciful *Lord*, blot out the abundance of our offences through the prayers of your Forerunner.

Both now:

O merciful *Lord*, blot out the abundance of our offences through the prayers of the Theotokos.

Have mercy: Tone 2

The *prophet* who was sanctified from his mother's womb and received the fullness of prophecy, is born today from an infertile womb. He plainly announces the coming of the Lord while he says, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!"

Intercession

P/D: O God, save your people and bless your inheritance. Visit your world with mercy and compassion; exalt the horn of Orthodox Christians and send down on them your rich mercy, through the prayers of our all-pure Lady, Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, by the power of the honourable and life-giving cross, through the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven, through the prayers of the honourable, glorious, prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, of the holy, glorious, all-praised apostles, of the holy, all-praised and victorious martyrs, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, of the holy and just forebears of God, Ioachim and Anna, of the holy prophet and forerunner John, and of all the saints. We ask you, only merciful Lord, "Listen to us sinners as we pray to you, and have mercy on us."

Lord have mercy. X12

Through the mercy, compassion and love for the human race of your uniquely-fathered Son, with whom you are blessed, together with the all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

Kontákion

Tone 3

The woman who had been infertile has become fruitful, and today gives birth to the Forerunner of Christ. He is the greatest and last of the prophets, for when he stood in the waters of the Jordan, he placed his hands on Christ whom all the prophets had announced. By doing this he became a prophet himself, a preacher and Forerunner of the Word of God.

Íkos

Let us now praise the Forerunner of the Lord! Elizabeth has produced him today from an unfruitful womb for the priest, yet not without seed. Only Christ passed through an impassable dwelling without seed. An unfertile woman gave birth to John, but he was not born without the help of man. A pure Virgin, whom the Father and the Spirit of God overshadowed, bore Jesus. The one who came from the unfertile woman was revealed as a prophet of the *Lord* who was born from a virgin without seed. *He was* a preacher and forerunner of the Word of God.

Synaxáριον

Today we remember the birthday of the honourable glorious prophet and forerunner, John the Baptist. He was born to be the Forerunner of the Messiah. (Luke 1:76) He was raised as a Nazarite. (They did not drink wine.) O Zachariah, rejoice! O wife, be glad, for every mother of a man can be envious! You have only one son rather than many, yet how great is this Forerunner born on the Twenty Fourth!

Together with him we also remember:

Abbot Anthony of Dymysk (Novgorod) C13

O God, have mercy on us through their holy prayers. Amen.

Katavasías

1: *The man* who had been slow in speech proclaimed the Law written by God when he was covered with divine darkness. He shook the dust away from the eyes of the wise as they saw the Existing *Lord*. After they had attained the knowledge of the Spirit, they praised him with divine songs.

3: Hannah, the prophetess of old, was drawn with a contrite spirit to the mighty God of wisdom; she undid the bonds of an infertile

womb and the rebukes of her rival, for she gave birth to a child by her prayer alone.

4: O King of kings, unique Word coming from the only Father without beginning, O Lord, as Benefactor you have sent the Holy Spirit who is equal to you in might, to the disciples who glorify your power.

5: O renowned children of the Church, receive the fiery dew of the Spirit which brings perfect purification from sin, for now the Law has come from Sion. The grace of the Spirit is like tongues of fire.

6: O Master Christ, you are our purification. You have appeared to us from the Virgin and come like the prophet Jonah from the belly of the whale. You rescue all the fallen sons of Adam.

7: Instruments once resounded in harmony in honour of the lifeless golden idol, but the life-bearing grace of the Advocate moves believers to cry, "Blessed are you, O Trinity in Unity! You are without beginning and equal in power!"

8: Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord. The three-fold radiance of the Divinity moistened the flames with dew and loosened the bonds. Therefore the youths sang to the Creator of all, "Blessed is our only Benefactor and Saviour."

Ode 9

My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. **R**

R: *You are* more honourable than the Cherubim
and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.
You gave birth to God the Word without defilement;
O true Theotokos, we glorify you.

² For he has regarded his servant's humility;
see, from now all generations will call me blessed. **R**

³ For the Almighty has accomplished great *things* for me
and his name is holy.

His mercy is from generation to generation
on those who fear him. **R**

⁴ He has accomplished strength with his arm
and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. **R**

⁵ He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones
and exalted the humble.

He has satisfied the hungry with good *things*
and dismissed the rich with nothing. **R**

⁶ He has helped his servant Israel
in remembering his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed for ever. **R**

9: Hail, O Queen! You are the glory of mothers and virgins. No mouth, however sweet or fluent, is eloquent enough to praise you worthily. Every mind is overawed by your childbearing. Therefore we glorify you in unison.

Small Litany

P: For all the powers of heaven praise you, and to you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Exaposteilária

Tone 3

Today the joyful birth of the Forerunner loosens the tongue of his father and the infertility of his mother. He proclaims the coming joy and gladness. Therefore all creation joins in keeping this feast.

Of the Pentecostarion

Praises

Tone 8

Let everything with breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.
To you, O God, is due a song.

Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his powers.
To you, O God, is due a song.

S4: Praise him with cymbal and dance;
praise him with strings and flute.
Most glorious wonder! John the Forerunner of God the Word hurries to come from an aged womb. He allows the bound tongue to speak clearly and sweetly by his birth. Glory to your ineffable dispensation, by which you save our souls, O Christ, for you alone are compassionate!

S3: Praise him with tuneful cymbals;
praise him with joyful cymbals.
Let everything with breath praise the Lord.
Most glorious wonder! Among those born of women, the greatest of prophets loosens the reproach of a mother's infertility. He comes in the strength and spirit of Ilias to prepare the way of the Lord. Glory to your ineffable dispensation, by which you save our souls, O Christ, for you alone are compassionate!

S2: Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel. Lk 2
Most glorious wonder! The one who announced the birth of Christ to the human race, reveals every heavenly matter by his voice. By being born he destroys infertility with divine strength and releases the voice of Zachariah. O Master, your marvellous works are great! Through them, save those who honour your great Forerunner.

S1: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. Most glorious wonder! The prophet and Forerunner is revealed from above. He is the greatest among those born of women, the highest of prophets, and the Forerunner of the coming of Christ. He leapt in his mother's womb. O Lover of the human race, your gifts are great! O Christ, save our souls through them, for you are all-powerful.

Glory: Tone 6

Today the Forerunner John, the star of stars, and the cherished *man* of God, is born on earth from an infertile womb. He reveals the faith which dawns from the heights and prepares a true Passover for the faithful.

Both now:

O Theotokos, you are the true vine who bloomed for us with the Fruit of life. O Lady, we pray to you, "Intercede together with the apostles and all the saints that he will have mercy on our souls."

Great Doxology

Glory to you who have shown us the light!
glory to God in the highest!
Peace on earth and goodwill to men!

² We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory,

³ O Lord King, heavenly God, almighty Father,
O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
and you, O Holy Spirit!

⁴ O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us,

for you take away the sin of the world.

⁵ Receive our prayer,
for you sit on the right of the Father,

and have mercy on us.
⁶ For only you are holy, only you are Lord,
 O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.
⁷ I will bless you every day
 and always praise your name for ever and ever. Ps 144
⁸ O Lord, allow us this day
 to be guarded from sin.
⁹ Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers!
 Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. Daniel 3
¹⁰ O Lord, let your mercy *be* on us,
 for we have hoped in you. Ps 32.
¹⁶ Blessed are you, O Lord!
 Teach me your statutes. X3 Ps 118
¹² O Lord, you have been our refuge
 from generation to generation. Ps 89
 I said, "O Lord, have mercy on me;
 heal my soul, for I have sinned against you." Ps 40
¹⁴ O Lord, I have fled to you;
 teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Ps 142
¹⁵ For with you is the source of life
 and in your light we will see light. Ps 35
¹⁶ Stretch out your mercy
 to those who know you. Ps 35

Triságion

Apolytikion

Tone 4

O prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, although we cannot praise you worthily, we honour you in love on your birthday. For by it you ended your father's silence and your mother's infertility; you proclaimed to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

LITURGY

Antiphon 1 Ps 46 Tone 2

S1: All you nations, clap your hands;
 shout to God with *the* sound of rejoicing.

R: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Saviour, save us.

S2: For the Most High Lord is terrible
and a great King over all the earth.
 S3: He has subdued *the* peoples under us
 and *the* nations under our feet.
 S4: Glory: Both now:

Antiphon 2 Ps 47 Own Tone

S1: Great is the Lord and highly praised
 in the city of our God
and on his holy mountain.

R: Save us, O Son of God.
 You ascended in glory from us to the heavens.
 We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

S2: God is known in her great houses
 when he comes to help her.
 S3: For see, the kings of the earth have been assembled;
 they came together.
 S5: Glory: Both now:
Monogenes

Antiphon 3 Ps 48 Tone 4

S1: All you nations, listen to these words;
 all who live in the world, be attentive,

R: O Christ *our* God, you have ascended in glory and granted joy to your disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit. They were

assured through the blessing that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

S2: My mouth will speak about wisdom;
 the meditation of my heart will be about understanding.
 S3: I will incline my ear to a parable
and unfold my enigma with the lute.
 S5: Glory: Both now:

Entrance Ps 46

God has gone up with a shout,
 the Lord with the sound of *the* trumpet.
 Save us, O Son of God.
 You ascended to heaven in glory from us.
 We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

Apolytikia

Tone 4

O Christ *our* God, you have ascended in glory and granted joy to your disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit. They were assured through the blessing that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Tone 4

O prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, although we cannot praise you worthily, we honour you in love on your birthday. For by it you ended your father's silence and your mother's infertility; you proclaimed to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

Of the Church

Kontákion

Tone 8

O Christ our God, when you had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake and united things on earth with things in heaven, you ascended in glory. You are not separated from any place, are constant without being removed and cry to your loved ones, "I myself am with you and no one will be against you."

Triságion

Prokeímenon Ps 63 Tone 7

R: The just will rejoice in the Lord.
 S: O God, listen to my voice.

Apóstolos

From the Letter of Paul to Romans (13:11-14:4)
 Brothers, you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then throw out the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and dissipation, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision to gratify the flesh its desires. ¹ As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. ² One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats; for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

Alleluia Lk 1 Tone 1

S1: Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel.
 S2: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High.

Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke (1:1-25, 57-68, 80)

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, ² just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed. ⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. ⁸ Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole crowd of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord, and he will drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." ¹⁸ And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹ And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. ²² And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. ²³ And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. ²⁴ After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, ²⁵ "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men." ²⁶ Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. ²⁷ And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ²⁸ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, ²⁹ but his mother said, "Not so; he will be called John." ³⁰ And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." ³¹ And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. ³² And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marvelled. ³³ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ³⁴ And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; ³⁵ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. ³⁶ And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, ³⁷ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people." ³⁸ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Communion Ps 111

The just will be in everlasting remembrance. Alleluia!