

ORTHODOX MESSENGER

January 2013, Vol. 22, Issue 1

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Parish • Santa Rosa, CA. 95407

THE DAY OF OUR PATRON SAINT

On **Wednesday, January 2**, we will greet His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin at 9:30 AM, and begin the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Repose of Saint Seraphim of Sarov. Each week we celebrate Liturgy in the Saint Seraphim Church, built to the glory of the Holy Trinity, and in living and loving honor of Saint Seraphim. His feast day is a unique day, a day in which, as we do at Nativity, Pascha, and feasts of the Lord and Theotokos, parishioners set aside all other activities, and come to thank God for His saint who has so faithfully made intercessions in our behalf.

At the end of the Liturgy the large and newly painted icon (no, we don't say "written") of the Protection of the Holy Virgin will be blessed by Archbishop Benjamin in preparation of mounting it above the door of the Hall at the porch. Following the blessing, a festal meal will be served.

THEOPHANY—JANUARY 5 AND 6

On the day of our Lord's Baptism we recall the miracle of His divine epiphany, or manifestation—the Theophany. Indeed, at the Baptism of our Savior, the One Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, for the first time revealed Himself to man in Three Persons: God the Father—through His voice, calling Jesus His Son; God the Son—the Only-Begotten—upon whom we gaze at His baptism in the Jordan; and the Holy Spirit—by His descent in the form of a dove, showing that Jesus is also Messiah/Christ. For this reason the *Troparion* of the feast of the Baptism states that on this day “the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.” The Baptism of Christ occupies a special place among the great feast days of the Church because it invites us to participate in a spiritual rebirth and the sanctification of God's creation. When we were thrice immersed in the water of baptism we were born from above—and God's grace is continually active within us, illumining us as we turn to Him in prayer and fasting. During the sacrament of Baptism, the priest recalls Christ's Baptism and prays to God in these words: “All creation magnifieth Thee, Who hast manifested Thyself. For Thou, O our God, hast revealed Thyself upon earth, and hast dwelt among men. Thou didst hallow the streams of Jordan, sending down upon them from heaven Thy Holy Spirit, and didst crush the dragons who lurked there. Wherefore, O King Who lovest mankind, come now and sanctify this water by the coming of Thy Holy Spirit... And grant unto it the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan. Make it the fountain of incorruption, the gift of sanctification, the remission of sins, the remedy of infirmities; the final destruction of demons, unassailable by hostile powers, filled with angelic might.... Wherefore, O Lord, manifest Thyself in this water, and grant that he who is baptized therein may be transformed; that he may put away from him the old man, which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh, and that he may be clothed with the new man, and renewed after the image of Him who created him: that being buried, after the pattern of Thy death, in baptism, he may, in like manner, be a partaker of Thy Resurrection; and having preserved the gift of the Holy Spirit, and increased the measure of grace committed unto him, he may receive the prize of his high calling, and be numbered with the first-born whose names are written in heaven, in Thee, our God and Lord Jesus Christ.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem, an early father of the Church, states that for a Christian the water of Baptism is “both a grave and a mother.” It is a grave for our former sinful life without Christ, and the mother of our new life in Christ and in His realm of everlasting righteousness. He who is baptized into Christ is also robed in Christ's righteousness, becomes like unto Him and is made a partaker of His holiness.

HOUSE BLESSINGS

Please email or call Fr Lawrence or any of the other clergy to schedule a house blessing. Homes are blessed after Theophany each year, in order to bring the newly blessed Holy Water and the joy of the feast of the manifestation of the Holy Trinity to each and every dwelling. Think of the house blessing as a renewal of God's grace in your home. How to prepare for a house blessing: Have a copy of the *Troparion of Theophany* so that you can sing with the priest. The entire family should be present. Please set out the following items: icon, oil lamp or a candle, small bowl (cereal size) for the Holy Water. I will bring Holy Water with me; list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked. Turn off TVs and radios, video games. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
90 Mountain View Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Parish office phone: 584-9491 / fax: 585-9445
website: www.saintseraphim.com

Our Parish Secretary may be reached at the Church office Tuesday-Saturday, 9 AM to Noon, at 584-9491.
Fr. Lawrence Margitich may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net. He is available Tuesday-Saturday, from noon onwards each day.

PARISH CONTACTS

| | |
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| Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus | 473-0314 |
| Fr. John Schettig, Assistant Pastor | 318-1559 |
| Fr. John Ramos, Attached..... | 570-9849 |
| Deacon Jeremiah Crawford | 823-5878 |
| Deacon Nicholas Carr..... | 588-8753 |
| Sub-Deacon Marc Richardson | 545-4047 |
| Nicolas Custer, Choir Director | 584-9491 |
| Nilus Veenis, Sacristan | 526-2284 |
| Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden..... | 291-7452 |
| Petar Griovski, Treasurer | 762-4742 |
| Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary..... | 778-8528 |
| Lisa Moroz, Sisterhood President..... | 360-5119 |
| Parmenas Davis, Church School Coordinator..... | 823-2921 |
| Shenina, Scrip Manager..... | 321-7417 |
| Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator | 480-6106 |

Our Parish Home for the Holidays

December 30, 2012

Dear Sisterhood members and Parishioners,

What a blessing it is to have a beautiful parish home filled with family members that care so deeply about this gift that we have all received. During this holiday season, I want to extend a huge thank you to Patricia Krueger and her decorating crew as well as Nilus and his cleaning crew. The care that they put into making the church beautiful is heartwarming.

I feel so excited by all that we accomplished together at our last meeting! Thank you for coming and participating in our efforts to care for the beauty of our church and to create a warm and hospitable 'home' for our parish community.

One of the highlights from the meeting was when we reviewed the Bazaar and started dreaming about how to rekindle some of the past sparkle of this seasonal fundraiser. We decided to simplify the luncheon and focus on the crafts area perhaps even expanding it to include some hands on activities such as candle dipping and gingerbread decorating for children and musical entertainment using parish talent! I am eager to start planning next year's bazaar and hope that you will join the fun.

We voted to take the next steps on beautifying the parish hall. Be sure to watch for the shelves and framed photos that Denise Pellizzer is going to install. By adding these shelves, we will have the flexibility to display different artwork over the course of the year. In the coming months, you will also see the addition of a conversation corner

in the hall. This will be a lovely and useful addition to our new space, which will provide an informal meeting place for Father Lawrence.

In addition to the beautification of the church and hall, the Sisterhood also provides hospitality throughout the course of the year. On that note, Matushka Xenia graciously volunteered to make a batch of her delicious coffee cake which was served after liturgy on Christmas morning. Thank you, Matushka! We are looking forward to decorating the hall and serving lunch at our Parish Feast Day on January 2nd as well as providing meals to the participants at the Liturgical Singing Seminar Feb. 8/9. If you would like to take part in this important work, please let me know.

It never ceases to amaze me how simple events such as a Sisterhood meeting can bring people together. By offering a little of our time and sharing our love for the gift of this parish and community, we accomplish so much together. Please come join us at our next meeting that will be on Sunday, February 17 at 1:00. We will be putting the final plans in place for the Barn Dance on March 1st! It is going to be a really fun event!

With love in Christ,
Lisa Moroz

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- HOLY THEOPHANY & House blessings: January 6—the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan—and the Twelfth Day of Christmas—is on a Sunday, so hopefully our entire congregation will be able to participate in this great Feast. We will begin the Theophany celebration with Vigil on Saturday evening, January 5. After the Sunday Divine Liturgy the Great Blessing of Water will take place. The Blessing of Homes will begin that day as well. If you would like your home blessed, please call Father Lawrence to arrange it.
- SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP: Our luncheon in January will be held on Thursday, January 10, at Noon. Prior to and after the lunch, Father Lawrence will be blessing homes. See him if you haven't already signed up for a house blessing.
- TALK ON ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN: Vincent Rossi will present a talk on the great 4th century Father of the Church, St. Gregory the Theologian, on Thursday, January 24 at 6:45 PM, after Vespers.
- HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS WARE, will be speaking in San Francisco on February 16 and 17. For more information on how to register for his talks, see the following link: www.sforthodoxinstitute.org/conferences/102-supplementary/194-feb2013-symposium-sf
- BELL RINGERS: Archbishop Benjamin recently revived the Church ministry of “Parish Bell Ringer,” in Seattle, reading the Prayers for a Blessing of a Bell Ringer over at least one candidate. Our ringers, Patricia, Matushka Esther and Serge Moroz, do an admirable job ringing before and during Services. However, we need more than three people in order to have ringers before and during all the services we do here. Inspired by His Eminence's support of ringing, I would like to do four things here in our parish: 1) Invite those interested in learning how to ring to meet together, on Sunday, January 20, after the Agape Meal. 2) Following the course set by Archbishop Benjamin, hold four or five training sessions to teach all the bell ringers (current ones included) basic patterns and techniques. 3) Create a roster for the ringers to decide who rings when. 4) Set regular practice sessions so that we may all continue to progress in skill. When these items are in place, we will then ask Archbishop Benjamin to bless those who are proficient in basic techniques and patterns. We will, of course, ask Father Stephan Meholick, a master ringer, to come and help us achieve this goal. I would encourage anyone with any interest at all to contact me, and sign up for the January 20 gathering. —*Father Lawrence*

ANNUAL MEETING

On Sunday, February 3, 2012, our parish membership will gather at 12:30 PM, following the Holy Liturgy, for its Annual Meeting. What constitutes parish membership and who is a member? According to the by-laws of our parish and the OCA, basically, a member is one who: 1) is an Orthodox Christian who strives to live according to the moral, ethical, spiritual and dogmatic teachings of the Church; 2) is at least 18 years of age; 3) makes regular financial offerings; 4) makes Confession and receives Holy Communion regularly here at this parish.

It's my task as your rector to determine the parish membership count. The criteria are quite simple, as you can see. Regarding point #3 above, I did not use the phrase “financial support for the Church,” since the issue is not about what the Church needs (God will care for His Church), but what *we need* to do as Christians, rich and poor alike: “let each person give, on the first day of the week, as God has proposed him” to paraphrase St. Paul (1 Cor. 16:2). St. Paul's command, seen in the light of Scripture and Tradition, asks us make an **thanksgiving offering**, not according to dues, like a club, but according to what we have been given by Him, whether we have been given very little or very great. By doing this we show our trust in God's promises to take care of His children—not dollar for dollar, of course, but by His love, providence and grace. Secondly, we participate in the financial support of the parish, from which we all receive so much. Thirdly, since all parishes make an offering—a Diocesan Tithe, in fact—for the work of the Diocese and the OCA in general, our participation is far greater than we can imagine. The Diocesan Tithe of our parish is based on our membership count, so we count as members only those who regularly give, otherwise, parish funds for charity, utilities and the OCA are diverted in order to subsidize someone's membership listing. For now, and until next year or so, this is the way it is until the Diocese changes the Diocesan Tithe based on membership count, to one based on our parish budget. I encourage you to establish and maintain your formal membership in the parish, the Body of Christ, and show your trust in God, your thanksgiving for the Church of which you are a member, and to allow the Lord to work in your life. —*Fr. Lawrence*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JANUARY 2013

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| | December 31 • 5 PM, Great Vespers for New Year and St. Basil Day | 1 - St. Basil Day • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 5 PM, Vespers & Akathist for St. Seraphim | 2 - St. Seraphim Day • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy (Archbishop Benjamin visiting) • Festal Agape | 3 <i>[Fr. L. at Calistoga monastery all day]</i> • 6 PM, Vespers of the Prefeast of Theophany | 4 • 9 AM, Royal Hours for Theophany • 6 PM, Vespers of the Prefeast | 5 • 5 PM, VIGIL for Theophany |
| 6 - THEOPHANY • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy, Great Blessing of Water • Noon, Festal Agape Meal • Presentation on <i>Project Mexico</i> • House blessings in Windsor | 7 • 9:30 AM, <i>Nativity, at Kazan Skete</i> | 8 • 6 PM, 40 th Day Panikhida for Konstantine Sakovich | 9 • 6 PM, Vespers | 10 • Morning House blessings • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship • Afternoon House blessings • 6 PM, Parish Council Meeting | 11 • <i>House blessings all day</i> • 3 PM, <i>House blessings at Valley Oak apartments</i> | 12 • 3:30 PM, Catechesis • 5 PM, Great Vespers |
| 13 - St. Hilary of Portiers • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal | 14 | 15 • 10 AM, Visit of the Presbyterian Women's Group | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 • 9:30 AM, <i>Theophany at the Kazan Skete</i> • 3:30 PM, Catechesis • 5 PM, Great Vespers |
| 20 - St. Euthymios the Great • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 1 PM, Bell Ringer Meeting | 21 | 22 | 23 • 6 PM, Vespers | 24 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Xenia of Petersburg • 6 PM, <i>Vespers & Talk by V. Rossi on St. Gregory the Theologian</i> | 25 | 26 • 3:30 PM, Catechesis • 5 PM, Great Vespers |
| 27 - St. John Chrysostom • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal | 28 | 29 • 6 PM, Great Vespers for the Three Hierarchs | 30 • 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy for the Three Holy Hierarchs | 31 • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting | 1 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord | 2 - Meeting of the Lord • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Feast • 3:30 PM, Catechesis • 5 PM, Great Vespers |

• HOUSE BLESSINGS: Please call Father Lawrence or Father John if you would like your home blessed.