

• SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREBEARS OF CHRIST:

At Great Vespers this Saturday [and then at Matins on Sunday morning], we praise the glorious men from before and during the Old Covenant law. We honor Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Samson, Barak, Jephthah, Nathan, Eleazar, Josiah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha and all the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, “and all the rest,” especially Daniel and the three holy youths, Zachariah, John the Baptist, and all those who proclaimed Christ. Likewise we sing praises to the holy women who were made “strong in the days of old by the might of Thy strength, O Lord: Hannah, Judith, Deborah, Huldah, Jael, Esther, Sarah, Miriam, Rachel, Rebecca, and Ruth.” Orthodox Christians faithfully preserve the awareness of where we come from. We not only remember that we are from the dust of the earth, but we also remember those who have preceded us, and are joined to us, in holiness, and in faith, and in the spiritual struggle. History is chronological, but the Kingdom of God is ever-present, and we commune with all the righteous who were before us and await us. As brothers and sisters in Christ, they are our forefathers too! The days of preparation for receiving the Incarnation with joy and understanding are drawing to a close. We may come to church on the feast, but if we have not prepared our hearts, we will miss the fullness of the spiritual experience. Everything of value in life is worthy of preparation, and there is no greater event than the birth of the Son. Attend services, pray, read, be charitable, love your neighbor, and give gifts of love and devotion.

—Father Thaddaeus Hardenbrook

• PROPHECIES OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES:

The prophets revealed many particulars regarding the coming of the Messiah, specifically: that He will be descended from Abraham (*Gen. 22:18*), from the tribe of Judah (*Gen. 49:9*), from the line of king David (*2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chron. 17:12-13*), will be born of a Virgin (*Is. 7:14*) in the city of Bethlehem (*Mic. 5:2*), will spread spiritual light (*Is. 9:1-2*), will heal the infirm (*Is. 35:5-6*), will suffer, be pierced, die, be buried in a new grave, then will rise from the dead (*Gen. 49:9-11; Ps. 41:7-10; Is. 50:5-7 and the 53rd chapter; Zach. 12:10; Ps. 16:9-11*), will lead souls from hades (*Zach. 9:11*); they even predicted that not everyone will recognize Him as the Messiah (*Is. 6:9*), but that some would even feud with Him, though unsuccessfully (*Num. 24:17; Deut. 18:18; Ps. 2; Ps. 95:6-8; Ps. 110:1-4; Is. 50:8-9 and 65:1-3*).

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**December 16, 2018**

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overthrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

• TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS, TONE TWO:

By faith, Thou hast justified the ancient forefathers; through them Thou hast betrothed to Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the Saints, therefore, exult in glory, for from their seed is the noble fruit: she who without seed gave birth to Thee. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

• KONTAKION, TONE TWO

A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, O thrice-blessed ones; but armed with the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, and hasten, as Thou art merciful, to come unto our aid. For Thou art able to do what Thou wilt.

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## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 15: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On the Holy Spirit*  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 16: 8:30 AM, Matins  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:45 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape Meal  
5 PM, *Kontakion of St. Romanos for Nativity*, Meal in the Hall, Christmas Play
- Wednesday, Dec. 19: 6 PM, Vespers for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
- Thursday, Dec. 20: 8 AM, Matins for the Pre-Feast of Nativity  
4–6 PM, Confessions  
6 PM, Vespers  
7 PM, parish Council Meeting
- Friday, Dec. 21: 8 AM, Matins  
4–6 PM, Confessions  
6 PM, Vespers
- Saturday, Dec. 22: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On the Church and the Virgin*  
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 23: 8:30 AM, Matins  
9:30 AM, Reception of Catechumens  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Monday, Dec. 24: 11:30 AM, Vespereal Liturgy  
6 PM, Festal Matins for Nativity
- Tuesday, Dec. 25: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Christmas
- Wednesday, Dec. 26: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis of the Theotokos

### • TIME FOR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION:

Please prepare yourself for the Feast of the Birth of Christ. It is appropriate and proper for us—priests and people together—to make a Confession prior to receiving Holy Communion on all feast days, but especially before Christmas. *It is not appropriate for anyone over seven years of age to receive Holy Communion without a recent Confession.* Our bishops teach that if we receive Holy Communion frequently, **and we should each week**, we should be confess-

ing no less than once a month. We should all make our Confession prior to Christmas Day, so that we may receive Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve and Day. Any person, age 7 and up, who wishes to receive Holy Communion on Nativity Eve or Nativity, should make a confession before Christmas. I especially appeal to the parents of our children to make a confession soon. **Times to make a Confession:** before, during or after Vespers on Saturday evening (try to avoid a Sunday morning Confession, please); Any time on Thursday and Friday, Dec. 20 and 21. The Calendar indicates 4–6 PM, but I will be available all day, both days.

—Fr. Lawrence

### • CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY:

The children of the parish will offer their annual Nativity Play—directed by Sophia Basch and Natasha Collins—on Sunday evening, December 16th. The *Nativity Kontakion* of St. Romanos the Melodist will be chanted at 5 PM in the Protection Church, followed by dinner and the Play. Please bring a dessert to share.

### • PRE-CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

The demands of work, family, holiday preparations along with morning and evening routines the week before Christmas present many challenges. Nevertheless, I invite you to set aside some time to join me at the Pre-Feast Services this week (see schedule). Gathering as the Church, let us enjoy the profound hymnography. May God grant us the experience of calming and cleansing silence found in the approach to the spiritual Cave in Bethlehem during this **Winter Holy Week**. —Fr. Lawrence

### • ON THE GOSPEL READING TODAY:

St. Theophylact wrote: “Every day this Supper is prepared and we are all invited to the kingdom which God prepared for mankind even before the foundation of the world....He grants the kingdom of heaven to all the poor who have fallen away from the glory above, and even to the maimed who cannot show forth in themselves a blameless life. To invite these sinners to the Supper, who are wandering astray in the streets and broad avenues of sin, the Father sends His Son Who became a Servant according to the flesh, and Who came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

### • LESSONS:

Irina Wysocki is available for piano and sewing (basic & couture) lessons. Contact info: (707) 608-8963 [irinamakc@gmail.com](mailto:irinamakc@gmail.com)