

prophet (Deut. 18:18); king (Gen. 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chron. 17:12-13; Ps. 2, Ps. 132:11, Ez. 37:24; Dan. 7:13) and High Priest (Ps. 110; Zach. 6:12), anointed by God (the Father) for these duties (Ps. 2, Ps. 45; Is. 42; Is. 61:1-4; Dan. 9:24-27), and will be a kind Shepherd (Ez. 34:23-24, 37:24; Mic. 5:3).

THE PROPHECIES also witness that the main role of the Messiah will be to defeat the devil and his powers (Gen. 3:15; Num. 24:17), to redeem people from sin and to heal their physical and spiritual illnesses (Ps. 40; Is. 35:5-7, 42:1-12, 50:4 and the 53rd chapter and 61:1-3; Zach. 3:8-9) and to reconcile them with God (Gen. 49:10; Jer. 23:5 and 31:34; Ez. 36:24-27; Dan. 9:24-27; Zach. 13:1); that He will sanctify the faithful (Zach. 6:12), will establish a New Covenant in place of the old (Is. 42:2, 55:3 and 59:20-21; Dan. 9:24-27), and that this covenant will be for eternity (Jer. 31:31; Is. 55:3).

THE PROPHETS predicted the calling of the Gentiles to the Kingdom of the Messiah (Ps. 72:10; Is. 11:1-11, 43:16-28, 49:6 and 65:1-3), that His spiritual blessings will extend to all humanity (Gen. 22:18, Ps. 132:11; Is. 11:1, 42:1-12 and 54:1-5; Ez. 34:23 and 37:24; Amos 9:11-12; Ag. 2:6-7; Zeph. 3:9, Zach. 9:9-11), and the spiritual bliss of the faithful (Is. 12:3).

THE PROPHETS also 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).

• BELL RINGING PLATFORM:

Constantine Stade from Blagovest Bell Co. gave our church bells an extreme make-over last week (new brackets, cables, cords and foot-pedal). Our own ringers will discover how responsive and easy it is to ring with the new set-up. From Mon–Wed. this week Constantine will be teaching a master class for our ringers and for those coming from other parishes.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



December 17, 2017

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord hath shown strength with His arm; He hath trampled down death by death; He hath become the first-born of the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of hell, and hath granted 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.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 16: 3:30 PM, Catechism (on *The Church*)
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 17: 9–9:50 AM, Confessions
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
4:30 PM, Kontakion of St. Romanos for Nativity, Meal in the Hall, Christmas Play
- Tues/Wed/Thurs: 6 PM, Vespers for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
- Thursday, Dec. 21: 6:45 PM, 40 Day Panikhida for Fr. Michael
- Friday, Dec. 22: 9 AM, Royal Hours for Nativity
3–6 PM, Confessions (please call)
6 PM, Vespers for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
- Saturday, Dec. 23: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
3 PM, Confessions
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 24: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy (Children’s Choir)
No Agape Meal, coffee and donuts only
5 PM, Festal Matins for Nativity
- Monday, Dec. 25: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Christmas
- Tuesday, Dec. 26: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis of the Theotokos

• USHERS TODAY:
Shannon and Ted.

• CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS:

The Holy Mystery of Confession is no less a gift from God, and essential to our lives, than Holy Communion. We should not consider Confession as an obligation. Rather, it is a privilege and an opportunity to more deeply encounter the Savior and receive forgiveness of sins. Priests and people together—let us all make a Confession in these two weeks preceding Nativity in order to be prepared to receive Holy Communion on the feast itself. In general, it is not appropriate for anyone over the age of seven to

receive Holy Communion without a recent Confession (at least once a month is a good benchmark). We operate on the “honor system,” which means the priests will probably not ask you if you are prepared. I will be available the week before Christmas every afternoon before Vespers, from 5–6 PM and following Vespers, and then on Friday and Saturday from 3 PM until Vespers. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY:

The children of the parish will offer their annual Nativity Play—written and directed by Carmen Anderson—on Sunday evening, December 17th. The *Nativity Kontakion* of St. Romanos the Melodist will be chanted at 4:30 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, knowing how special Christmas is for all of us, 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 and beautiful singing. May God grant us the experience of calming and cleansing silence found in the approach to the spiritual Cave in Bethlehem. These brief Divine Services, which serve as a ***Winter Holy Week***, are a gift of Church Tradition. I find them essential in my own preparation for Nativity; may they be so for you as well. —*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.”

• PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH [home work reading]:

THE PROPHETS wrote that the Messiah would have two natures: a human (Gen. 3:15, Is. 7:14, Gen. 22:18, Ps. 41:7, Dan. 7:13) and a divine (Ps. 2; Ps., 45; Ps, 110; Is. 9:6; Jer. 23:5; Bar. 3:36-38; Mic. 5:2; Mal. 3:1), that He would be the greatest