

• TIMES FOR CONFESSIONS:

Saturday: 4:30–5 PM, then during the latter half of Vespers, and after Vespers. **Sunday:** 9–10 AM. Once Liturgy starts we serve the Liturgy, not Confession. **Tuesday–Friday:** anytime after 12 Noon, just ask, or call to arrange.

• UPCOMING - PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:

The Annual Meeting for 2012 will convene on Sunday, February 5, following the Liturgy. According to our Parish By-Laws, the Annual Meeting is to take place on the first Sunday of February. All parish members are asked to attend the meeting. What constitutes Parish Membership? What are the requirements for eligibility to vote at this meeting? Very simply, four things: A formal member of the parish is one who 1) is a baptized Orthodox Christian, 2) is at least 18 years of age, 3) regularly confesses and communes in this parish, 4) financially supports the parish (you are encouraged to give a proportional amount from what God has blessed you, in accordance with the Biblical standard). If you have questions about any of these requirements, please see any Parish Council Member, or speak with Father Lawrence.

• CLASS ON THE INCARNATION:

Fr. Philip Tolbert is teaching a wonderful course on the famous book of St. Athanasius *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*. The class is held at Dormition Orthodox Church, 1521 Rose Ave, at 7 PM, on Tuesday. There are two more classes (12/13 and 12/20). I highly recommend the class, both as a preparation for Nativity, and for learning some basic Orthodox theology and spirituality. —Fr. Lawrence

• CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS REMEMBRANCE:

“Just a hurried line...to tell a story which puts the contrast between ‘our’ feast of the Nativity and all this ghastly *XMAS* racket at it’s lowest. My brother heard a woman on a bus say, as the bus passed a church with a Crib outside it: ‘Oh Lord, they bring religion into everything. Look—they’re dragging it even into Christmas now.’”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ
December 11, 2011

• 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 OF THE ANCESTORS, 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. 10: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *on the Liturgy*, held in the Protection Church. Please be prompt.
5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 11: 9–10 AM, Confessions
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Coffee Hour
12:45 PM, Choir Rehearsal
- Monday, Dec. 12: 6 PM, Vigil for Saint Herman of Alaska
- Tuesday, Dec. 13: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Saint Herman
- Wednesday, Dec. 14: 6 PM, Vespers

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- Thursday, Dec. 15: 8 AM, Liturgy at Kazan Skete
6 PM, Akathist to St. Herman of Alaska
7 PM, Parish Council Meeting

- SAINT NICHOLAS PARTY—4 PM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18:

Each year we celebrate the memory of Saint Nicholas, the great 4th century bishop of Myra (in modern day Turkey) by joining our sister parish, Saint Nicholas in San Anselmo, for the Liturgy. In addition to the wonderful celebration there, we also arrange a party for the parish kids on the Sunday evening prior to Christmas. Since the hall will not be quite ready yet, the party will take place at the home of Ray and Vicky Basch, at 86 Leighann Place, Windsor, CA., 95492, phone: 838-4109. The craft for the kids will begin at 3pm, followed by a brief prayer service to St. Nicholas about 5 PM, then a potluck meal and caroling. For more information please contact Gloria at 849-6135 or at gypsybootsie@att.net or Vicky at 838-4109. RSVP.

- CHRISTMAS LITURGICAL SERVICES:

This Sunday is the day of the Holy Ancestors of Christ (there are men and women in that list). We begin to move quickly, liturgically speaking, toward the celebration of the Birth of the Lord. Today and this week we bring to mind all those righteous men and women of ancient Israel who foretold the coming of the Messiah, who delivers not just the Chosen People, but the whole creation, from injustice, sin, death, and alienation from God. The Ancestors of the Lord, according “to the Law of Moses”—since not all were according “to the flesh”—are those people who were a light to the nations, and were consciously God’s People, living in righteousness and expectation of the coming of the Messiah. They were those who were faithful to that unseen hope, despite suffering and persecution, and serve as part of that “great cloud of witnesses” that St. Paul refers to in Hebrews: “...And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Therefore, seeing we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 11:39–12:2)

During the week prior to Christmas, Vespers of the Prefeast will be served at 6 PM each evening (see the calendar). On Friday morning we will serve the Royal Hours, which consists of hymns, Old Testament prophecies, New Testament Epistles and Gospel readings about the Nativity. These Divine Services constitute a very effective way to prepare for Christmas Day, both because they are beautiful and they immerse us in the theology of the Incarnation, in a prayerful and mystical way. Christmas Day—the Nativity of God in the Flesh—is an exceedingly great feast day, and to gain the most benefit, we need a bit of spiritual preparation, some real content, in order to celebrate it worthily. As a pastor, I realize that the demands of work, holiday preparations, morning and evening routines will prevent many from attending ALL of these Services, but surely, attending SOME is not out of the question. Do remember that these Church Services are served for your benefit as well as mine. On Saturday, December 24—Christmas Eve morning—we will have the Divine Liturgy served at 9 AM. Later that day, at 5 PM, we will serve the joyous Festal Christmas Eve Matins of Nativity, and hear those marvelous hymns: “God is with us;” “We Magnify” and the hymn called the “Christ is born, glorify Him...” On Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day, the Festal Divine Liturgy begins with the Hours at 9:10 AM, and the **Liturgy begins at 9:30 AM, rather than the usual 10 AM Sunday time.** The second day of Christmas is the Synaxis of the Theotokos, so a Liturgy in her honor will be served at 9 AM, since the part she played in the Nativity is so great. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- CONFESSION:

Please prepare yourself in every spiritual way 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 the feast of 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, as in each week, we should be confessing 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. Please do not delay. Any person, age 7 and up, who wishes to receive Holy Communion on Nativity Eve or Nativity, should make a confession in these days before Christmas (times below). I especially appeal to the parents of our children to make a confession soon.