

*Holy Virgin Parish.* Or find us by using our address and/or zip code 90 Mountain View Ave 95407. Call Shenina at 575-3422 or email her at shenina@sbcglobal.net if you have questions or are having trouble.

Please join us for our traditional

# Blini Brunch

Complete with sour cream,  
lox, herring, and caviar...  
(Not to mention butter, syrup and bacon!!)

Protection of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church  
In the NEW Church Hall  
90 Mountain View Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

**Sunday, February 19, 2012**  
**12 PM**

We will be honoring this tradition with our family and friends, so make sure to invite them!  
Please come enjoy Blini with us as we prepare to enter that wonderful time of Lent.

Prices for the Blini Brunch will be ala carte. Wine, juice, coffee and tea will be available for a small additional charge. Children's plates will also be available.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## February 12 ~ Sunday of the Prodigal Son

- KONTAKION OF THE PRODIGAL SON, Tone 3  
Foolishly I sprang away / from Thy great fatherly glory, / and dispersed in wicked deeds / the riches that Thou didst give me. / With the Prodigal I therefore / cry unto Thee now: / I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. / But receive me in repentance; / and make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

### ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 11: *baptism cancelled due to illness*  
3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Reading the Scriptures*  
5 PM, Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 12: 9–10 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy. Church School & Agape luncheon to follow the Liturgy  
**12:45, Choir Rehearsal**  
12:45 PM, High School Youth Planning Meeting
- Tues., Feb. 14: 7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group (*Orthodox Perspectives on Islam*)
- Wed., Feb. 15: At Kazan Skete: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy  
6 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., Feb. 16: 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim of Sarov
  
- FORGIVENESS SUNDAY – February 26:  
In three weeks we will serve the Vespers of Forgiveness, right after the usual

Sunday Agape Meal. The Service, which ushers in the Great Fast of Lent, begins at 1:15 PM. We will begin Vespers as usual, with the reading of Psalm 103, the Great Litany, and the various hymns of the day. After “O Joyous Light” we will sing the special “Great Prokimenon” “Turn not Thy countenance from Thy servant, for I am afflicted, hearken to me speedily, attend to my soul, and deliver it.” During that slow and compunctionate melody, the gold covers on all the icon stands will be changed to the Lenten purple—a royal and rich color, yet darker and more mournful too. From that point on we are in Great Lent, and the choir will be singing the Lenten melodies for the litanies. At the end of this unique Service we will ask forgiveness of each other, each person approaching the priests, then each other. Those who can, do a prostration before one another; those who cannot, simply ask forgiveness, and that’s completely sufficient. We say: “forgive me;” and answer back, “forgive me. God forgives.” The important thing is to ask for forgiveness and then give it. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- SUNDAY OF THE WASTREL (Prodigal) SON, Luke 15:

Here is a Parable for our Lenten preparation. A young man wants his inheritance, and he wants it before his father’s death! He leaves home, and with terrible swiftness the young man, wasting his inheritance, is reduced to poverty, want and famine. St. Augustine sees as it as a famine of truth and exile from God. It’s a famine not of food but of good works and virtues, which is the more wretched fast...since nothing satisfies a wastrel mind. And in this spiritual exile the young wastrel is put to work feeding pigs. To Jesus’s Jewish hearers tending pigs is a foul and vile fate. He is in exile from home. The wastrel at last remembers his father’s house and “he rightly returns to himself,” says St. Ambrose, “since he departed from himself. For whoever returns to God restores himself to himself, and the one who departs from Christ rejects himself from himself.” He came back to himself, says Augustine, when “he brought his mind from those things that unprofitably entice and seduce, back to the inner chambers of his conscience.”

- YOUTH ACTIVITY PLANNING MEETING TODAY:

Parents of our high school-age children are invited to attend a meeting today at 12:45 PM in the Parish hall. *Topic:* Creating Orthodox soul-strengthening, faith-building and friendship-bonding activities, camp-outs, and retreats for our parish teens. We won’t be discussing theology, theory,

challenges or problems that confront our youth (that’s for the retreats, etc.). Fr. Lawrence will simply lead a planning session for the above-named activities for the year ahead, using our resources, those that the Diocese makes available to us, and those of our sister parishes.

- BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON:

On the three Sundays prior to Great Lent we sing Psalm 136, which begins with the phrase: “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.” A soloist intones the verses of this ancient lament, and the people led by the choir respond by singing “Alleluia.” This was a psalm sung by the Jewish people who had been taken as captives to Babylon (597–538 BC), the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed, with no hope of returning to the Land of Promise. In the Scriptures Babylon is seen as the antithesis of Jerusalem, as the broken and rebellious world opposed to God’s Kingdom, the condition of sin, of confusion, of exile from God. The tower of Babel in Babylon was built on the presumption of those who felt they could build their own kingdom over and against the Kingdom of God. Finally, Babylon can be identified with the pig pen in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, who went to live in a “far country” i.e., a land of sin and exile from God. The Prodigal son was weeping in the pig pen when he remembered the house of the Father. As we meditate on this in the light of Jesus Christ, we can’t help but admit that we are often far away from Jesus in our deeds, yet we remember His glory, and the honor He confers on us, His grace and love. We come to the last, outrageous and violent verse of the psalm, and wonder, what could it mean? *Happy shall he be, that shall take and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.* In our spiritual warfare, we are constantly confronted by thoughts (logismi) and passions that would lead us into sin—when they are just thoughts—infants so to say, small and as yet harmless. We call upon the Name of Christ, who is the Rock (according to many scriptural verses), and the sins are smashed by Christ.

- SCRIP PROGRAM:

This notice is to remind our fellow brethren to please bring in their old cell phones, i-pods used ink jet cartridges and toners. We get credit in the form of money. Just bring them to the Church and place them in the green-topped bins in the utility closet or give them to Shenina. Please don’t just leave them in the church. Also, don’t forget to sign up your Safeway cards and/or credit cards for *escrip* at *escrip.com*. We are under *Protection of the*