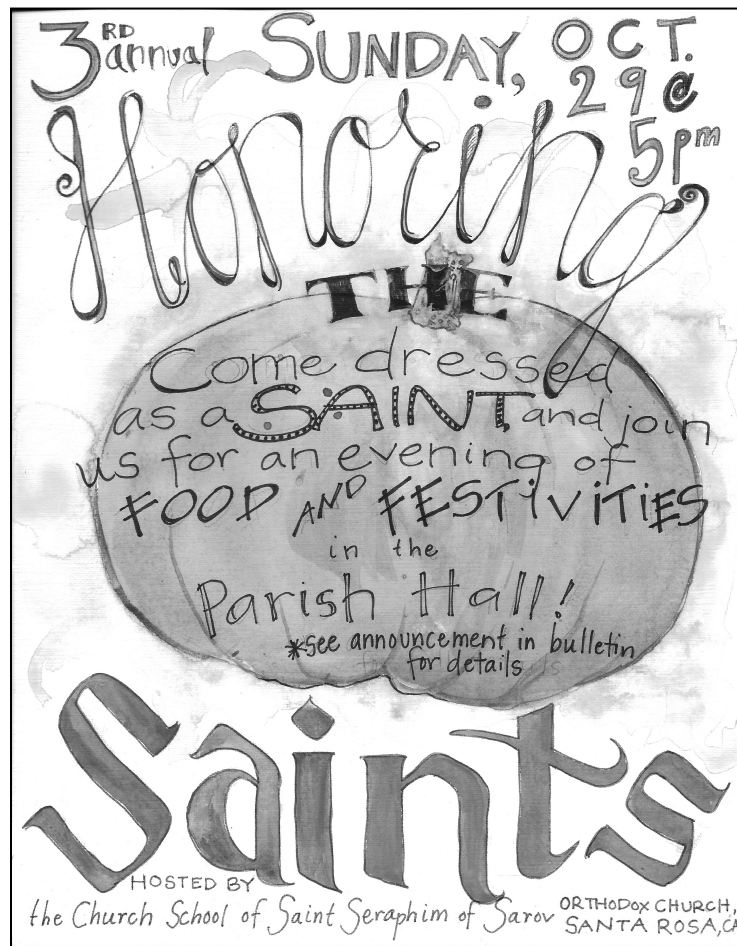


As a church, you must make a plan to engage the survivors. This must be a long-term strategic plan. With this tragedy, you have the greatest opportunity you've ever been given to minister to your community. As you must do with individuals, meet your community where they are. Sponsor a trauma event with other groups and churches at a neutral site and show them your love. Invite all who would come for a dinner or dinners. Hold a festival specifically for the community as a celebration to the commitment of all to rise from the tragedy. Build relationships first on the ground where those you want to help feel comfortable, show them your love, then the door will be opened to share the bright light of our faith that burns but doesn't sting. Ours is a Holy Fire. Many blessings to you all. I hope to see you again soon. In Christ's love. —*Silouan Green*



ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



October 22, 2017

St. Averkios, Equal-to-the-Apostles



• 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 ST. AVERKIOS, Tone Four:

The Truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness and a teacher of temperance; for this cause, thou hast achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty. O Father and Hierarch Averkios, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

• KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the prophets and patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

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- KONTAKION OF ST. AVERKIOS, Tone Eight:

The whole Church of the faithful doth honor thee as an all-great priest and dweller with the Apostles, O Averkios. By thy supplications preserve it invincible, unassailed and undefiled by all heresy, in that thou art ever-memorable.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, October 21: 4 PM, Children's Choir Rehearsal
4:30 PM, Panikhida for St. Demetrios Saturday
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, October 22: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wednesday, October 25: 6 PM, Great Vespers and Lity for St. Demetrios
- Thursday, October 26: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Demetrios
- Saturday, October 28: 3:30 PM, Catechism "On the True God" (class takes place in the Library)
5 PM, Great Vespers

- ST. DEMETRIOS:

Services will be held for St. Demetrios with Great Vespers and Lity (*Lity* means "supplication" and involves blessing the wheat, wine, oil and bread) on Wednesday at 6 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Thursday at 9 AM.

- RESCHEDULED RETREAT:

Due to the disastrous situation in the County, we postponed the marriage retreat with Fr. Timothy Pavlotos. He has indicated that a good date for a rescheduled retreat would be Saturday, January 27. More to follow.

- REACHING OUT:

The following is a summary of a talk by Silouan Green, an Orthodox Christian, long-time friend, and lecturer to the CHP, military and other organizations on trauma, PTSD and crisis. The short talk took place here in the Church after the "Supplication for Rain" service on Thursday, Oct. 12.

It was with joy and sadness I was able join with your community last Thursday as we prayed together for rain and asked God's comfort and

respite from all the destruction in our midst. The joy was being surrounded with such true love and a heartfelt reminder of a community I last visited seventeen years ago.

The impact of the fires will be deep and long-lasting. For the near term, I would ask you to do two things: 1) help with the immediate needs of the victims as best you can—food, shelter, money, prayer, etc. and 2) begin to reach out and build relationships, old friends and new, with those impacted by this unfathomable tragedy. By impacted, I mean not just the victims, but the first responders, the caregivers, basically anyone directly or indirectly associated with the fires. Trauma also impacts those indirectly involved with a tragedy and because of thoughts like "Well, my home wasn't burnt down, or I wasn't even there," survivor's guilt can take hold and fester.

As time goes on, you will need to engage your community on a deeper, more spiritual level. For many, the fire has opened up or widened the hole we all have. The hole of mortality and the desire in this temporal world to find meaning. So often we try to find meaning in our stuff—our home, our car, the shiny things. A fire turns these to ashes and reminds us all that ash is the consequence of death. Our call as Orthodox Christians is to bring them hope, hope that ashes can be turned to life. We cannot leave them with only the hole.

I would start by planning something both individually and as a group to begin your deeper engagement sometime over the next few months. As an individual, meet the person or family you wish to help where they are comfortable, over coffee, lunch, on a walk or long drive. Begin with making yourself vulnerable. Explain the impact of the fire or other trauma in your life not by saying "I understand" but with something like "I can't completely understand what you've been through, but because of the trauma I survived I have a desire to help you. I don't want you to walk alone." To help them with their vulnerability, make yourself vulnerable.

Then you listen. If they are ready to talk, they will and you'll be able to identify their needs and go from there. If they aren't ready to talk, you will be patient. As love is patient. And you will then be patiently persistent reaching out as appropriate for similar talks and listening sessions. As a volunteer who rocked drug addled newborns whose mothers were in jail once said to me, "Sometimes the best prayer is just listening." I'm sure Saint Seraphim would agree. You need no skills to do that, only love.