

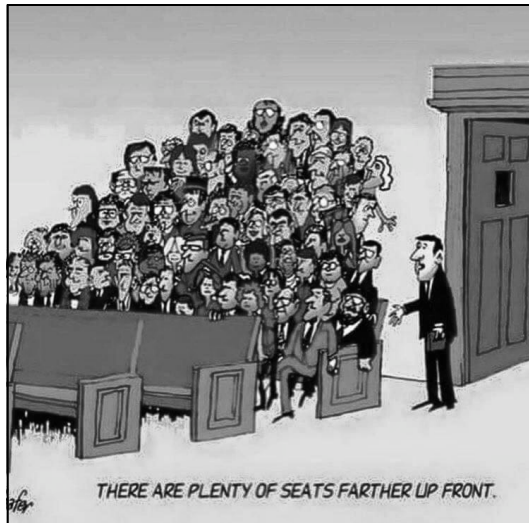
scene? Of course, it's the Christ Child, and everything is there because of that. What happens if you remove the Wise Men, or the Shepherds, or something else, from the Scene? You still have a Nativity manger scene. What happens if you remove everything in the Scene except the Christ Child? For those who are Orthodox it's still a Nativity scene. For the non-Christian, it's nothing at all. The "world" has more or less kept the various characters in the display as decorations, a faint reminder of what has been (like Santa Claus and St. Nicholas). Yet we know that shepherds, the angels, and all the other things that make up a Nativity scene are only there in order to worship the Christ Child. They've come looking or have been called. Perhaps He's somewhat hidden. Surely, one has to be looking for the Humble God-Man to see Him; one can pass by a Nativity scene and never notice Jesus. So, to answer the question above: the reason why we have so many Services is so that we find Jesus. The Services serve as a Christmas Star leading us to the Lord, to the Light that shines in darkness. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY:

If your address, phone or email has changed, please let the parish office know so we can edit the parish directory.

• NATIVITY PLAY:

Carmen Anderson and Gloria Collins are preparing a Christmas play, featuring many of our parish children, to be performed on Sunday, Dec. 18. There will be an Akathist at 4 PM in the Protection Church, followed by a dinner (which will be prepared by Serge Anderson) then the play and Christmas caroling.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ December 11, 2016

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• TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS, TONETWO:

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, TONETWO

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 willest.

### ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 10: 3:30 PM, Catechism (on the *Holy Spirit*)  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 11: 9–10 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:45 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape Meal / Tatiana's Bazaar
- Monday, Dec. 12: 6 PM, Vespers with Lity, for St. Herman of Alaska
- Tuesday, Dec. 13: 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy for the Feast of St. Herman

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7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group (McPherson home)

- Wednesday, Dec. 14: 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank  
6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Dec. 15: Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship

- IS OUR IDENTITY: “in the world” or “of the world?”

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. —*Colossians 3:4–11*

- HYMN OF VESPER FOR THE HOLY FOREFATHERS:

Come, ye lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchisedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elijah, Elisha and all the rest, Zachariah and the Forerunner, who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of the human race.

- SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP:

All seniors and retired folk are invited to lunch in the Parish hall at noon, Thursday, December 15.

- CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS:

The Holy Mystery of Confession is no less a gift from God, and essential to our lives, than Holy Communion. Let us not consider Confession as an obligation, but as an opportunity to more deeply encounter the Savior. With that in mind, I ask you to prepare yourself in every way for the Feast of the

Birth of Christ. Let all of us—priests and people together—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. Accordingly, each of us must take responsibility for Confession. So, let us all, adults and children, prepare ourselves for Communion on Nativity by making a Confession. I will be available during the week before Christmas every morning after Matins (about 9 AM) and every afternoon, before Vespers, from 4–6 PM. May the Lord grant us all a good and joyful repentance. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- CONFESSION BEFORE LITURGY:

An apology: often on Sunday mornings, from 9–10 AM, there are a number of people who would like to make a confession, but before they can do so, the priests leave the confession-stand to begin the Divine Liturgy. I apologize to those who prepared yet were not able to confess. It grieves me that time on Sunday before the Liturgy is limited. However, the others priests and I are available for confession during the week at almost any hour and day that works for you (except Mondays). Call, text, email, or speak directly to one of us to schedule a time. In any case, confessions are always heard, and no one turned away, Saturday evening before, during and after Vespers. This is the best time to come as it allows one to prepare for Holy Communion the evening before receiving. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

We begin the Christmas Pre-feast with Matins at 8 AM on December 20. Each day thereafter we will have a morning and evening service (see calendar). I realize that the demands of work, holiday preparations, morning and evening routines will prevent many from attending all of these Prefeast Services, but surely, attending SOME is possible for all of us. Why so many services? Like Holy Week, Christmas also has preparatory Services to instruct us, to focus us, and to foster within us a sense of childlike anticipation of what’s to come. Please, set aside time now to participate in at least some of the Matins and Vespers of the Pre-feast. In a recent sermon, one pastor asked the congregation to imagine a Nativity scene on the lawn, with the shepherds, the manger, the animals, the Virgin, the Righteous Joseph, the Wise Men, and so on. What’s the main item in that Nativity