

The Meeting Of The Lord In The Temple

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, one of the Great Feasts of the year, is celebrated on February 2. Matins will begin at 8:30 AM, followed by the Divine Liturgy and the blessing of candles. Below is a short meditation on the feast to help us prepare for it.

A Sermon by St. Sophronius of Jerusalem

Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendor of the One who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of His eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ. The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought Him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him.

The Light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the Light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through Him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

The True Light has come, the Light that “enlightens every man who is born into this world.” Let all of us, my

brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this Light. Let all of us share in Its splendor, and be so filled with It that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves, as we go together to meet and to receive with the aged Symeon the Light whose brilliance is eternal.

Rejoicing with Symeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the Light, who sent the True Light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in His splendor. Through Symeon’s eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which He prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Symeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness.

By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as He came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen Him present among us and have mentally received Him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in His honor.

(Orat. 3 de Hypapante 6.7: PG 87, 3, 3291-3293.

St. Sophronius died 638 AD)

GRATITUDE

OUR PARISH experienced a unique and grace-filled event last week: Bishop Daniel, consecrated in San Francisco on Saturday, January 24, was installed—he was given the pastoral staff—as the Bishop of Santa Rosa. About 310 faithful gathered to participate in the Divine Liturgy and to welcome him, along with our Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Benjamin, Archbishop Melchisedek, and Bishops David and Paul. Our children greeted the bishops with the singing of a version of “eis polla eti dhespota” composed and conducted by Carmen Anderson; the servers attended to their duties with dignity, the choir sang with splendor—everyone commented on that, and the iconostasis and icons were beautifully decorated with flowers. It deserves special mention that we are all extremely grateful for those who provided a magnificent feast in the parish hall: those who organized, decorated, purchased the food, cooked it, served and cleaned. Many Years to all.

Establishing Support For An Intern

LAST SUNDAY AT THE FESTAL BANQUET honoring Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa, Father Chad Hatfield, from St Vladimir’s Seminary in New York, spoke about how valuable it is for a recent seminary graduate entering the Holy Priesthood to be an intern in an established parish. Pastoral, liturgical, administrative and community lessons are gained that cannot be taught in seminary. While the intern is growing in understanding of what it means to be a pastor and parish administrator, the parish also experiences benefits such as sermons and classes given by a competent and intelligent semi-

INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
90 Mountain View Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Parish office phone: 707-584-9491
website: www.saintseraphim.com

Our Parish Secretary—Bobbi Griovski—may be reached at the Church office Mon., Tues. and Wed., 9 AM to Noon, at 584-9491. Fr. Lawrence Margitich may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net. He is available Tuesday–Saturday, from noon onwards each day.

Parish Contacts

Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
Fr. John Schettig, Second Priest	318-1559
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
David Winterton, Treasurer	331-9085
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	338-4962
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nary graduate who is zealous with the love of God and the desire to serve and evangelize. The parish cares for the intern, his wife and children, extending itself in love and charity. Over the years, we have had the following interns, some for a matter of weeks, some months, and in the case of the Cuneo family, over a year: the former Fr. John Ramos, Fr. Derek Leonid Schmidt, now rector of St. Gregory Palamas in NJ; Fr. John Diamantis, now rector of St Vladimir Church in Trenton, NJ; Fr. Paul (Brian) Fetsko, now rector of Sts George and Alexandra in Arkansas, and Fr. Andrew Cuneo, priest of St. Katherine's in Carlsbad. In working with each of these men and their wives, I deepened my own priestly understanding and work, and this enabled me to be more active in evangelism, which in turn brought real growth to the parish in membership and in quality.

We have been challenged by our Archbishop and St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological seminary to host a very capable and pious man and his family, to accept them as interns here, providing them the kind of education that seminary cannot provide, but that is essential for the formation of a good priest. Having met the intern candidate and his family—Father Theodor Svane, his wife Hanna and children (one four year old, and one due in May)—I accept the challenge of Vladyka Benjamin and the seminary, and ask you to do the same. In response to this challenge, in November our Parish Council offered a unanimous resolution to financially support the Internship program.

Before coming to the U.S., Fr. Theodor (a convert to the Orthodox Church) was a civil/construction engineer, and his wife Hanna an associate professor at a community college. They come to us very

highly recommended by the Seminary staff, by clergy that know them and our Archbishop. Fr. Theodor and his wife have asked to come to work with and for us for a year, beginning in June or July. The Svanes are from Norway, so in due time they will be returning there.

In practical terms, what does that resolution mean? The Council designated a line item in the 2015 Budget for financial support: \$12,000 was pledged, with another \$8,000 coming from the weekly offerings. One parishioner has offered to move out of his condo, and rent it to the Svanes for a reduced amount. Our remaining task is to raise another \$20,000, so that a reasonable compensation can be provided to the intern and family.

I ask that you join me and the Parish Council in supporting the internship of the Svane family and humbly request that for the next year you consider adding to your weekly or monthly tithe a designated amount—whatever you can manage—for this purpose. No appeal letters will be sent nor will there be a hard sell to come up with the funds. Our parish relies at all times on both God's blessing and on your good will and support. I trust that if the Lord blesses, He will multiply and increase our efforts. Your comments and ideas on this endeavor are invited. Please share them with me or our Treasurer, David Winterton. —*Fr. Lawrence*

DENYING A CREATOR, MEN MAKE THEMSELVES INTO GODS

The philosophers of Greece have made much ado to explain nature, and not one of their systems has remained firm and unshaken, each being overturned by its successor. It is vain to refute them; they are sufficient in themselves to destroy one another. Those who were too ignorant to rise to a knowledge of a God, could not allow that an intelligent cause presided at the birth of the Universe; a primary error that involved them in sad consequences.

Some had recourse to material principles and attributed the origin of the Universe to the elements of the world. Others imagined that atoms, and indivisible bodies, molecules and ducts, form, by their union, the nature of the visible world. ...Deceived by their inherent atheism it appeared to them that nothing governed or ruled the universe, and that was all was given up to chance.

—St. Basil, from the *Hexameron*

THE JOURNEY TO LENT BEGINS

THE PASCHAL SEASON of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is also preceded by its own liturgical preparation. This weekend at Great Vespers we will hear the hymns about repentance, humility, pride, prayer and hypocrisy—based on the **Parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee** (Luke 18), read at the Liturgy the following day. We begin to sing that most compunctionate of hymns: *Open to me, the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life, for my spirit rises early to pray toward Thy holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled, but in Thy compassion, cleanse it by Thy loving-kindness and Thy mercy...*

On February 8 we read the **Parable of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15), which reveals not only man's wasteful prodigality, his self-induced misery and his afflicting misery on others, his exile from God, true repentance, the journey toward God, and again hypocrisy, as seen in the older brother, but more importantly, the love of God for us. On the same day we sing Psalm 136, *By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept*, and meditate on our exile from the Paradise of true life, true union with God.

On Sunday, February 15 we hear the **Parable of the Last Judgement** (Matt. 25), about the Sheep and the Goats, about who sees, and who doesn't see, the image of God in others and what they do about it. On this Sunday we eat meat for the last time until Pascha, so the day is called "Meatfare."

The following week, Sunday, February 22, is **Forgiveness Sunday**, so-called because of the reading from Matthew 6:14 about forgiving our enemies, proper prayer, fasting, and works of mercy, leads us to the doors of Great Lent. More properly the title of the day is the *Commemoration of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise*, and the hymns of the day will meditate on this sorrowful reality, which came about from the misuse of freedom and lack of trust in God, prompted by the evil one. We also call this day "Cheesefare Sunday" because we eat the last of our dairy, eggs and cheese. At 1:15 PM or so, after the Agape Meal, we will enter into Great Lent with the **Vespers of Forgiveness**: the gold icon cloths are replaced with the darker, royal purple; the chanting is done in the "lenten mode" and we participate in the act of mutual forgiveness at the conclusion of the Service. As we quietly and in an orderly fashion line up, we come to the clergy and then one another and say: "Forgive me" answering "God forgives," and we bow down in humility. Once we

learn to forgive others—even unto "seventy times seven"—then we can be free at last to experience God's forgiveness, which is the third step in the process. God's forgiveness is love in its purest form. It heals our hearts, makes us kinder to our fellows, and leads us into union with God. Forgiveness is a form of love—and love is the highest law. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "Do not be obliged to anyone for anything, except to love each other; he who loves has fulfilled all the rest of the law." By the way, if you are able to do a prostration before each person, fine; if not, a bow is more than sufficient. Do not let anything keep you from attending.

I encourage each and every single parishioner to participate in these Services—especially in the **Vespers of Forgiveness**, on Sunday, February 22, at 1:15 PM. It seems to me that no Orthodox Christian could enter into Great Lent, or celebrate Holy Week and Pascha without the experience of Forgiveness Sunday. The Church gives us such a service precisely because it is the perfect antidote to our self-enclosed, self-centered, excuse-making, other-blaming and critical existence. I wonder why and how anyone could intentionally miss this Service, and would perhaps even ask that person about it.

—Fr. Lawrence

Please join us for our traditional

Blini Brunch

Complete with sour cream, lox, herring, and caviar...and of course, butter, syrup and bacon!!

Church Hall
Sunday, February 15,
Noon

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 a la carte. Wine, juice, coffee and tea will be available for a small additional charge.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **ANNUAL MEETING, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1:** Yes, it's that time again—reports, discussions and elections to Parish Council. The meeting will begin at 12:30 PM. No lunch will be prepared, so bring a sandwich or something. Our meetings usually take less than two hours.
- **NOMADIC SHELTER:** Wednesday, February 4. Due to a scheduling conflict, we will not have a Nomadic Shelter evening here during March.
- **WOMEN'S RETREAT:** Dr. Jeanie Constantinou will be speaking here, Saturday, Feb. 6, 9 AM–5 PM or so. See the flyer for more info.
- **THE HOLY MYSTERY OF BAPTISM** will be given to Gabrielle Myles, infant daughter of Niki and Freddie, on Sunday, February 8 at 9 AM.
- **WE OFFER OUR CONDOLENCES** to Deacon Nicholas Carr, on the repose of his step-mother Vai last week. May her memory be eternal. Deacon Nicholas and his family will be traveling to Southern California on Sunday, and have asked that you keep them in your prayers.
- **HOUSE BLESSINGS:** Our parish has about eighty or so families that attend church each week. It is odd to report to you that since Theophany on Jan. 6, I have only blessed about 31 homes. That's not even half. Some homes I have never blessed, and some, only years ago. One wonders, if home blessings have been intentionally avoided? Great Lent is quickly approaching, during which there is little time or energy for home blessings. Please call me at 707-217-4556 to arrange a house blessing. —Fr L
- **THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK** distribution (to low income and needy families) is set for Wednesday, February 11, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM. Volunteers, please arrive just before 5 PM to set up. See Denise Pellizzer if you would like to volunteer to help with this outreach.
- **OUR SENIOR LUNCH** this month is scheduled for Thursday, February 12 at noon.
- **THE CATECHISM REVISITED** classes will be held on February 18, March 4 and 11. We will pick up again after Pascha.
- **BLESSING BAGS:** A co-worker of Shannon Winterton is taking donations and assembling 200 blessing bags to give to homeless in our community. Last year she made 100, and this year she wants to make 200, and is in need of donations. The "blessing bags" contain travel-size shampoo, hand sanitizer, Kleenex, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, band-aids, socks, gloves and energy bars. If you have any of these items and would be willing to donate them, please bring them to church this Sunday, February 1, and give them to David Winterton to deliver.
- **MEATFARE** is February 15. That is the last day to consume meat products (including chicken and lamb!) until Pascha. The next weekend, February 22, is Cheesefare, or more properly, the "Sunday of Forgiveness" which is the last day to eat dairy and eggs. The Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness will be at 1:15 PM that day.
- **CONCERT HERE BY THE YALE RUSSIAN CHOIR:** March 8 at 5 PM. Information and a flyer coming.

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY VESPERS

Sunday, March 1, 2015

with the blessing of

Metropolitan Gerasimos, *Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco*

Metropolitan Joseph, *Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*

Archbishop Kyrill, *ROCOR San Francisco and Western America Diocese*

Bishop Maxim, *Serbian Orthodox Western American Diocese*

Archbishop Benjamin, *OCA Diocese of San Francisco and the West*



5 PM:

Theological and practical considerations regarding the Fresco Program of the Church, by Iconographer, Monk Patrick (Doolan)

6 PM:

Lenten Vespers with Reception to follow

Protection of the Holy Virgin / St. Seraphim Orthodox Church

90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95407

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Publican and Pharisee • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 12:30 PM, Parish Annual Meeting	2 - Meeting of the Lord • 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy, blessing of candles	3 <div>Fr. Lawrence in Portland at Mission Parish Retreat</div>	4 - No Fasting • 6 PM, Vespers • Nomadic Shelter	5	6 - No Fasting	7 • 9 AM, Women's Retreat • 5 PM, Great Vespers
8 - Prodigal Son • 9 AM, Baptism • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 12:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	9	10	11 [Fr Lawrence in Calistoga all day] • 5 PM, <i>Redwood Empire Food Bank</i> • 6 PM, Vespers	12 • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship • 7 PM, <i>Master Plan Meeting</i>	13	14 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
15 - Last Judgment/Meatfare • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: BLINI LUNCHEON	16	17	18 • 8 AM, Matins • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 6 PM, Vespers	19 • 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, <i>Parish Council</i>	20 • 8 AM, Matins	21 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, • 5 PM, Vigil
22 - Forgiveness/Cheesefare • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal • 1:15 PM, Vespers of Forgiveness	23 - Clean Week • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	24 • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	25 • 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	26 • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	27 - St. Raphael • 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified • 6 PM, Akathist	28 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, • 5 PM, Vigil
March 1 - Sunday of Orthodoxy • 10 AM, Liturgy with Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel • Noon: Agape Meal • 5 PM, Sunday of Orthodoxy Celebration *	2	3 • 8 AM, Matins <i>[Fr. L in SF at Diocesan Council all day]</i>	4 - St. Daniel of Moscow • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	5 • 8 AM, Matins	6 • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Akathist	7 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, • 5 PM, Vigil

* The **Sunday of Orthodoxy Celebration** at 5 PM, Sunday, March 1, will be attended by Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Archdiocese, Bishop Maxim of the Serbian Archdiocese, and our own bishops. We expect clergy and faithful from all over the Bay Area. Father Patrick (Doolan) will give a talk on the fresco plan of the church at 5 PM, followed by Vespers at 6 PM, and refreshments after that.

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Sunday of Orthodoxy • 10 AM, Liturgy with Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel • Noon: Agape Meal • 5 PM, Sunday of Orthodoxy Celebration	2	3 • 8 AM, Matins <i>[Fr. L in SF at Diocesan Council]</i>	4 - St. Daniel of Moscow • 8 AM, Matins • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	5 • 8 AM, Matins	6 • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Akathist	7 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
8 - St. Gregory Palamas • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 12:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal • 5 PM, Concert by the Yale Russian Chorus	9 - Forty Martyrs	10 • 8 AM, Matins	11 • 8 AM, Matins • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 5 PM, <i>Redwood Empire Food Bank</i> • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	12 • 8 AM, Matins	13 • 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified • 6 PM, Akathist	14 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
15 - Veneration of the Cross • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	16	17 • 8 AM, Matins	18 • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	19 • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, <i>Parish Council</i>	20 • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Akathist	21 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
22 - St. John Climacus • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	23 • 9 AM, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete for the Fifth Week	24 • 6 PM, Vigil for Annunciation	25 - Annunciation • 5 PM, Vespersal Divine Liturgy and Meal	26 - Archangel Gabriel • 8 AM, Matins • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship (<i>Leave-taking of Annunciation</i>)	27 • 6 PM, Matins and Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos	28 • 10:30 AM, Choir Rehearsal • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
29 - St. Mary of Egypt • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	30	31 • 8 AM, Festal Matins for St. Innocent of Alaska	APRIL 1 • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	2 • 8 AM, Matins	3 - Last day of Lent • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Matins for Lazarus Saturday	4 - Lazarus Saturday • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • 2 PM, Decoration of Church for Vigil • 5 PM, Vigil / Blessing of Palms