

THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

JUNE 2019, Vol. 27, Issue 6

The Resurrection of Christ and the Rise of Christianity

ALMOST ALL AMERICAN churches are seeing either loss of members or a slowing of growth. Many formerly vibrant congregations are now moribund, closing and seeing their buildings demolished as the last parishioners turn off the lights for the last time. Orthodox churches are no exception. Some wonder where the golden age of the mid 20th century went, when the churches were filled and the next generation was inheriting leadership from their parents. What happened that we lost the golden age?

While former generations may have seen a golden age in terms of attendance, retention, etc., from what I have read and also been told by those who experienced it, it was not a golden age in terms of mission, education, liturgical depth, etc. In other words, they were not prepared for what was to come.

There are numerous societal factors that have exerted a shearing force on our churches, but pointing to one of them to blame and just throwing up our hands will lead simply to more church closings and more unengaged people. And it is fundamentally an abandonment and betrayal of Christ's commission to us.

Orthodoxy in America is experiencing what all American Christian groups are, and that is a falling away of those who were never really connected to the core concerns of Christian life. We are going through a winnowing, and only those churches who dedicate themselves to Christ in full will even be able to survive.

Some jurisdictions are seeing growth, while some are seeing an almost shocking decline. But the more impor-

tant story is being told parish by parish and family by family. We all have both success stories and cautionary tales. And no one can rest on whatever laurels he might have.

It is a scary time, but it is also a time of clarification, when being Christian will take more than ever, because all the social and even familial reinforcement are no longer there. And since we are Orthodox Christians in a non-Orthodox land, this will be even harder. This is what we must realize: We are in a new apostolic age. The assumption of a permanent Christendom must die and be replaced with a sense of mission to all God's creatures. No person is an outsider to God's love, and we have a responsibility to connect to all of them with the life-giving way of salvation in Christ.

The core of Orthodox Christian parish life is worship, which supports education, which supports outreach, each circle being founded on the previous one. There aren't any easy formulas, but if clergy and laity resolve to do these things together and not to assume that the next generation will simply be there to take over (or lament and/or scold them when they're not), then we can participate again in the apostolic work that is at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Will we lament the loss of Christendom, or will we renew our mission to a world that needs it more than ever? The choice belongs to each of us.

—Fr. Andrew Steven Damick



QUESTIONS FROM YOUTH

At the Youth Group meeting in January questions were anonymously submitted by some of the youth for our clergy to consider. Since we have yet to arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss the questions, it seemed right to post a question and a tentative answer in the bulletin. Each month we will consider a question.

Question: I'm worried about drifting away from the Orthodox Church as I grow older. How can I adjust my life so that could be prevented?

Response: The question is a good one, and relevant for all ages. I've noticed over the years that many of our adults are content with their Sunday School education about Jesus Christ and the Church. Perhaps reading spiritual books and engaging deeply with the Prayerbook daunting and confusing endeavors. In any case, the question does not concern what adults don't do, but rather, what this mature youth can do now to deepen his or her faith.

Some possible things to do—*First:* If your parents are serious about the Church, if they pray and if they are devoted

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to the Divine Liturgy, then of course you should ask them to tell you how they came to faith in Jesus Christ, what brought them to belief in Christ as their Savior and the Savior of the world, and how He gave them hope, understanding, inspiration, love and faith itself.

Second: Ask your parents and your priest how to pray to the Savior, how to really know Him. We can pray by rote, or we can learn how to pray with our heart and mind fully engaged in conversation with the Lord. St. Paul tells us that if we struggle to pray the Holy Spirit Himself will inspire us and ignite prayer within us. We often need to pray even when we don't "feel" like it.

Third: Read the Scriptures every day—just a little bit—especially the New Testament, but don't forget about the Old Testament. Jesus Himself explained to Luke and Cleopas after the Resurrection, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets...all the things in the Scriptures pertaining to Himself" (Luke 24). The Scripture mentioned here is the Old Testament. We meet the Lord in the Old and New Scriptures—we should approach the reading with a prayer that God will illumine our hearts.

Fourth: Learn how to hear during Church services, to bring your mind and heart to attention in Church, whether it be Vespers, Matins, Liturgy, etc. We don't just let our minds wander around in

Church, but we bring our attention to the words being prayed and sung. That takes a bit of work, but with God's help, we learn how to be in the moment.

Fifth: Know yourself. Be honest, but also know that you are not your thoughts or desires, your needs, fears or urges. You are created to be God's image and likeness to be like Christ. We live in a fallen world, subject to all kinds of sins and confusion, so we will find our true selves in Christ. That's the journey to make in learning about yourself. Of course, make a regular confession—we all need someone who knows us, accepts us, loves us and listens to us, so that we don't lie to ourselves. Fast weekly, and pray in preparation for Holy Communion as part of your effort to love God.

Sixth: This is your parish, you are a valued member of the Church. Find a way to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. There are many ministries—find one. Why wait to serve?

Above all, discover what it means to love God and how to keep His commandments. Let your goal be to love God above all—discover what it means to love Him. Jesus Christ makes a great promise to us: *He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him* (John 14). We have lives of the saints to teach us how they loved God; we have the Psalms which cry out to the Lord in joy, sorrow, pain, anger and love; we have the mystical Church services which bring us to the Throne of the Father Himself; we have the profound spiritual tradition of the Fathers of the Church teaching us how to know, to *deeply* know Christ. Here is the nourishment and inspiration we need to keep us centered in the presence of the Savior Jesus.

Just remember, when we love God and struggle (struggle is good, not bad) to keep His Holy Commandments this constitutes the carrying of our cross, as the Lord asked us to do when He said that anyone that would be His disciple will pick up a cross and follow Him. Loving Christ, putting Him first, will *unavoidably* bring us into tension and conflict with lots of things: the prevailing social, moral and ethical practices of this world for example, but maybe just our own laziness, anxieties and priorities. This causes us some suffering—but that's OK, God's Holy Spirit is helping us. Be prepared for the conflict—without anxiety—knowing that God became man, took our human nature as His own, died, rose again, ascended into Heaven, and now we sit with Him at the Right Hand of the Father. We reign with Him now.

Parents, take note: There are many books available about how to teach our children about Jesus Christ. Dr. Philip Mamalakis, a speaker and author, has a wonderful book entitled *Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Principles of Child-Rearing* (available in our bookstore). Here is a link of a video of Dr. Mamalakis speaking on that very topic (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zO_sptqYVM).

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- FROM MAY 21–JUNE 4 I will be in Phoenix to lead a one day choir workshop at our OCA Parish of St. John the Theologian in Tempe on Saturday, June 1. On Sunday, June 2 I will have the joy of serving with Bishop Daniel at his parish of Sts. Peter and Paul, and then on Monday will enjoy a brief visit to the Monastery of St. Paisius. —Fr Lawrence
- 50th ANNIVERSARY PARTY: Michael Jorgenson and his family will host a 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration for Matushka Patricia and Father James on June 9. We will begin with a Thanksgiving Prayer at 5 PM, followed by a BBQ. In the meantime, please keep Fr. James in your prayers as he recovers from back surgery. Call Matushka Patricia at (313) 903-5757 to confirm your attendance. The family will provide meat to grill, and asks that all of us bring a salad and beverages.
- THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK is held on the second Wednesday each month—June 12. Volunteers, please arrive around 5 PM to help set up. This Food Bank is an important way in which our parish does outreach to the community. Come and participate.
- ST SERAPHIM WEEK IS AROUND THE CORNER: If you have children, grandchildren or godchildren ages ten and under, you'll want to enroll them in our St. Seraphim Week for Kids program. This annual "Church School" will take place June 10–14 from 10 AM to 1 PM. Volunteers will be needed to help out each morning for a couple of hours. We have opportunities to help with crafts, story telling, playing games, snack prep and, of course, clean up. Please contact Gloria Collins at (707) 849-6135.
- WE WELCOME BACK Fr. Theodor, Matushka Hanne, Simon and Filip Svane. They are coming here on June 13 to participate in the Life School at Manton (June 17–21), the Diocesan Summer Camp (July 7–13) and to assist at Divine Services.
- SUMMER CAMP INFO: St. Eugene's Diocesan Camp is an Orthodox Christian Summer camp for youth ages 7-17. The camp will take place from July 7–13th, 2019 at Timber Mountain Summer Camp Located at [48478 Mill Canyon Rd, Oakhurst, CA 93644](https://www.google.com/maps/place/48478+Mill+Canyon+Rd,+Oakhurst,+CA+93644). The Camp is nestled within Sugar Pine Christian Camps in Oakhurst, California (near Yosemite). Cost is \$440 per camper, with scholarships available (siblings and otherwise) from our parish and the camp. See me ASAP if you are in need of financial assistance. I will be attending the camp. More information is available at www.steugenecamp.org. Registration is due by June 9.
- CALISTOGA RETREAT: The Monastery of the Assumption in Calistoga will host a retreat entitled "In His Image and Likeness — Sanctity of Life Teachings of the Orthodox Church." See the flyer on the back side of the Calendar.
- FISHING TRIP FOR KIDS: Fred Krueger is organizing a fishing trip to Lake Ilanjo at Annadel State Park on Saturday, June 22. A car pool will depart from the parish parking lot at 9 AM. There is a hike of two miles or so from the parking lot to the lake. Each person is asked to bring their own lunch, water and a hat. Children under age 16 do not need a fishing license. We will return to the Church by 4 PM. Call Fred Krueger for more info: 573-3076.
- AGAPE MEALS: Please take a look at the Agape Meal Sign Up Sheet in the Parish hall. We are in need of cooks and helpers to prepare meals on Sunday after the Divine Liturgy. Is there a birthday, name day, anniversary or anniversary of repose of a loved one that you would like share with the congregation by preparing a meal? If you've never done so, there are several families who have, and will be more than happy to give help and advice. Please also remember that on Pentecost, June 16, we have a Potluck after the Divine Liturgy and Kneeling Vespers.
- UPCOMING SERVICES: Leave-taking of Pascha; Feast of the Ascension; the Nativity of St. John the Baptist; the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (preceded by a short Apostles Fast, which begins on June 24); Liturgy at Fort Ross on July 4th. See the Calendar for times/dates.



GOING AWAY BBQ

THE HAMNER FAMILY will be moving to Pennsylvania to attend St. Tikhon's Seminary. Although our Parish life will be much weaker without them, nevertheless we rejoice that Garret has been accepted into the Master of Divinity program, which begins in September. There will be a going-away party for the family on Sunday, June 16 (Pentecost) beginning at 4 PM. Let us assure the Hamner family that we send them to the Seminary with our love and support (and I stress the word *support*). The Parish Council asks for your participation, so that we can provide to them monthly financial assistance.

The Parish will provide the meat for grilling at the BBQ on June 16; everyone is asked to bring something substantial to share, such as a salad and beverages. **PLEASE** contact Gloria Collins at (707) 849-6135 to confirm you will attend so that we have ample food. —Fr. Lawrence

Summer Retreat—Saturday June 22, 2019

In His Image and Likeness:

Sanctity of Life Teachings of the Holy Orthodox Church and Reflections on an Orthodox Christian Response for Our Times

Conducted by Fr. Edward Henderson and Veronica Ruby

I knew you
BEFORE I Formed
YOU in YOUR
mother's
womb. BEFORE
you were born
I SET YOU
Apart.
Jeremiah 1:5

9:00 AM—Session 1



10:30 AM—Session 2



12:15 PM Akathist



1 pm Lunch



2pm—Session 3



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1519 Washington St.
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No Fee—donations accepted

Call Soon—Space is limited

Fr. Edward Henderson is the pastor of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Berkeley, and Veronica Ruby is Coordinator of Orthodox Christians for Life of the San Francisco Bay Area.

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JUNE 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 – Samaritan Woman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Sun School • Noon, Agape Meal • 2 PM, <i>Wedding</i> • 3 PM, <i>Hall Rented for Birthday Party</i> 	27 – St. John the Russian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:30 AM, Memorial Prayers at Santa Rosa Cemetery (north side) • Potluck BBQ at Church 	28	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers • 6:30 PM, Panikhida for Kathie Franotovich 	30	31 <i>Fr Lawrence in Phoenix until Tuesday morning</i>	June 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
2 – Sunday of the Blind Man <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal 	3	4 – Leave-taking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Matins for Leave-taking of Pascha 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Ascension 	6 – ASCENSION DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy 	7	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
9 – Holy Fathers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • <i>Men's Group: SF for Liturgy and game</i> • 5 PM, Jorgenson Anniversary* 	10	11	12	13	14	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Memorial Liturgy • Decorating Church • 5 PM, Vigil for Pentecost
	<div>St. Seraphim Week for Kids, 10 AM–Noon each day</div>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank Distribution • 6 PM, Vespers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting 		
16 – HOLY PENTECOST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Baptisms • 10 AM, Festal Liturgy and Kneeling Vespers • 12:30 PM, Agape Meal (Potluck) • 4 PM, Party for Hamner's 	17 – Holy Spirit Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy 	18 Fr Lawrence on vacation until July 2	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	20	21	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>9 AM, Fishing Trip (see Bulletin for details)</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
23 – All Saints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 1:15 PM, Great Vespers 	24 – Nativity of St. John <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy Beginning of the Apostles Fast	25	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	27	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers 	29 – Sts. Peter and Paul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy (Children's Choir) • 5 PM, Great Vespers
30 – All Saints of Russia/America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal 	1 - JULY	2 <i>Fr. Lawrence returns from vacation</i>	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy at Fort Ross 	5	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers

* June 9: men's Group will attend Divine Liturgy in SF at the Old Cathedral (ROCORO) and a ballgame. At 5 PM, Thanksgiving Prayers and BBQ for 50th Anniversary of Patricia and Fr. James