

THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

JUNE 2020, Vol. 28, Issue 6

WHAT WILL WE DO IN JUNE?

Christ is Risen! We take leave of the Paschal Season on Wednesday, May 27 (also the feast of St. John the Russian) and prepare ourselves for the feast days of the Ascension of the Lord the next day, and Holy Pentecost on June 7. These two feast days lead us to rejoice: first, in the fact that when the Lord ascended into Heaven, as the God-Man He has enthroned our human nature at the Right Hand of the Father, as we confess in the Creed. He rules over all things, and guides us. In our sorrow, our worries and our fears, we remember that He is with us, “even until the end of the age. Amen.” It is the Holy Spirit Who makes Him present for us—when we received Him at Chrismation: He has come to us, to dwell and abide in us. This is the joy of Pentecost. So, we look forward to the Great Feast of the Holy Trinity on June 7. More on that below.

I’d like to express my thanks to all of you for your patience since March. Our Church life has been seriously disrupted, yet, as you can read below, those who embrace what God has allowed in the midst of this disruption, have experienced a deeper life in Christ. And it has been a most unusual and horrible disruption in so many ways. Lest anyone think I never leave the Holy Altar and have my head in the clouds, I assure you that I have profound concerns and sorrow for those who have suffered so much. I have unbounded admiration for those who have been working hard to keep things going in our society all around us, with no recompense and very little recognition.

I am grateful that so many of you have spent time and resources in outreach, phone calls, shopping, errands, help at homes and many other activities. I have been humbled and impressed with the continued financial generosity of our parishioners. Our financial support of the two rooms at the Catholic Charities family Support Center downtown continues; parish members come to volunteer at the Redwood Empire Food Bank (now, happening

twice a month, see the calendar); Church School Teachers continue to teach all the grade levels; our two churches continue to be cleaned twice weekly by Elsie and a few church “elves” and the office is kept running by our outstanding Treasurer Martin Thong and our Secretary Bobbi Griovski. What a blessing for the Parish!

I am very grateful to Fr. Nicholas and Matushka Esther Carr for really “stepping up” during these last months: Matushka Esther initiated the use of Zoom for our parish, and has organized the various meetings, Bible Studies and online fellowship get-togethers.

Fr. Nicholas has extended himself to help where help is needed: teaching the Wednesday evening class on Acts, preaching each Saturday evening, serving during Holy Week at the Monastery in Calistoga, making visits to shut-ins and calling parish members to stay in touch, and now, serving the Divine Liturgy each Saturday morning. Many Years to them both. Fr. John Schettig has been serving regularly at the Kazan Skete, so the Sisters have not been without Divine Services and the Holy Mysteries thanks to his labors.

I am grateful to our Church singers: our Choir Master Nicolas and his assistants, Tom Pellizzer and Justin Margitich, for all the solo singing they have done and will continue to do for at least a while. Along with them, I am grateful to have serving in the Holy Altar Subdeacon Marc and Gary John. My thanks to them. And, unseen by all, is our catechumen Timothy Danford, who has made our live stream services a reality.

Upcoming: We will have the Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy for Leave-taking on Tuesday evening, beginning at 11:30 PM. No matter what the situation with people—in or not in the Church—we will have only one singer, our Choir Master, Nicolas. The next evening we



THE FIFTH BEATITUDE that was spoken in the Sermon on the Mount is, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7). It is possible that no other commandment of Christ is needed more in our epoch than this commandment of mercy, of charity. We live in the era of ideologies which in their attempt to be all-encompassing exist in continuous strife, and this strife fills the world with fear and hatred. We live in a world where mercy and charity are exiled, and that is perhaps the most frightening thing about it—the sign of its dehumanization. How often it is told about Christ in the Gospels that He had compassion on them, that He was merciful to them! —*Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, +1983*

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

The Rector, Fr. Lawrence Margitich, may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net.

Parish Contacts

Bobbi Griovski, Parish Secretary	584-9491
Fr. John Schettig	318-1559
Fr. Nicholas Carr	318-5391
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
Martin Thong, Treasurer	888-7888
Karen Werder, Recording Secretary	338-4962
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

will have Vespers for Ascension at 5 PM, and Matins at 8 PM (why not? since no one has to drive to church), and the Liturgy on Ascension at 8:30 AM. All of this will be live streaming on Facebook.

We are all wondering if we will be able to gather together in Church, as the Church, in Divine worship for the Feast of Pentecost on June 7, and if so, how will that be? Or, will we be following the same routine as we have now, with only a “serving staff” in the Church and Holy Communion given only at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy? I honestly can’t say at this moment.

However, let us *consider a tentative plan* for Pentecost (pending the Archbishop’s blessing, of course) to have Baptisms of Catechumens at 9 AM, followed by Divine Liturgy at 10 AM. We will serve the Liturgy outside, i.e., the Altar on the porch of St. Seraphim, with a single singer on either side. I have made arrangements to have a modest sound system for this. Those attending can be in the forecourt, and bring folding chairs if needed, and umbrellas for shade. After Pentecost *perhaps* we can gather again, even if in smaller numbers (but more frequently, and with alternating groups). Let us see what the Lord provides and what the Bishop blesses. The decisions on all this are theirs alone. *With love in Christ our Savior. —Fr. Lawrence*



COMMENTS ON PARTICIPATION IN STREAMING SERVICES

Some parishioners offer remarks on praying along with a live stream Church Service. The first four are presented without author ascription

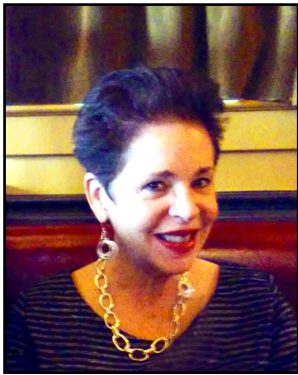
We have been incredibly blessed during this time to have streaming services available. We feel that it has provided a lifeline to us. We miss our beautiful church and parish immensely, but get great comfort and joy knowing that we are sharing and attending our services together via the internet. We enjoy seeing the beauty of our cathedral and hearing the hymns. And of course, being able to see Fr. Lawrence and others. We are so grateful for the education that Fr. Lawrence and Fr. Nicholas provide. ... We miss being in church together, seeing and hugging you. We miss watching the children interact, sing and worship. We miss venerating the icons and hearing the choir. We miss the beautiful grounds and seeing waffles. Honestly, we miss everyone and everything!

I miss liturgy terribly but I still find the streaming services to be very powerful. It is very easy for me to pray and enter in during them—and I usually associate that ease with communal prayer rather than individual prayer because when it’s just me my prayers are weak, I’m distracted and I can’t concentrate. But during the services I get to pick up on the frequency (for lack of a better word) of everyone else, which is much stronger. It’s not the same if I save the services and watch them later. The “live” feature where it’s all happening in real time seems to facilitate that. I would imagine that for shut-ins, it could continue to be a great ministry. And yes, the glitches are no fun. But I still prefer to “watch” while standing at our icon corner rather than doing readers’ services with just us.

I have felt that our streaming is kind of lacking just a bit. However, this may be just me. The church streaming I am benefiting from the most is San Anselmo. Second, Calistoga. I love the way Father Stephan is doing the Services, in a small space, personally reaching the viewer. It’s less cavernous sounding, less fussing with stuff, and it feels more real. However, I am also noticing that while I miss our parish, I have personally experienced a deep sense of being connected to the greater Orthodox world, more than I have ever before, despite whatever struggles I have. I think people’s prayers and Saint Seraphim himself have something to do with it.

Our experience of the streaming has been basically positive once we were finally given the right link and instructed on how to get into Facebook and the parish site. We had occasional glitches a couple of weeks ago when others were experiencing serious sound problems, but in our case it was only here and there during the service for a few seconds (amazing, considering the generally ornery nature of our old computer). Of course, the main thing we miss is the people and just the spiritual energy that resides in the cathedral itself, in the walls and beautiful dome and altar as well as the collective body of everyone in attendance. Even so, I was surprised that I felt some of what I experience in church from the streaming service, perhaps simply from the power of the words of Holy Scripture when it is read aloud, the beauty that remains in the hymns and chants even if only performed by one person (your voice is in great form, Justin, by the way). I read the article about the special dangers of singing as a way of spreading the virus, even responding to the chants with “Lord have mercy” or whatever. I would really miss the choir as that is one of my favorite parts of the service, but we will have to consider all sides of that issue. The agape meal is definitely missed, the one time I get to connect with many people in our far-flung parish. I miss Waffles too, though I might see him if I attend one of the in-car services.

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—For Lisa and I the streaming of the services has been a wonderful blessing. Especially for Lisa since she so rarely is able to attend any service. To be able to see the icons, see the smoke from the incense, hear the hymns and prayers, even with the odd echoing quality due to lack of people to absorb the sound. We both try to type in the responses as we are able, and I have managed to get a couple of nice screen captures on my phone. Our parish is truly blessed having singers such as Nicholas, Justin, Steven, and servers such as Subdeacon Marc, and acolyte Gary John who all labored like *Stakhanovites*, along with our beloved priests and *Matushki*. Now that we are able to partake of the Holy Mysteries I’m finding it somewhat surreal. We leave the house at the end of the sermon, listen to the stream on our phones—and Lisa continues to watch. But I have found that I am able to “lay aside all earthly cares” almost as well watching the service as being there in person. The mindset of immersing myself in the prayers, of allowing the rhythm and flow and sound of the Liturgy to wash over and through me is the same even without the “smells and bells” (which do add greatly to the feeling). But driving and trying to maintain participation in the Liturgy sets up an odd feedback loop in my head. Two acts that should not go together are forced together, like poles of magnets being forced towards each other. Regarding the technical issues: Other than confirming that I didn’t somehow mess something up on my end they really don’t bother me much. Other than the hymns and readings of the day the Liturgy is enough a few cutouts don’t break the flow of it. —*In Christ, Subdcn. Joe Lovell*



Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! I want to express my sincere appreciation of St. Seraphim’s and especially Fr. Lawrence, who has been a shining light of calm concern during what has been a most unusual and historic time. As part of the “extended” family of St. Seraphim Cathedral, I found that during the shelter in place, and especially during Lent I wanted, nay, needed to hear and be a part of the Liturgy and the Scriptures. I needed our Orthodox traditions. Traditions help connect us to all that has gone on in the past. That’s why we appreciate them so much and work hard to maintain them. They help bring us meaning, and a rhythm to life. However, traditions change over time, sometimes because we want them to; and other times, they change due to circumstances beyond our control like with the Coronavirus. Even though we could not be physically present in church, I felt connected the Holy Mysteries and the community at St. Seraphim’s. I am deeply grateful to Fr. Lawrence, the clergy, the cantors, and all who helped bring us live streaming of the services. The beauty and deep resonance of our faith is there for us. In recognition and appreciation of the efforts of Fr. Lawrence, and all who assisted, I have made additional modest financial gifts. I realize that most likely parish giving has been impacted in light of the economic downturn, and I wanted to do my small part to help. Thank you for all you do. —*Blessings, Stephanie Chapralis*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

JUNE 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 31 - Holy Fathers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 3 PM, Women's Online Fellowship 	1	2	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of Acts 	4	5	6 - Memorial Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 5 PM, Great Vespers
7 - PENTECOST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:40, Hours • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy (in Church) • 3 PM, Kneeling Vespers for Pentecost (in Church) 	8 - Holy Spirit Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • 7 PM, Men's Fellowship 	9	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4:30 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of Acts 	11	12	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 5 PM, Great Vespers
14 - All Saints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 3 PM, Women's Online Fellowship 	15 <p><i>Beginning of the Apostles Fast</i></p>	16	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of Acts 	18	19	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 5 PM, Great Vespers
21 - All Saints of America/Russia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy 	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Men's Fellowship 	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers for Nativity of St. John the Baptist 	24 - Nativity of St. John <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • 4:30 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 5 PM, Vespers 	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting 	26	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 5 PM, Great Vespers
28 - Sts. Sergius and Herman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 1:30 PM, Vespers for Sts. Peter and Paul 	29 - Sts. Peter and Paul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy <p><i>End of the Apostles Fast</i></p>	30				