

# THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2020, Vol. 28, Issue 11



## SOME TEMPORARY ADJUSTMENTS

### Worship

**A**S WE ENTER November, our county has not reached the COVID markers for opening up venues, including Churches for worship. Our front porch Liturgies will continue for the time being—of course, if it rains (will it ever?) we will serve the Liturgy inside. “By the book” there is no indoor attendance, although we have been allowing 15 max for Vespers and weekday Liturgies, and will do the same for a rainy Sunday morning. When the county does move to the next level of easing restrictions (which apparently won’t happen for a while), we will have room for 55 people inside the church, with social distancing. At that point we will probably operate on a *first-come-first-serve* attendance policy, but this will be confirmed after discussion with the Parish Council.

### Pastoral Ministry

More impactful for the parish in general will be the temporary changes in priestly ministry. As all of you know, attendance at the Sunday Divine Liturgy is drastically lower than it was last year at this time—for obvious reasons. We now average 75–100 for the Sunday Liturgy, while last year we averaged 180–200. Because of this drop in attendance, and the *much lighter concurrent pastoral duties* here at the parish, Fr. Nicholas will take this opportunity to serve Sunday Divine Liturgies more frequently at our two local Women’s Monasteries, starting January 1 (He has already begun to help out and will be in Calistoga for the next two Sundays). The more immediate change: Fr. John and Matushka Xenia, who have been

serving here with great distinction and honor since 2005, will temporarily help out at our sister parish, Sts. Peter and Paul Russian

Orthodox Church on Stony Point Rd. Have no fear, they are not leaving the OCA or our parish, this is only a temporary change due to circumstances, and has been blessed by Archbishop Benjamin. Fr. John will continue to visit some of our parish shut-ins whom he dearly loves, as well as be available for those who regularly make Confession with him—simply call or email him to arrange that and meet him at Sts. Peter and Paul. He will also join us for most of the Sunday Agape Meals, so we are not losing his active participation in parish life.

I see these unfortunate, yet necessary, adjustments as lasting only until we are able to return to a normal indoor Liturgy with a full congregation. Please be mindful that in general (well, there are always exceptions, since we have the blessing of Fr. James being with us) there will be very little time to confess on Sunday mornings since I will be the only serving priest. I would ask you to schedule your confessions for any other day or time.

### Sunday Agape

The newly-revived and revised Sunday Agape was a wonderful gift to the Parish from the Box Lunch Committee! Thank you, dear friends in Christ, for making this possible. We are now able to restore a little bit more fellowship after the Divine Liturgy, and are grateful for this opportunity. —Fr. Lawrence

## PRAYERS AND FASTING FOR RACIAL RECONCILIATION

**I** invite you to join with me in praying the *Akathist to the African Saints* and the *Prayer for Racial Reconciliation* at 12 Noon, Saturday Nov. 7, and to keep a fast from noon until dinner. Following the lead of Archbishop Michael of the Diocese of New and New Jersey, this service has been done (and will continue to be done) on the first Saturday of the month since June. [You can find the text of the Service here.](#) During these days of social anxiety and conflict, one of the things we can do as the Church is to fast and pray, asking for God’s help, protection and guidance for all. —Fr. Lawrence

# THANKSGIVING FOOD BOX PROJECT

It's that time year again for our Thanksgiving Food Box Project! This is our 8th year providing families a full Thanksgiving meal box. \$50.00 supports a full meal box. This year our goal will be to supply **200 families**.

This partnership between St. Seraphim Orthodox Church and Catholic Charities has become a staple in our community for families in need. Thank you for your continued support!

Please reach out to Amy Margitich or Serge Anderson with any questions (such as when the box assembly and distribution will take place). Donations can be made directly to the Church via Check, Cash or [Paypal LINK HERE](#).

## THANKSGIVING

*Thoughts of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

Man has loved the world, but as an end in itself and not as transparent to God. He has done it so consistently that it has become something that is “in the air.” It seems natural for man to experience the world as opaque, and not shot through with the presence of God. It seems natural not to live a life of thanksgiving for God's gift of a world. It seems natural not to be eucharistic. The world is a fallen world because it has fallen away from the awareness that God is all in all. The accumulation of this disregard for God is the original sin that blights the world. And even the religion of this fallen world cannot heal or redeem it, for it has accepted the reduction of God to an area called “sacred” (“spiritual,” “supernatural”)—as opposed to the world as “profane.” It has accepted the all-embracing secularism which attempts to steal the world away from God.

The Eucharist is the state of perfect man. When man stands before the throne of God, when he has fulfilled all that God has given him to fulfill, when all sins are forgiven, all joy restored, then there is nothing else for him to do, but to give thanks. When a man stands before



### 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Thanksgiving Food Box Project.

This collaboration between St. Seraphim Orthodox Church and Catholic Charities, provides a full Thanksgiving Meal Box to **200 families**.

\$50.00 sponsors a full meal box

Donations can be made directly to St. Seraphim Orthodox Church via Check, Cash or Paypal.

Serge Anderson and Amy Margitich also available to accept donations



God, face to face, when he has been accepted into his presence, when his sins are forgiven, and he has recovered his pristine beauty, the Eucharist, thanksgiving, adoration, worship, is truly the ultimate and the total expression of his whole being. It is the divine element, the image of God in us, the life of paradise, the one essential relationship with God, the only full and real response of man to God's creation, redemption, and gift of heaven. It is a new style of life, the only real life, of creation with God, and in God, the only true relationship between God and the world. In sin, man has lost that pure Eucharist. He has directed his life, his love, his care, toward other objects. He has become incapable of Eucharist, thanksgiving, which is the state of man in Paradise. ✱

## CLEANING OUR CATHEDRAL

A FEW OF US are attempting to re-organize our efforts to keep the Cathedral clean. We would like to give all our Parish Members the opportunity to participate. For a while now, our dear sister-in-Christ, the ever-industrious Elsie Avalon, has not only been managing the Sacristan duties, along with Peter Tennyson, but has frequently been cleaning the church by herself. We would like to help out with those duties. Our goal is to have a sizable group, so that we can break into teams that will minimize each person's efforts toward keeping our Cathedral worthy of its beauty to glorify God. We are eager to include family units—there is plenty to do, and this need is immediate. Please contact me to take part. —Bonnie Alexander (707-338-4962)

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK is held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month—Nov. 11 and 18. Volunteers: please arrive around 4 PM to help set up. This Food Bank is an important way in which our parish does outreach to the community.
- THE 7 PM WEDNESDAY EVENING SCRIPTURE STUDY continues, on Zoom, with a study of selected chapters of the Prophecy of Isaiah, led by Fr James. The Zoom link will be sent via our GROUPS forum each week.
- MONTHLY CONFESSION: Those who are receiving Holy Communion regularly also make a regular and monthly confession.  
When to schedule?      Fridays from 11:30 AM–1 PM, no appointment necessary  
                                    On Saturdays before, during and after Vespers  
                                    Phone or in-person appointment, whatever time and day suits you, simply call, email or text to set up a time  
                                    Please schedule a time OTHER than Sunday morning
- SAINTS PETER AND PAUL Russian Orthodox Church on Stony Point Rd will be holding their Christmas Bazaar and Food Festival on Saturday, November 14, from 10 AM–3 PM and Sunday, November 15, from 11 AM–3 PM. ONLINE DETAILS: [Click here for event details](#) or [click here to pre-order frozen Russian food to-go](#).
- BLESSED REPOSE: Our brother Yemani Teklu reposed peacefully Tuesday morning, October 27, after a two-year illness, one year of that with hospice. During that time he confessed and received Holy Communion regularly. On Tuesday morning, the prayers for “The Departure of the Soul from the Body” were prayed at his Memorial Hospital bedside, his sons being present as well. We are of course grieving as a church family, missing this devoted, pious and righteous man. But we have hope and faith in the resurrection. The funeral service will take place at a funeral home with family members only, date/time to be set, after which Yemani’s holy body will be sent to Eritrea where he will be buried until the general resurrection. There will be a Panikhida for Yemani on Saturday, October 31, at 4:45 PM.
- OUR FRESCO PAINTERS, Father Patrick and Hierodeacon Moses, have returned! They will focus on completing the three northern arches in the Nave: Feeding of the Five Thousand; Healing of the Blind Man; Christ at the home of Martha and Mary.

### NOVEMBER 15—AN IMPORTANT DATE

THE NATIVITY FAST begins, as always, on November 15, and continues until Christmas Day, when we break the Fast. The Nativity Fast gives Orthodox Christians the opportunity to prepare for Christmas on December 25. By abstaining from certain food and drink, particularly from meat, fish, dairy products, olive oil, and wine (how about we also fast from TV and social media), we turn our attention to prayer and almsgiving. **One** of the aims of fasting, besides self-discipline and obedience to the spiritual practice of the Church, is that hunger, when given wings by prayer, makes us conscious of our dependence upon God. While fasting from food, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us. There is a strong connection between works of mercy for those less fortunate (alms) and fasting. We not only sympathize with those who suffer hunger and want, we show compassion (to co-suffer) as well. Our compassion is sustained by the love of God when we approach fasting in a prayerful, humble and spiritually directed way. [See this link for a short article on fasting](#). On the first day of the Christmas Fast, Sunday, November 15, a brief Vespers will be served at 1:15 PM to help us make a good beginning.

### Stewards of the OCA Sunday, November 15

Support the work of the Orthodox Church in America by becoming a *Steward of the OCA*. Your support will enhance the work of the ministries and departments of the OCA that serve the entire church by providing important resources such as liturgical texts, liturgical music, religious educational material, and educational events. Other new and exciting projects are also under development. Go to [oca.org/stewards](https://oca.org/stewards) to learn more and to view the schedule of upcoming live online events that will highlight the work and plans of the departments.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## NOVEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 - Unmercenary Healers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	2	3	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	5	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noon, Prayers for Racial Reconciliation</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism on <i>Jesus Christ the Savior</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions</li> </ul>
<b>8 - Holy Archangels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	9	10	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 AM, <i>Panikhida in Healdsburg, Anniversary of Fr Michael's repose</i></li> <li>• 4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	12	13 <i>No Confessions today</i>	14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 Catechism On <i>Repentance and Faith</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions</li> </ul>
<b>15 - St. Paisius – Fast Begins</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:30 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Agape Meal</li> <li>• 1:15 PM, Vespers and Prayers for the beginning of the Nativity Fast</li> </ul>	16	17	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	19	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Vigil for Feast of the Entrance</li> </ul>	21 - ENTRANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Festal Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism On <i>the Holy Spirit</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions</li> </ul>
<b>22 - Virgin Martyr Cecilia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:30 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	23	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	25 - St. Catherine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank</li> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	26 - Thanksgiving Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> </ul>	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism On <i>the Church</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions</li> </ul>
<b>29 - Martyr Paramon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:30 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Agape Meal</li> <li>• 1:30 PM, Vespers for St. Andrew</li> </ul>	<b>30 - St. Andrew</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Andrew the First Called</li> </ul>	December 1	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	3	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> </ul>	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism On <i>the Virgin Mary</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions</li> </ul>