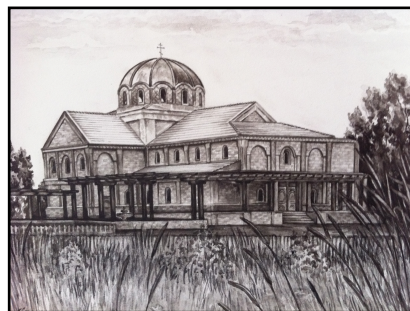


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Thy kingdom; glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

- TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

Great are the achievements of faith. In the fountain of flames, as in refreshing water, the three Holy Children rejoiced. And the Prophet Daniel proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

- KONTAKION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

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 wilt.

- KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Special Melody: *On this day the Virgin:*

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child, Who before the ages is God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 18: 11:30 AM, Baptism
2:30 PM, *Nightingale Blessing Bags assembly*
3:30 PM, Catechism: *On the Virgin Mary*
5 PM, Vigil and Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 19: 9:45 AM, Reception of Catechumens
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Lunch
1 PM, Vespers of the Prefeast
Church decoration to follow Vespers

- Monday, Dec. 20: 5 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
- Tues., Dec. 21: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
4 PM, Confessions
5 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
- Wed., Dec. 22: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
4 PM, Confessions
4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
5 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
- Thurs., Dec. 23: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast / Confessions to follow
11 AM, Church Decoration
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM (please note the time), Royal Hours (3rd & 9th) for Nativity
- Fri., Dec. 24: 11:30 AM, Vesperal Liturgy for Christmas Eve
6 PM, Festal Matins for Christmas
- Sat., Dec. 25: CHRISTMAS DAY: 9:30 AM, Festal Divine Liturgy, *The Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ* (No Vespers)
- Sun. Dec. 26: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Agape Meal

- CHRISTMAS CHARITY (i.e., normal Christian work)

Our head elves, Denise Anna and Lydia, will be gathering on Saturday, December 18th at 2:30 PM (under the overhang of the storage building) for our annual [Nightingale Event](#). We will be wrapping backpacks, sweatsuits and assembling blessing bags. If our volunteers can bring their own scissors and tape, that would be great. We have everything else covered. Please contact Denise Pellizzer with any questions you have and if you will be able to join us! Her cell is (707) 364-6445.

- NEW CATECHUMENS:

We will have the great joy of receiving as catechumens James Greene, Andrew Todhunter, Raquel Llas and Dr. John Fullerton on Sunday at 9:45 AM. Please come to support them with your prayers. They join Bibiane Vissoh and Evan Holloway, who have been catechumens for a few months.

- CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS:

Please prepare yourself in every spiritual way for the Feast of the Birth of Christ. It is appropriate and proper for us—priests, servers, readers, singers and all the people of God—to make a Confession prior to receiving Holy Communion on all feast days, but **especially before the feast of Christmas**. It is not appropriate for anyone over seven years of age to receive Holy Communion on Nativity without a recent Confession. *See this edifying [Encyclical on Confession and Communion](#) from the Holy Synod.*

- BLESS THOSE WHO LOVE THE BEAUTY OF THY HOUSE:

On Sunday December 19th, right after the brief 1 PM Vespers, we will be decorating the church for the Nativity of Our Lord. There will be some heavy lifting and ladder work. I hope you will join us. Many

hands make for light work. Then, on Thursday, December 23 at 11 AM we will set out the flowers: surrounds, sprays and arrangements will be assembled. All are welcome to participate.

- OFFERINGS FOR FLOWER DECORATIONS

There will be an offering this Sunday for the flowers, wreaths and Poinsettias to beautify our church during this festal season. Thank you all for your support. —*Your sister in Christ, Denise Anna.*

- SERVICES OF THE PREFEAST OF CHRISTMAS:

Beginning this Sunday, December 19, the Church gives us a *Winter Holy Week* with the services of Matins and Vespers (see calendar above) to spiritually, mentally and emotionally prepare us for the great day of Christmas, the birth of Christ. On Sunday morning at the Liturgy we hear the passages from the [Epistle to the Hebrews \(Chapter 11\)](#) all about that faith: “All these [people], having obtained a good testimony through faith [their fidelity to God, despite the incredible struggles they had] did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” The saints of old witnessed by their faithful lives to what was to come, that is Christ the Redeemer, by remaining faithful to God, that is, by trusting in His many promises for the deliverance to come. And now, we too are included in this great cloud of witnesses to God’s love and acts in history to save the world from sin and death. During the week to come we will hear the following *Troparion* repeatedly:

Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all. Adorn thyself, O Ephratha [the area around Bethlehem], for the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the divine fruit: If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

THE WORSHIP SERVICES OF CHRISTMAS

How essential it is to realize that Christmas, which commemorates the Birth of the Savior of the world, is centered around the services of the Church, cleansing of the soul and body by prayer and repentance, and works of mercy for the poor—in those things, if our hearts are open and we act with humility, Christ is renewed within us! Yes, family, festive foods and drink and presents are important aspects *ON* Christmas and after—but only because of the joy that we have celebrating the birth of the Word of God (“God became flesh!”), and our rebirth in baptism. Christians celebrate Christmas for a specific reason(s); the world celebrates the “holidays” as a distraction from life (celebrating about nothing in particular), but we prepare for, and then celebrate our salvation in Christ. I encourage you to attend whatever of the *Prefeast Matins* or *Vespers* you are able to attend. However, it’s not improper for me to say since I love you all, that I absolutely expect (as in “are you coming to the great celebration to be together?”) all of you to be present in Church for the Christmas Eve Matins at 6 PM and the Liturgy on Christmas day at 9:30 AM, to enjoy the banquet of faith. I can’t imagine celebrating without each one of you. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- THE GENEALOGY OF THE LORD—MATTHEW 1:

The progression of the lineage of the promised Savior, the Messiah, the Christ passed through the generations. On the Sunday before Nativity we read the first chapter of the [Gospel according to St. Matthew](#). He began his account by tracing the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham: “Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah, etc.” Though there were more, Matthew chooses to list fourteen generations from Abraham to David, another fourteen from David to the Babylonian captivity, and another fourteen from then to the Christ; *three groups of fourteen* signifying to the ancient Jewish mind perfect completion and fulfillment of God’s original promise. It so happens also that in Hebrew the Prophet David’s name is composed of three consonants: D-W-D, which also have in Hebrew a numerical value, 4-6-4. So, St. David’s name is also the number fourteen. (*adapted*)

- THE DAY OF OUR PATRON SAINT:

On Sunday, January 2, we will greet His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin (and possibly His Grace Bishop Daniel too) at 10 AM, and begin the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of *Saint Seraphim of Sarov*.

- A HOMILY OF ST. NIKOLAI (VELIMIROVIC):

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world (John 16:28). So great is God’s mercy, and so great is the dignity of man, that the Son of God Himself came down from eternity into time, from heaven to earth, from the throne of glory to the shepherd’s cave, solely to save mankind, to cleanse men from sin and to return them to Paradise. *I came forth from the Father, where I had everything, and am come into the world, which cannot give Me anything.* The Lord was born in a cave to show that the whole world is one dark cave, which He alone can illumine. The Lord was born in Bethlehem—and Bethlehem means “the House of Bread” — to show that He is the only Bread of Life worthy of true men. O Lord Jesus, the Pre-eternal Son of the Living God and the Son of the Virgin Mary, enlighten us and nourish us with Thyself. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

- MYLES FAMILY MOVING:

The following was sent by Niki Myles: We are off to Nebraska! Freddie has been planning to work for a university for some time now, but we were thinking it would be Sonoma State. He was offered a job at Concordia University in Seward, a small town near Lincoln. Please pray for us as I know we will be quite homesick and missing you all. We look forward to seeing you this weekend and for Christmas, but we will be away by the time of Theophany, sending our love and prayers in your direction.

- THEOPHANY IS COMING:

The feast of Theophany commemorates the Baptism of the Savior and the revelation of the Holy Trinity at the Jordan River. This feast is very much connected to Christmas, and until the early 4th century Christmas and Theophany were celebrated together. We keep this feast each year with services on January 5 and 6, with Royal Hours, a Vespers Liturgy, a Festal Matins in the evening and the Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of Water. Please, mark your calendars so you can participate. House blessings will be scheduled in the next week or so, and posted. As usual, I will make a geographic list of homes to bless, pick some dates, and hope that you will be home on that particular day (we can always reschedule if the date does not work). —*Fr Lawrence*