

• HERE'S HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HOUSE BLESSING:

1. The entire family should be present.
2. Have the following items at your Icon Corner or on a table: icon, oil lamp or candle, small bowl (cereal size is fine) for the Holy Water (I will bring some Water with me if you do not have any), list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked.
3. Turn off TV, video games and cell phones.
4. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

• CLING TO GOD:

The faithful are often scandalized by the prosperity of sinners. And it is true that if we look at things from a purely human perspective it can seem as if God has distributed His blessings unjustly. Here, where He should have given a measure of happiness, He has given only misfortune. And there, where He should have dispensed riches, He gave only poverty. And where poverty was in order, he lavished wealth. When we wait for a blessing, He often deals us a hard blow, while at the same time He maintains smiles on the faces of those around us. In a way that echoes modern social concerns, we might say that God discriminates, and this is something that scandalizes us. Why does this scandalize us? The answer is simple. It is because our hearts are still attached to earthly things, still clinging to false “goods” that we continue to covet and crave. Thus the solution to our dilemma must be sought elsewhere, and this means that we should not be hasty in abolishing whatever strikes us as discrimination or injustice. We live in a time of rapid change, when every innovation is presented to us as “progress,” but before real change, real progress, can take place, something must first change within us. And for this to happen we must become completely estranged to all things earthly and human, to all human logic, to all human ways of thinking, and to every so-called material good. We must be indifferent in the face of all things. And only then, when we have become strangers to all, can God become all things to us, as if there existed nothing else in the world for us except God. It is this alone that can grant us true and lasting tranquility. Otherwise, if our heart is attached to anything earthly, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem to be, we can be sure that it will make us suffer. —*Elder Aimilianos of Athos*

• COMMEMORATION BOOKS:

Please update your commemoration books for the year at the candle desk.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



January 9, 2022



• RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overthrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

• TROPARION OF THEOPHANY, Tone One:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word. O Christ, our God, Who hast revealed Thyself, and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

• KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY, Tone Four:

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise: and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light Unapproachable.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, January 8: 5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
- Sunday, January 9: 10 AM, Liturgy (No Church School or Agape)
- Wednesday, January 12: 4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
5 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, January 13: 7 PM, Online Scripture Study with Fr James
- Friday, January 14: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
7 PM, Visit of the Icon of St. Anna with Akathist (see the flyer)
- Saturday, January 15: 5 PM, Vigil
- Sunday, January 16: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

• AGAPE / CHURCH SCHOOL / CHILDREN'S MUSICAL EVENING:

After some discussion, the Parish Council and I decided to cancel the Agape Meal and Church School classes for the next two weeks due to the rather dramatic increase in covid cases throughout the county, and with some of our own parish members. The “Children’s Musical Offering” planned for this Sunday, Jan. 9 at 5 PM will also be rescheduled. Hopefully, we will return to our usual practice very soon.

• THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. JAMES:

Fr James will resume the 7 PM Thursday evening **Bible Study**. During the next several weeks he will cover the Psalms and Old Testament readings that were done at Theophany. See [HERE](#) for a list of the 34 readings specified for January 5th in preparation of the Feast. Let no one say that the Orthodox don’t use enough scripture.

• TRUTHFULNESS OF HIS WORD:

The *Troparion* of the Feast of Theophany tells us that “...the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word.” This phrase is not about affirming that God is speaking the truth (which He does). Sometimes we hear people sing “...the truthfulness of His words.” But “Word” is singular, not plural: this phrase tells us that the Holy Spirit—Who proceeds from the Father, rests upon the Son as a sign to us that Jesus Christ is indeed the Word of God.

• WORD OF ADMONITION:

Getting to Liturgy on time is important. One doesn’t need to list the reasons. Having had young children, I know “stuff happens” before Liturgy. Having lived one hour away from Church in 1983, I am aware of the problems that come up. However, let us try, as a parish, to gather together BEFORE the Liturgy begins. Very frequently, to be blunt, some of you enter the Church at moments when I can’t help but see: during the first entrance with the Gospel, or during the Scripture readings. Those who come late should NOT receive Holy Communion *unless they have been detained with parish work, or have had a problem with a child*. When we arrive before the Liturgy begins we show our respect, reverence and love for God (and one another); we can more easily gather our attention; we can end the conversations with each other once we enter the Church and continue our wonderful corporate prayer with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. —*Fr Lawrence*

• HOUSE BLESSINGS:

I will be out of the office and off-campus for much of January and part of February blessing homes, so please be patient with my return correspondence. Certainly, do not hesitate to call me if a need arises. I always have my phone with me. The LIST for house blessings is posted in the Narthex. If your name does not appear on the list, it is only because you like to schedule a specific time. Please contact Fr Nicholas or me, ASAP, to do that. Orthodox Christians dedicate their homes to God in many ways: prayer, an icon corner, harmony between family members; the singing of hymns and the bringing of Holy Water by the priest to sanctify the home and banish the presence of any intrusive and evil spirits. The Holy Water is sprinkled in order to cleanse the home. Sin isn’t a “one and done” thing. As a fire leaves the smell of smoke, so sin leaves a residue in and around us. The blessing of the home is a cleansing of that sin and an affirmation that the home belongs not to us, but to God. It’s a joyous and victorious act of faith in God. There are a number of homes I have never visited to bless, and I would very much like to correct that. —*Fr Lawrence*

• WALK FOR LIFE:

The **2022 Walk for Life** will take place on January 22 in San Francisco (12:30 PM). We hope to provide transportation for those who are interested in going. See Fr. Lawrence or Josef Candalario for more information. I encourage you to participate.