

- PROSPHORA/COMMEMORATION BOOKLETS:

Please update and renew your commemoration booklets for 2023 at the Candle Desk.

- CANDLE STANDS:

I invite you to join me as we prepare our church and ourselves for the birth of the Savior. The brass candle-stands in the cathedral are looking a bit shabby, and need to be cleaned and polished. I plan to work on them on

Thursday, December 22, from 3–5 PM. You are welcome come at another time if that's convenient.. —*Fr Lawrence*

- EVENTS IN JANUARY:

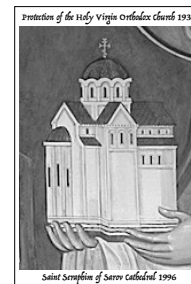
The Feast of St. Seraphim—Vespers on Jan. 1, and the Hierarchical Liturgy with His Eminence our Archbishop Benjamin on Monday, Jan. 2. *Theophany Services*—Jan. 4, 5 and 6th with the Blessing of Water here on Jan. 5 and at Steelhead Beach (weather permitting) Jan. 6. *House blessings*—a List will be posted by next week. *Going Away Party*—the Candelarios depart for Seminary on Jan. 10. The date/time for the party TBA. I

CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS

The Holy Mystery of Confession is a gift from God, and as essential to our lives, as is Holy Communion. Confession is not an obligation, but an encounter with the Living God, Who stands before us in that Holy Mystery. Let all of us—priests and people together—make a Confession in these two weeks preceding Nativity in order to be prepared to receive Holy Communion on the feast itself. In general, it is not appropriate for anyone over the age of seven to receive Holy Communion without a recent Confession (at least once a month is a good benchmark). We operate on the “honor system,” which means I trust you, and I will not ask you if you have confessed and are prepared for the Great Feast of Christmas. I will be available during the week before Christmas every afternoon, before Vespers, from 5–6 PM and following Vespers, and then on Friday from 3 PM until Vespers. See this edifying [Encyclical on Confession and Communion](#) from the Holy Synod. —*Fr. Lawrence*

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



December 18, 2022

Sunday before Nativity



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life-Immortal, Thou didst slay hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead; and when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.

- TROPARION OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS, 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.

- TROPARION OF THE PRE-FEAST, TONE FOUR:

Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all. Adorn thyself, O Ephratha, 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.

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- KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Three – *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

- Friday, Dec. 16: 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Dec. 17: 11 AM, “Backpacks” assembly
3:30 PM, Catechism—*On the Theotokos*
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 18: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
4 PM, Akathist/Potluck and Christmas Play
- **Tuesday – Thursday:** 8 AM, Matins for the Pre-Feast
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Vespers
- Friday, Dec. 23: 8 AM, Matins
11:30 AM – 2 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Royal Hours for Christmas
- Saturday, Dec. 24: 11:30 AM, Vespers for Christmas
5 PM, Festal Matins for Christmas
- Sunday, Dec. 25: 10 AM, Christmas Day Festal Liturgy

• 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.

• BACKPACKS FOR NIGHTINGALE:

The *Nightingale Shelter* at the new Catholic Charities Caritas Village in Santa Rosa provides beds for hospital-referred patients experiencing homelessness to heal and connect with permanent, affordable housing. With the leadership of Denise Pellizzer, our parish makes an offering each year of “Blessing

Backpacks” which contain various personal-care items (combs, water, poncho, wipes, gift card, protein bars, etc.). Denise is organizing assembly of the backpacks for **Saturday, December 17 at 11 AM**. Please call Denise—at (707) 364-6445—to let her know you intend to help out with this project.

• HELP NEEDED:

Please consider staying after the Divine Liturgy Sunday to help begin the process of decoration of the Church with the seasonal greens and poinsettias. We will hang wreaths and garlands, plants will be put into brass pots with moss, mini-lights will go on the small Christmas trees, ribbons and bows attached. Work will begin immediately after the Liturgy. —*Denise Anna Pellizzer*

• CHRISTMAS PLAY:

Our annual Christmas Play, directed by Carmen Anderson this year, will take place on Sunday, December 18. We begin with the *Kontakion of St. Romanos* at **4:30 PM in St. Seraphim** (the *Kontakion* tells the Christmas story in a 24 stanza poem/hymn, composed in the 5th century). At 5:15, dinner will be served (NOT a potluck, but please bring “lenten” desserts), then the Christmas Play, concluding with the singing of carols and a visit by St. Nicholas.

• WHY SO MANY CHURCH SERVICES?

How many Christmas carols are there? One [source](#) claims 9,274, not including seasonal tunes like *Frosty the Snowman* and *Jingle Bells*. These carols celebrate and meditate on various aspects of the holy night of the birth of the Savior. Well...*of course* there are almost 10,000 hymns—the meaning, implications and joy of the birth of the Son of God are inexhaustible. It should not surprise us that our Church also has hundreds of hymns, each a theological and spiritual treasure leading the worshippers into the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, revealing the diverse meaning of salvation. The Services of this *Winter Holy Week* are when we hear and pray these hymns, as the Church leads us step by step to Bethlehem. Make time to attend at least one of the Vespers and Matins. —*Fr Lawrence*

*Let us celebrate, O ye people, the forefeast of the nativity of Christ,
let us lift up our minds and hearts to Bethlehem
and with our spiritual eyes let us see the Virgin on her journey to the cave,
there to give birth to our God, the Lord of all.*