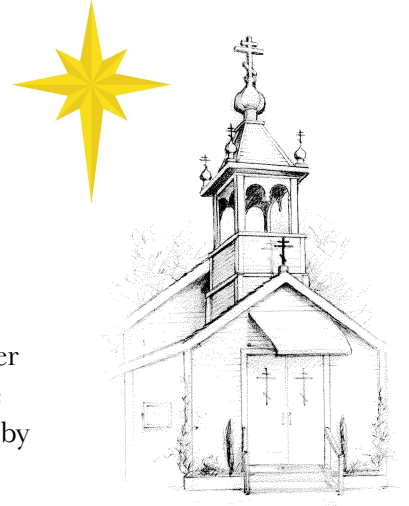


ANNOUNCEMENTS



SUNDAY, December 31, 2023
Leave-taking of Nativity

- RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION, Tone Five:

Let us the faithful praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

- TROPARION OF NATIVITY, Tone Four:

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone to the world the light of wisdom; for by it those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to worship Thee the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee.

- TROPARION OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONES, Tone Two:

O Joseph, proclaim the wonders to David the father of our Divine Lord. Thou hast seen a Virgin conceive; thou hast given glory with the Shepherds; thou hast worshipped with the Magi; and thou hast been warned by an Angel. Implore Christ our God, to save our souls.

- KONTAKION OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONES, Tone Three:

Godly David on this day is filled with gladness of spirit; Joseph also joineth James in offering glory and praises. They rejoice, for as Christ's kinsmen, they have received crowns: and they praise the One ineffably born upon earth as they cry out with a great voice: O Lord of mercy, save them that honor Thy Name.

- KONTAKION OF NATIVITY, Model Melody:

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He that existed before the ages as God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 30: 5 PM, Great Vespers for the Resurrection and Leave-Taking of Christmas
- Sunday, Dec. 31: 9:40 AM, Reception of Aly Sidjakov and Phacelia Alvarez as Catechumens
10 AM, Divine Liturgy / Potluck Agape Meal
5 PM, Vespers for St. Basil, [Feast of the Circumcision](#) and New Year's Day
- Monday, Jan. 1: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast
5 PM, Vespers and Akathist for the Feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov
- Tuesday, Jan. 2: **9:30 AM, Greeting of Archbishop Benjamin and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Seraphim, Agape Meal to follow**
- Wednesday, Jan. 3: 6 PM, Vespers for the Pre-feast of Theophany

- Thursday, Jan. 4: 5 PM, Angels Unawares guests arrive for dinner/overnight
6 PM, Royal Hours for Theophany
- Friday, Jan. 5: *Eve of Theophany*: 11:30 AM, Vespers Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water
6 PM, Matins for Theophany
- Sat., Jan. 6: *Theophany*. 9 AM, Divine Liturgy
Outdoors blessing of water (location TBD)
5 PM, Vespers

On Sunday, Dec. 31 at 9:40 AM we will have the joy of receiving Aly Sidjakov and Phacelia as catechumens. Please come to support and encourage them.

December 31 is the Leave-taking of the Feast of Nativity. From Christmas until Dec. 31 we greet one another with the words “Christ is born” and respond, “Glorify Him.” On January 1 we celebrate the feasts of the Circumcision of Christ (see below) and St. Basil the Great. On January 2 we keep the feast of St. Seraphim with the greeting of Archbishop Benjamin at 9:30 AM and the Divine Liturgy.

Please update and renew your Commemoration Booklets for 2024 at the Candle Desk.

The Tradition of the Church is for us to have our homes blessed each year, sanctifying them, dispelling the “residue of sin” built up over the last year with the Water of the Feast of Theophany. In previous years I have posted a list with dates and times and local regions for each person’s home to be blessed. This list was my best-case scenario, the “hoping-it-would-work list” — which, for the most part, did not. This year, I’ll simply request that you contact me to arrange a house blessing. I am honored and very happy to come. Here’s a [What To Expect](#) at a House Blessing.

Matushka Ann and I will be attending the wedding of our nephew at St. Mark’s Orthodox Church in Rochester, Michigan, on Sunday, January 14. We will be gone from Friday, Jan. 12, and return on Monday, Jan. 15. Father Nicholas will be here that weekend to serve and to greet Abbot Sergius and the icon (see below).

The Miracle Working Icon of St. Anna will be brought to St. Seraphim Cathedral on Saturday, Jan. 13 at 6 PM (at the conclusion of Vespers) by Archimandrite Sergius of St. Tikhon Monastery in PA.

The Saint Seraphim Men’s Fellowship will have a dinner here on Thursday, January 18 at 6 PM. Dinner provided, please bring a beverage to share. Please let Daniel DeCarlo know that you plan to attend so we can make appropriate plans for the dinner.

The Annual [Walk for Life](#) in San Francisco will take place on Saturday, January 20. Transportation to the *Walk* is being arranged now. Plans are to car-pool to SF for a **8:30 AM Divine Liturgy**.

Circumcision as a sign was first given to Abraham (Gen 17:1-14). In the wake of the rebellion at Babel, Yahweh [the True God and Lord] had dispersed the nations, assigning them to the governance of angelic beings. He is going to use a nation that will serve collectively as priests for all of the nations of the world until that nation brings forth Christ as the culmination of its ministry. Rather than choosing one of the 70 nations which already existed to favor over the others, Yahweh creates one which previously did not exist. He creates it from one man of Ur named Abram. At the giving of his initial covenant with Abram, he changes his name to Abraham, promising to make him the father of many nations, to bless all the nations of the world through him and his descendant. The way in which someone was made a part of this people was through circumcision. ... Abram is called out of Babylon, the capital of the world in all of its negative connotations, to become the

foundation of a new nation and so circumcision enacts him cutting himself off from the world, under the sway of the power of darkness, from which he came. He is given a new name, Abraham, and this is done on the eighth day for his progeny to communicate that he is now a new creation, as are they (Gal 6:15). This cutting off takes place in relation to the genitals because it is not primarily an individual act of devotion or a pledge made by an individual. Rather, it is constitutive of community and therefore involves not only the male but his spouse and his progeny. The broader community of Israel was a family, the family of God. It began with the family of Abraham and was always composed of tribes and clans, family units. These units always included strong elements of adoption, of incorporation of outsiders into family and clan. Newcomers, both by birth and adoption, shared in this cutting off as the ritual means of integration. ... Women and female children were integrated through their family bonds to the circumcised male who was the head of the household as only males were circumcised. The circumcised male cut the family unit off from the world, setting apart and therefore definitionally making it holy. It was the responsibility of the women of the household to maintain the purity and holiness of the household in both a physical and spiritual sense while it was the responsibility of the males who ventured out into the world to not yield to its impurity and bring sin and impurity back into the home. The circumcision of the flesh was to embody the circumcision of the heart, which needed to be cut off from the world and its desires and temptations (Deut 10:12-17; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:26). St. Paul reveals that every element of circumcision finds its fulfillment in Christ. This does not mean that it is done away with. Rather, every element is filled to overflowing in such a way that Christ represents the truth and reality which stood behind the shadow of the ordinance of circumcision (Col 2:17). To return to the circumcision of the flesh, then, is to forsake reality and fulness for image and shadow and remove one's self from Christ, if not outright deny that Jesus, the Christ, has come as that fulness. Basic to St. Paul's understanding of the crucifixion of Christ is that it represents an inversion of the curse of the Torah (Gal 3:13). In his suffering and death, Christ was cut off from among the people. Christ's receipt of the curse, however, did not cut him off from life. Rather, being God, his cutting off was the final cutting off of the world and its prince, the dark powers and the passions and wickedness which had infested the creation, from God. It is, therefore, the world as a system, as represented by its capital, Babylon, that is judged and dies (Rev 17:1-18:8). The person then, who is in Christ has been cut off from the world and the world from him (Gal 6:14). That person is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Participation in Christ's death and resurrection and the reality of this cutting off and new creation takes place in the mystery of Baptism. To be baptized is to be baptized into Christ and thereby to put on Christ (Gal 3:27). To be baptized into Christ is to be integrated into the family of God (v. 26). It is to leave behind whatever characterized life in the world and its system of relationships to become a part of a new people created by God (v. 28). That new people is new to the one baptized but is the same family, the same people, created by Yahweh through Abraham to exist eternally (v. 29). Before his death, his cutting off, Christ sanctified himself (John 17:19). Those who are baptized into Christ are set apart and made holy by him through participation in his family (Heb 2:11). St. Paul can, therefore, say that we have all been circumcised with Christ's circumcision in baptism (Col 2:8-12). Christ has therefore established the spiritual and material holiness of his house and his household members. It is the responsibility of the Church to protect and maintain that holiness because she is his bride. It is in precisely this sense that the Church is spoken of in feminine terms. —*Father Stephen DeYoung, [excerpt from an article](#)*

Mark your calendars for a two-part workshop here: *Death and Dying—Being Prepared*. Part #1 will be a presentation by Paul Miller, *Esq.* and Jacquelynne Ocaña, *Fiduciary* on estate planning, power of attorney, hospice, trusts, healthcare management during incapacity. Part #2 will be talks by Archpriest Matthew Tate, from Holy Annunciation (OCA) in Milwaukie, OR, Archpriest Lawrence and Daphne Russell. They will speak about Orthodox funeral practices, planning ahead, burial arrangements, completing forms and informing family about your plans. Online registration will be posted within the week.

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 31 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9:40 AM, Reception of <i>Catechumens</i>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy• Noon, Potluck Agape Meal• 5 PM, Vespers for the Feasts of St. Basil/Circumcision	1 – New Year/St. Basil <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy and prayers for the New Year• 5 PM, Vespers for St. Seraphim Day	2 – St. Seraphim Day <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9:30 AM, Greet Archbishop Benjamin, Hierarchical Liturgy and Festal Lunch	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 PM, Pre-Feast Vespers	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 PM, <i>Angels Unnumbered</i><i>Guests arrive</i>• 6 PM, Royal Hours for Theophany	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11:30 AM, Vespersal Liturgy/Water Blessing• 6 PM, Festal Matins	6 – THEOPHANY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, outdoor water blessing, location TBD• 5 PM, Great Vespers
7 – St. John the Baptist <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy• Noon, Agape Meal	8	9	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 PM, Vespers	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 PM, Bible study with Fr James	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">No Confessions<i>Fr Lawrence out of town until Monday</i>	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11:30 AM, Sisterhood get-together• 5 PM, Great Vespers• 6 PM, Visit of the <i>Icon of St. Anna</i> with Abbot Sergius of St. Tikhon's
14 – St. Nino, Equal to the Apostles <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy• Noon, Agape Meal• Spiritual Lesson	15	16	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 PM, Vespers	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 PM, Men's Fellowship Dinner• 7 PM, Bible study with Fr James	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confession	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>WALK FOR LIFE in SF</i>• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions
21 – St. Maximus the Confessor <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy• Noon, Agape Meal• Mentorship	22	23	24	25 – St. Gregory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy• 7 PM, Bible study with Fr James	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confession	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions
28 – New Martyrs of Russia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy• Noon, Agape Meal• Spiritual Lesson	29	30	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 PM, “MOM” Diaper Bank Distribution• 6 PM, Vespers	February 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 PM, <i>Angels Unnumbered</i><i>Guests arrive</i>• 6 PM, Vigil for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord	2 – Meeting of the Lord <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 AM, Liturgy for the Feast, Protection ChurchNo Confessions	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions

• OUR PARISH Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4th, 12:30 PM.