

**Vespers spiritually takes us** through God's plan of salvation—by means of hymns, psalms, the Gospel, dark and light: we hear about the creation, the Fall from Paradise, the prophecies and the preparation for the coming of the Messiah, His Incarnation, signs, teachings, warnings, His Passion, death and of course, His Resurrection from the dead and the glorious “robe of majesty,” the Ascension, the gift of Pentecost, the gift of Holy Baptism, and even the Glorious Coming, which we await, yet even now taste beforehand in the Church. All this is part of Saturday evening Vespers (the same holds for Matins on Sunday). Saturday evening Vespers is there to include and invite the worshippers into the message of salvation and as a preparation for receiving Holy Communion on Sunday.

**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 **Sunday, December 10 after lunch**. Please call Denise—at (707) 364-6445—to let her know you intend to help out with this project.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A CHRISTMAS PLAY  
PRESENTED BY THE ST. SERAPHIM YOUTH

## THE STORY OF MARY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

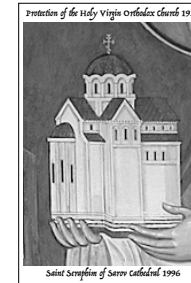
5:30 PM—Kontakion of Christmas by St. Romanos, in the Cathedral

6 PM—Dinner in the Parish Hall

6:45 PM—Christmas Play and Caroling

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**December 3, 2023**

Prophet Zephaniah



- 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 PROPHET ZEPHANIAH, Tone Two:  
As we celebrate the memory of Thy Prophet Zephaniah, O Lord, through him we beseech Thee to save our souls.
- KONTAKION OF THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH, Tone Four:  
Thou was shown to be illumined by the Divine Spirit, O Prophet Zephaniah, proclaiming God's manifestation, and thou didst preach: Rejoice greatly, O daughters of Sion and Jerusalem; behold, your King cometh, bringing salvation.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 2: 5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 3: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
Noon, Agape Meal  
12:30 PM, Mentorship
- Tuesday, Dec. 5: 7 PM, *Vigil for St. Nicholas in San Anselmo*
- Wednesday, Dec. 6: 9:30 AM, *Divine Liturgy in San Anselmo*  
5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga  
6 PM, Vespers (Feast of St. Ambrose of Milan)
- Thursday, Dec. 7: 5 PM, Welcome *Angels Unawares Guests*
- Friday, Dec. 8: 11 AM, Akathist to Sts. Joachim and Anna for the Feast of the Conception
- Saturday, Dec. 9: 3:30 PM, Catechism *On the Church*  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions

**Please remember in your prayers** the Ever-memorable Archpriest Michael Oleksa, former rector of our parish in the late '80s, prior to the coming of Fr. Michael Margitich. Fr. Michael was a well-known and inspiring teacher, speaker and scholar with a focus on the Alaskan Orthodox mission. He was a generous, kind and sacrificial pastor of the Church. May his memory be eternal.

**Advent is intended** to be a time of quiet and patient expectation (kids come by the *expectation* part naturally); it is meant to be a time of hope, prayer, repentance and daily reflection on the mystery of the Virgin and the coming of the Creator of *heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible*. We are on a journey—have you begun it yet—towards the *Nativity of Christ*—rather like Great Lent as we prepare for Pascha. Fr. Philip McCaffrey made the following observations: “This reality of the Church’s way of life conflicts rather radically with the American ‘Holiday Season’ and celebration of Christmas. For Orthodox Christians, **the time before** the celebration of Christ’s Nativity is like Lent before Pascha! A forty day fasting time is prescribed (like a doctor’s prescription) wherein we seek to ‘purify our senses’ (as the Pascha hymns calls out to us) through repentance. Experience has taught us that this is the best way to cultivate true joy. Take the Nativity fast seriously and you will see this for yourself. The Orthodox *Feast of the Nativity*

**Please come to make a 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 that I will not ask you if you have confessed for the Great Feast of Christmas. I will be available during the week before Christmas. Please consult the calendar for service times, or arrange an appointment for a confession. See this edifying [Encyclical on Confession and Communion from the Holy Synod](#). —Fr. Lawrence

marks the *beginning* of the festal season, not the end. At the center of this ‘Festival of lights’ stands the *Feast of Theophany* (Epiphany) and then the celebration continues until its completion in the festival of the *Meeting of the Lord in the Temple*—forty days after Nativity. Let the good times roll. Turn on (awaken to real life), Tune in (get in the Church’s ‘groove.’), and Drop out (Of a culture that is going crazy). Today!”

**An invitation from Fr Stephan Meholick**, rector at St. Nicholas Church in San Anselmo: On behalf of the entire parish of St. Nicholas in San Anselmo, I would like to cordially invite you, your family, and your flock to join us in the celebration of our “altar feast” on December 6th. The Festal Vigil will begin at 7 PM on Tuesday evening. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will be served at 9:30 AM on Wednesday. There will be a festal *trapeza* and fellowship following the Liturgy with a “visit” from St. Nicholas. This year, all proceeds from our annual raffle will again go to the support of St. Nicholas House at Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga.

**Do you enjoy** the blessings of being a financial steward of the parish? Stewardship involves prayer, worship, time, care for the Temple of the Holy Spirit (your body), care for others (charity) and financial care for the Church Temple and Parish grounds. Let each give according to what God has prospered that person. But, *give God what’s right, not what’s left!*