

**A Hymn of the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos:** The all-glorious great mystery hidden from the beginning of time, which was unknown to angels and men, is manifest today: Mary, the divine maiden, becometh a child in the womb of the chaste Anna, and is prepared as a dwelling-place for the King of all ages, unto the restoration of our race. Her do we entreat with pure conscience, crying out to her: Beseech thy Son and God, in that thou art the intercessor of us Christians, that He save our souls!

**Vespers on Saturday evening** is the beginning of the celebration of the Lord's Day—Sunday—which is the foretaste of the coming in glory of Christ, the inauguration of the *Day without evening*, and the resurrection of the dead, which we profess each time we say the Creed: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come." Saturday evening Vespers is all about that coming, all about the Incarnation, teachings, Passion, death and Resurrection from the dead. What we do in worship concerns days and times—and Saturday evening Vespers is the prelude and opening to Sunday Liturgy. It would be good if all of us made this sacred time a priority for worship at least a few times a month. —*Fr Lawrence*

**...if we realized** that all we have, in body, in soul, in circumstances of life, even in the tragedies of life, comes because God has sent us into the world as His messengers to bring divine presence at a cost, if necessary, of our lives—how grateful we would be, and how we would live in order that God should look at us, each of us, and say, Here is a disciple of Mine who has understood, and who lives accordingly! —*Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)*

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**December 10, 2023**

Conception of the Theotokos (moved from Dec. 9)



- 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 CONCEPTION, Tone Eight:  
Today the bonds of childlessness are loosed. For God hearkened unto Joachim and Anna, And though it was beyond hope, He clearly promised them that they should bear a divine child, from whom was born the Uncircumscribable One Himself Who became mortal, and through an Angel commanded them to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
- KONTAKION OF THE CONCEPTION, Tone Two:  
All the world doth celebrate Anna's conception on this day with festive joy, because it came to pass through God; for by divine grace she hath conceived her that beyond words conceiveth the Word of God.

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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

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Fri., Dec. 8: 11 AM, Akathist to Sts. Joachim and Anna, parents of the Virgin Theotokos
- Sat. Dec. 9: 3:30 PM, Catechism *On the Church*  
5 PM, Great Vespers /Confessions
- Sun., Dec. 10: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
Agape Meal  
**12:20 PM**, Spiritual Lesson in the Protection
- Tues., Dec. 12: 6 PM, Vigil for St. Herman of Alaska
- Wed., Dec. 13: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of St. Herman (in Protection Church)  
5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga  
6 PM, Daily Vespers
- Thurs., Dec. 14: 7 PM, Christmas Prophecy Bible Study with Fr. James
- Fri., Dec. 15: 11 AM, Akathist of the Protection of the Theotokos  
11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions, in the Protection Church

**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.

**On Tuesday evening** and Wednesday morning, Dec. 12/13, we celebrate the feast day of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Herman (Germanos) of Alaska. This saint was the first to be glorified in America. A Vespers hymn proclaims that “he harvested abundantly a field of fruitfulness, which remains, even till now, prospering in the Lord. Therefore

we pray to thee, our venerable Father Herman: ‘Do not cease through thy prayers to care for thy people, and for all of us who lovingly celebrate thine all-honorable memory!’” On the same day we celebrate St. Lucy (Lucia) of Syracuse. Read the brief account of her life [HERE](#).

**There are various tasks** that need doing here at the parish. None of these things are time-consuming or difficult, all are simple and practical. We share a common responsibility for the Temple, the Hall and the parish grounds—and it’s our joy to care for all these things that the Lord has entrusted to us. I apologize, since I have been remiss in inviting others into the ministry of care for the parish. In order to correct my neglect, in the next few weeks, the Parish Council members and I will create a list of on-going tasks that need volunteers. We will share that list with the parish members, and after that, ask for individuals to take on-going responsibility (not forever!) for those areas that need work. Stay tuned. —Fr. Lawrence



**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, we aim for anyone over the age of seven to make a regular confession (for adults, at least once a month is a good benchmark, children less frequently). 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