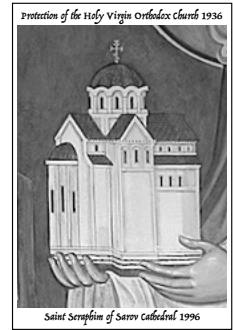


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, February 22, 2026 — Forgiveness Sunday

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, 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 ST. JOHN THE FORERUNNER, Tone Four:

The head of the Forerunner has shone from the earth, sending forth rays of incorruption and healings to the faithful. It gathers together a multitude of angels above and summons the human race below to send up glory with one voice to Christ our God.

- KONTAKION OF [FORGIVENESS SUNDAY](#), Tone Six:

O Master, Guide to wisdom, Giver of prudent counsel, Instructor of the foolish and Champion of the poor, make firm my heart and grant it understanding. O Word of the Father, give me words, for see, I shall not stop my lips from crying out to Thee: I am fallen, on Thy compassion have mercy on me.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEKEND

- Friday, Feb. 20: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confession
- Sat., Feb. 21: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy commemorating all departed monastics
3:30 PM, Catechism on *The Eucharist*
5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
- Sun., Feb. 22: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy in the Protection Church
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Noon, Agape Meal
1 PM, Vespers of Forgiveness, beginning of Great Lent

CLEAN WEEK

- Mon., Feb. 23: Begin to fast from all dairy and eggs
8 AM, Lenten Matins
7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Tues. Feb. 24: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Wed., Feb. 25: 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
6 PM, Presanctified Liturgy / Meal to follow
- Thurs., Feb. 26: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
7 PM, Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- Fri., Feb. 27: 10:30 AM–1:30 PM, Presanctified w/Canon to St. Theodore the Recruit, Koliva

Vespers begins at 1 PM, this Sunday. This unique Vespers is our entry into the Great Fast. At the conclusion of the service, we will have the [Rite of Forgiveness](#) during which we approach each other to ask forgiveness quietly and reverently, beginning with the clergy. We bow low, say “forgive me,” and “God forgives,” then move on to the next person, then the next, and so on. The choir sings some of the hymns from Pascha to remind us that Lent culminates in the celebration of the Resurrection.

On Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings we will have an opportunity to receive Holy Communion at the *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts* and be strengthened in our Lenten efforts. Those who will receive Holy Communion are asked to prepare themselves by fasting (on Wednesday, from noon), praying the *Prayers before Communion* and a recent confession. Confessions will be heard before and during the service, until we sing the hymn *Now the Powers of Heaven...*



My name is Samuel Still IV. Originally I was born in Virginia but lived the majority of my childhood in south Jersey. I'm active duty Coast Guard and have been doing that for a little over ten years. I used to be very into Muay Thai, but now I just read. My hobbies include anything creative. If I had to really pick my top three right now they would be reading, cinematography and having a slow day at the beach (maybe surfing). I've been Christian for a long time and each year, month and day is a new lesson from the Lord. The past six months there has been a strong pull to become Orthodox. I was always into Biblical studies but recently I got into studying the Church. As I had my reservations, they slowly broke down and I realized I understood and had already believed in the same teachings as in Orthodoxy, so I finally decided to join the Church.

On Tuesday evening we expect His Grace Bishop Vasily to be with us for service of Great Compline and the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. The service begins at 7 PM. This *Canon* of nine odes, is a lament, by St. Andrew of Crete (died July 4, 740?) of a fall into sin, and a cry for God's compassion and mercy. In the many stanzas of each ode, he sets before us events and persons of the Old Testament as models of sin, apostasy, repentance and renewal, always focusing on the immeasurable patience of God.

The last of the preparatory Sundays before the Great Fast has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise as well as the theme of forgiveness—God's toward us, and ours toward one another. There are obvious reasons why these two themes should be brought to our attention at this moment: One of the primary images in the *Triodion* [hymn book of Lent] is that Lent is our return to Paradise. Where to begin? The hymns places us weeping with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise:

O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty, tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight, glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints, with the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all: May He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression, and may He count me worthy to partake of

the Tree of Life, and of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before. [Hymn from Vespers].

Note how the *Triodion* speaks here not of “Adam” but of “me,” “May He open unto **me** the gates which I closed.” Here, as throughout the *Triodion*, the events of sacred history are not treated as happenings in the distant past or future, but as experiences undergone by me here and now within the dimension of sacred time. The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14–21) and in the special [Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness at the end of Vespers on Sunday](#).... Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. ...we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. —*From the forward to the “Lenten Triodion”*

While circumstances for each person or family may differ to some degree (age, health requirements, etc.) there are some [basic Lenten fasting rules](#) that we all ought to follow: abstain from all meat, dairy and eggs until Pascha; abstain from alcoholic beverages during weekdays. Wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays. Shellfish may be eaten on any day. Fasting will do no good at all if it is not joined with forgiveness for others and prayer. We also at least try to fast from noise and distractions during Lent. For Clean Week and Holy Week turn off the radios, the games, and the various distractions. If we fast from social media, food and noise and pray for strength, we might, with the grace of God, also be able to fast from sin. A great virtue in fasting is that we may show obedience to God and His will, rather than be led by our own will all the time. —*Fr Lawrence*

A request: Very often during the Sunday Divine Liturgy the front doors of the church are left open for air circulation. Those that stand outside the doors (that was traditionally the place for penitents) are asked to remember that the Liturgy extends even to the porch. The sound of conversations in front of the church, even down by the forecourt, are heard inside. Parents may need to come and go with their children—they get a “pass” and this admonishment is not for them. As hard as it may be to do, those outside should endeavor and struggle to stay attentive to the hymns and prayers and actions of the Divine Liturgy—let us strive to enter more deeply into worship and “let us love one another, that with one heart and mind we may confess: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, One in essence and undivided.”

My name is Judges Isaiah Cantara. I am 27 years old, and I grew up in San Francisco, although my family and I now live in Santa Rosa. As you might have gathered from my two first names, I was raised in a religious household my whole life; both of my parents are evangelical Baptists. Being an avid reader, I was keen on defending the faith in which I was raised against other belief systems. But the more I read and the more research I did, the less I saw my beliefs as having ties to the Church that Christ and His Apostles established - and the more I found that Orthodoxy has withstood scrutiny and the test of time. After over 25 years as an evangelical, I decided to wholeheartedly embrace Holy Orthodoxy. I am so grateful to be received as a catechumen, and I cannot wait to be fully received into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. To borrow a phrase from my Protestant days: Soli Deo Gloria!



PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Sunday of Orthodoxy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Divine Liturgy • 9 AM, Baptisms • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Procession with Icons 	2	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins 	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, *Presanctified, Meal to follow 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 5 PM, Angels Unawares guests arrive • 7 PM, Online Bible Study 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified 	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Sisterhood • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On the Priesthood</i> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
8 - St. Gregory Palamas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Divine Liturgy • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	9	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins 	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Presanctified, Meal to follow 	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Men's Fellowship Dinner • 7 PM, Online Bible Study 	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified 	14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On Marriage</i> • 4:45 PM, Panikhida • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
15 - Veneration of the Cross <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Divine Liturgy • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	16	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 10:30 AM, Presanctified and Deanery Clergy Meeting 	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Presanctified, Meal to follow 	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 7 PM, Online Bible Study 	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified 	21 <p style="text-align: center;">Retreat in SF st Holy Trinity Cathedral <i>No catechism here</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
22 - St. John Climacus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Divine Liturgy • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Small Compline/Canon of St. Andrew of Crete w/Life of St Mary 	24 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No morning service</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Festal Matins 	25 - Annunciation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, 6th Hour Prayers • 4 PM, Diaper Bank • 5 PM, Vesperal Liturgy 	26 - ArchAn Gabriel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins (Leavetaking of Annunciation) 	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Matins with the Akathist Hymn 	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism <i>On Death and the Funeral</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers • 8 PM, Concert here
29 - St. Mary of Egypt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Divine Liturgy • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 3 PM, Concert here 	30	31 - St. Innocent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Council Mtg 	APRIL 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Presanctified, Meal to follow 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins 	3 - End of Lent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Lazarus Saturday Matins, Baptism prep 	4 - Lazarus Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Baptisms • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Reception • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions

* Confessions are available one half hour before, and during (up until we sing *Now the Powers*) most of the Wednesday and Friday Presanctified Liturgies.