

“... **there was evening** and there was morning, one day” (Gen. 1:5). In the Bible, a new day begins in the evening, while it is still dark. The Church year begins in much the same way—not amid the bright promise of spring, but as summer fades and the days grow shorter. September brings us back to the work of beginning again: worship, learning, prayer, and the religious education of our children. It is tempting to think of religious education as one more parish program—something for the children to attend while the adults take care of other things. But the faith cannot be handed on by a program alone. Children learn what the parish truly believes by watching what the adults actually value. They notice whether worship is allowed to claim our time. They notice whether prayer has a place at home. They notice whether Scripture and the lives of the saints are living voices or merely books on a shelf. Above all, they notice whether learning the faith matters enough for us to make a real commitment to it. Fr. Thomas Hopko often reminded us that the heart is revealed by what we treasure. Not by what we say is important, but by what receives our time, attention, sacrifice, and love. That is true of a parish as well. Our heart is not finally revealed by our buildings, our finances, our social life, or even by the number of programs we offer. It is revealed by whether we are forming people—children and adults—to know Christ, to pray, to understand the Scriptures, to enter deeply into the services, and to live as Orthodox Christians in a world that is also catechizing them every hour of every day. And here is the sting: if we do not teach our children the faith deliberately, someone else will teach them what to believe. The world has no shortage of teachers, and it rarely cancels class. Religious education, then, is not optional decoration around the edges of parish life. It belongs near the center. It asks something of teachers, parents, children—and of every adult who promised at baptism to help raise them in Christ. As this new Church year begins, the question is not simply how many children we can enroll. It is whether we are willing to become a parish in which learning the faith is taken as seriously as professing it. Our children will know what we treasure. We are showing them already. —*Fr Stephan Meholick, St Nicholas, San Anselmo*

Matushka Ann and I will be going on a pilgrimage to Mull, Scotland, Lindisfarne and the island nation of Cyprus from Sept 17 to Oct. 5. —*Fr L*

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

Protection of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church



September 6, 2026

St. Michael the Archangel



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, 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 ST. MICHAEL, Tone Four:

O Michael, commander of the heavenly hosts, we who are unworthy beseech thee: by thy prayers encompass us beneath the wings of thine immaterial glory, and faithfully preserve us who fall down and cry out to thee: “Deliver us from all harm, for thou art the commander of the Powers on high!”

• KONTAKION OF ST. MICHAEL, Tone Two:

O Michael, commander of God’s armies and minister of the divine glory, prince of the bodiless angels and guide of mankind; ask for what is good for us, and for great mercy, as the supreme commander of the Bodiless Hosts.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Sept. 4: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Sept. 5: 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
- Sunday, Sept. 6: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy
9 AM, Choir Rehearsal
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Agape Meal to follow / *Crossroads Rep here*
12:30-ish, A brief talk on “*What is a Catechumen*”
4 PM, Back to Church School BBQ, * **RSVP**
- Monday, Sept. 7: 6 PM, Vigil for the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos
- Tuesday, Sept. 8: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast
- Wednesday, Sept. 9: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Sts. Joachim and Anna
6 PM, Vespers
6:45 PM, *Presentation on a Pilgrimage to Russia*
- Thursday, Sept. 10: 7 PM, Bible Study on Zoom

Welcome—Guests and Visitors: Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you’re with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with one of the priests, please let us know. Stick around for the 12:30 talk —see below.

At about 12:30 PM, I will offer some remarks on the topics, “What is a catechumen and how does one join the Orthodox Church.” I will plan to speak on the porch by the storage building. All are welcome. —*Fr L*

We are honored to welcome this Sunday Mr. Louis Stamoulis, a summer director at [CrossRoad Institute](https://crossroadinstitute.org/), who will briefly tell us about this pan-Orthodox nonprofit aimed at insuring young people to develop a lifelong Orthodox faith. Louis will give a 3 minute intro in Church at the end of the Divine Liturgy and then have a table in the parish hall for those with questions. Check out the website to see the amazing and exciting work being done by CrossRoads. <https://crossroadinstitute.org/>

On Monday evening and Tuesday morning we will celebrate the *Feast of*

the Birth of the Theotokos—and of course it’s a *Great Feast*, since it is about the Mother of our Savior. This is also the beginning of the series of feast days of the Liturgical year, which started September 1. I suppose that feasting is more important than fasting, prostrations and contrition for sins—although **without** fasting, prostrations, contrition and Vigil, we don’t, or can’t, nurture a festal spirit within ourselves. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann points out that when we look at this particular birth with spiritual eyes we understand that “the Church is telling us...that every birth, every entrance of a new human being into the world...is a miracle of miracles, a miracle that explodes all routine, for it marks the start of something unending, the start of a unique, unrepeatable human life, the beginning of a new person.” The Church faithfully and joyfully celebrates—at the Vigil and the Liturgy—this “birth of a little girl in whom are concentrated all the goodness, spiritual beauty, harmony and perfection that are the elements of genuine human nature. In and through this new-born girl, Christ—our gift from God, our meeting and encounter with Him—comes to embrace the world. Thus, in celebrating Mary’s birth we find ourselves already on the road to Bethlehem, moving toward to the joyful mystery of Mary as the Mother of God.” —*Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, Celebration of Faith, pg. 25*

* **The Men’s Fellowship** will host the Back-to-Church-School BBQ this Sunday, at 4 PM. Please let Vicky Basch know, ASAP, if you plan to attend.

On Wednesday evening, Sept. 9 at 6:45 PM, Innokentia-Robin Joy (from Fort Ross) will give a Pilgrimage to Russia presentation. She just recently returned from a whole month in Russia, where she visited many Orthodox churches and monasteries. This is her 20th plus pilgrimage to Russia, including Siberia, home to St Innocent of Alaska and Moscow. She also participated in services in Russia’s big cities and reconnected with many of her friends in the Russian clergy. She will share accounts of a few miracles along the way! There will be time for a Q&A after her presentation. Bring a sandwich and beverage (not a potluck). Any questions please call Joseph Marino at 707-331-4030.

Please mark your calendars for the Parish Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos, Vigil, Sept 30 at 6 PM and the Hierarchal Liturgy with our Bishop Vasily, Oct.1 at 9:30 AM.