

Sts. Peter & Paul Church Council News

August–September 2020

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Priest's Corner

Last year at this time, I happily announced that the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia had officially set the date for the full consecration of our church for this year's patronal feast day. As we all know, of course, this was not meant to be. Although we have heard the phrase: "mankind makes his plans, but God dispenses them," it is a sobering "reality check" when something for which we had worked so hard and were expecting with such excitement and anticipation could be so easily snuffed out by something so totally unexpected. There are important lessons to be learned here: This is a genuine opportunity for all of us to reevaluate what is truly important in our lives and where we need to set our priorities.

Interestingly enough, we are managing. We are adapting. Our Divine services continue. I am reminded of what happened at the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville many years ago. The monastic brotherhood had scraped together enough money to build a permanent church building at the monastery, and upon its completion, were planning to begin services there the next day. That very night, the cathedral burnt to the ground. One can only imagine how difficult it was for them to accept and deal with such a terrible setback. Yet the cycle of services continued that day completely uninterrupted, their monastic obediences continued as before, and, undaunted, they began rebuilding what is now one of the most renowned and beautiful cathedrals in the Russian Orthodox world.

While we may have endured a setback of our long-awaited Consecration, we, too, continue working toward that goal, depending upon God's providence and mercy to bring these efforts to a successful completion. In July, we were blessed to celebrate the feast day of our beloved St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco in our church for the first time. Our Parish Feast Day was celebrated—again for the first time—by our dear Bishop Theodosy and was a joyous "return to

normal" during these very abnormal times. There is much to be grateful for. And there is much to look forward to. We continue our services unabated, recognizing that only through our renewed commitment to our spiritual life in our Church and the prayers we continually send up during the Divine Liturgy each week, Our Heavenly Father will not deny His mercy and help to us in all of our efforts, which are to His glory, for the well-being of our spiritual family, and unto the salvation of our souls.

God bless!
—Father Alexander

This time is a genuine opportunity for all of us to reevaluate what is truly important in our lives and where we need to set our priorities.

Congratulations to all who are celebrating their Name's days*:

- Aug. 1 – Milica Chidlowsky and Seraphim Wawiliuk
- Aug. 2 – Ilya Ionin, Ilya Poluektov, and Ilya Shikaloff
- Aug. 4 – Marie Roquemore and Magdalena Reighard
- Aug. 7 – Anna Ferguson and Diana Handelih
- Aug. 16 – Anthony Newton and Anthony Tatsy
- Aug. 20 – Orr Chistiakoff
- Sept. 8 – Natalie Abrahams, Natalie Litvinenko, Natalie Pitserskih, Natalie Poluektov, and Natalie Ramensky
- Sept. 12 – Fr. Alexander Krassovsky, Alexander Hubert, Alexander Lukianoff, and Alexander Markoff
- Sept. 18 – Elizabeth Russie, Elizabeth Huhlov, Elizabeth Jones, Anna (Renée) Tchirkine, Zachary Able, Zachary Balitsky, and Zachary Jones
- Sept. 30 – Nadejda Balitsky, Nadezhda Mogilev, Nadia Stewart, Vera Levshina–Williams, Vera Peterson, Vera Rajevsky-Spring, Sophia Logvy, Dr. Sophia Schluter, Sophia Tatsy, and Vera Zaro

God grant them all Many Years!

**Fr. Alexander asks that you please notify him if we have missed anyone's name's day in our lists.*

Thank you!

In Memoriam

Nadejda Nikolaevna Protopopoff, wife of the late founder of the Sts. Peter and Paul Missionary Group (in honor of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco), Nikolai Nikolaevich Protopopoff. Nadejda Nikolaevna was a dedicated parishioner and an active member of both our Sisterhood and Missionary Group in our parish for many years. Having received Holy Communion the very morning of August 5, she passed away quietly that evening.

May God grant rest to the soul of the newly departed servant **Nadejda**, and I ask that you remember her, together with her ever-memorable husband **Nikolai**, in your prayers both in church and at home. Our condolences go to Natalia Szidon, Nicholas Protopopoff II, their families, and the friends of our reposed parishioners. *Memory eternal!*

The Mystery of the Church

There is a certain emptiness in trying to live the Christian life outside the life of the Church. This is because it is impossible to truly live as a Christian without the Church. The reading of the scriptures, and our commitment to prayer, are important foundations in the life of a Christian, but they are incomplete without the mystical and sacramental life that is found within the Church.

If we hope to grow spiritually, we will take advantage of the Mysteries that are found only within the Church. Without the Mystery of Penance, and the



absolution of the Church, we have no hope of transformation and holiness, for without the corporate life of the Church, our sins keep us captive. Without the Mystery of Christ's Body and Blood, received during the celebration of the Church's Divine Liturgy, the healing of the soul remains undone, and salvation is next to impossible. The center of the Church's Eucharistic Liturgy is to be found in the descent, the appearance, and the divine presence of the resurrected Christ, and is central to every moment of the Liturgy. As believers, the partaking of Communion is actually that moment when we are encountering the living person of the Lord, Who enters the congregation as "King of the universe, borne invisibly over their spears by the angelic hosts." This act is so central to the life of a Christian as to make it the necessary component to being a Christian.

—With love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon
All-Merciful Saviour Monastery
Vashon Island, Washington



Celebrating Sts. Peter & Paul Day in the Age of COVID-19

This year, the celebration of our Parish Feast Day in this year of the pandemic was a challenge indeed! But with God's help, we managed to honor our patron saints reasonably well (not without difficulty) while strictly adhering to the mandates of the civil authorities and of His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill, who instructed us to follow those mandates.

The celebration started on the eve of the holy day, which, in a better, pre-virus time, we had hoped would have marked the day of the Full Consecration of our church. Alas, given the current circumstances, this was not to be. Vladyka Kyrill was unable to serve on the actual feast day this year. However, and fortunately for us, Bishop Theodosy, who in past years would normally serve at the Vigil service, presided instead at

the festal liturgy. It was a joy to be back in our church, albeit with certain restrictions, including masks and distancing ourselves from one another. Nevertheless, celebrating the Divine Liturgy with our choir doing its customary great job with heartfelt renditions of the hymns, Bishop Theodosy's wonderful sermon and the procession around the church were truly spiritually uplifting.

The Sisterhood was tasked with the challenge of the festal luncheon, at which a much more modest lunch than is our wont was to be served to a good number of parishioners and guests. Owing to the government restrictions in place for serving food, the menu had to be limited to only two choices, and the lunches had to be plated before placing meals on our guests' trays. Only a limited number of people at a time were allowed into the hall to go through the serving line, and a swift progression to the outdoor seating areas was encouraged in order to maintain a proper "social distance."



It was a beautiful day and very warm, which made things a bit uncomfortable in the kitchen, but our heroic kitchen staff, all masked and gloved, labored mightily to keep the salad crisp and cold, the chicken and the lasagna hot, and the dessert from melting. Bravo!

Overall, with God's help and our wonderful staff of volunteers (which included some of the younger parishioners), we managed to celebrate our Parish Feast Day very nicely indeed while observing all the restrictions placed on us. The parishioners and guests

in attendance seemed to enjoy their lunch and were graciously complimentary to those who labored in the kitchen. Many thanks to all who contributed their expert suggestions, their labor, and their dedication to make this Parish Feast Day go as smoothly as possible in this unprecedented situation. God willing, next year's Parish Feast Day will be celebrated under much more normal circumstances.

All in all, we express our gratitude once again to God for His help and generous blessings!

—Lana Logvy



Starosta's Corner

We are continuing the projects that were planned for 2020 as time and finances permit. The parking lot project, discussed in detail in the June/July newsletter, has been completed with new asphalt and striping. The extended parking area has turned out very well and is a lot easier to walk on than the previous bumpy field.

The entrance gates and fencing are currently being manufactured, and installation should begin within a week or so. In the meantime, we are working on extending the security camera coverage to the front gates.

While the parking lot was torn up, trenches were dug and conduit was run to the gates, the well, and the center island, which will provide electrical, network,



water supply, and irrigation needs for immediate use and for future expansion.

A new panel has been installed in our iconostasis, depicting the Prophet Daniel and the Three Youths in the Furnace, on the right-side kliros. There are also refurbished chandeliers that light up the area and highlight the impressive gold-leaf details.

—Paul Johnson
707-696-5566; starosta@sonic.net



Sisterhood News

I would like to thank all the volunteers who made our parish feast day such a special day in the midst of such uncertainty. Thank you, Zoya Litvinenko, Lana and Katya Logvy, and others for preparing the entrees, and Anya Krassovsky and Sharon Kardashiantz for serving. As a result, everyone was able to relax for a bit and enjoy each other's company and savor the occasion.

While we continue to abide by the restrictions that have been imposed on us, please do not forget our elderly, and our ailing members and shut-ins. Now more than ever, they need to know that we are thinking of them, and they could use our prayers and a reassuring card, phone call, e-mail, delivery of food items, or ride to church. If you know someone who could use support, please contact our Outreach Liaison, Anna Judd, at 707-823-2372 or annaljudd@comcast.net.

Pelmeniy-making will resume in a socially distanced way when we deem it safe to restart. Please stay tuned for an upcoming Sisterhood meeting, where we can share ideas about how and when to proceed with some of our activities. Thank you to everyone for their continuing support and patience during this time. God bless!

—Nadia Stewart, Head Sister
of the St. Olga Sisterhood
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This Sacred “Holiday Season”

The first two weeks of August are set aside as a special “protected” time of the year. As Great Lent prepares for the celebration of Easter and Pentecost, and the Fast of Advent anticipates the feasts of Christmas and Theophany, this fast centers around the celebration of the feasts of the Transfiguration of Christ and the Dormition of the Theotokos.

Looking at these feasts, we see why the Church highlights this time as a special season of celebration. Christmas and Theophany proclaim the presence of Christ in the world—His historic coming in the flesh. Pascha and Pentecost celebrate the fulfilled purpose of His coming: the presence of the Holy Spirit by the power of Christ's Resurrection. The feasts of Transfiguration and Dormition show us how this resurrection life will be realized for us in human flesh in the glorification of our bodies after the model of the transfigured Christ, a glorification already bestowed on the Theotokos because of her unique role in the salvation of humanity.

It is this physical glorification that we celebrate in the two Great Feasts of August. On the feast of the Transfiguration, we look on the glorified body of Christ, the model of our future risen bodies. On the feast of the Dormition, we celebrate Mary's glorification and realize that already, one of our race shares in that transfiguration which awaits us all in the kingdom to come.

On Transfiguration, the blessing of grapes, as well as other fruits and vegetables, is a beautiful sign of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the paradise of God's unending Kingdom of Life, where all will be transformed by the glory of the Lord.

—Father Stephan Meholick



A Heavenly Intercessor for the Pandemic

St. Nikephoros the Leper (feast day January 4) is a twentieth-century saint who suffered from leprosy for many decades. He has emerged as a major saint to turn to during this time of pandemic, after word spread that he had appeared to an elderly man in Greece in early

March, telling him not to fear the virus because he would protect and heal all those who have faith and turn to him in prayer.

Father Nikephoros (Nicholas Tzanakakis in the world) was born in 1890 in a mountainous village in Khania, Greece, which enjoyed a healthy climate, with beautiful forests, rich waters, gorges, and caves.

His parents were simple and pious villagers who died when he was still a young child, leaving him as an orphan. So, at the age of thirteen, he left his home. His grandfather, who had undertaken to raise him, went to Khania to work there in a barbershop in order to learn the job. At that time, young Nicholas showed the first signs of Hansen's disease, better known as leprosy. The lepers were isolated on the island of Spinalonga because leprosy was a contagious disease and it was treated with fear and dismay.

Nicholas was sixteen years old when signs of the disease began to become more conspicuous, so he left on a boat to Egypt in order to avoid being confined to Spinalonga. He remained in Alexandria, working in a barbershop again, but the signs of the disease became more and more apparent, especially on his hands and face. Through the intervention of a cleric, he went to Chios, where there was a church for lepers at that time, and the priest was Father Anthimos Vagianos, later Saint Anthimos (February 15).

Nicholas arrived in Chios in 1914 at the age of twenty-four. In the leper hospital of Chios, which was a complex with many homesteads, there was a chapel of Saint Lazarus, where the wonderworking icon of the Panagia of Ypakoe (Theotokos of Obedience) was kept. In this space, the course of virtues was opened for Nicholas. Within two years, Saint Anthimos considered him ready for the angelic Schema and tonsured him with the name Nikephoros. The disease progressed and evolved in the absence of suitable drugs, causing many large lesions (a drug would later be discovered in 1947).

Father Nikephoros lived with unquestioning, genuine obedience to his spiritual father, and with austere fasting, working in the gardens. He also recorded the miracles of Saint Anthimos, which he had witnessed with his own eyes, many of which were related to the deliverance of those possessed by demons.

There was a special spiritual relationship between Saint Anthimos and the monk Nikephoros, who always remained close to him. Father Nikephoros prayed at night for hours on end, making countless *metanias*

(bows or prostrations). He did not quarrel with anyone, nor injure anyone's heart, and he was the master chanter of the temple. Because of his illness, however, he slowly lost his sight, and so he chanted the troparia and the Epistles from memory.

The Chios leprosarium was closed in 1957, and the remaining patients, together with Father Nikephoros, were sent to Saint Barbara's home for lepers in Athens. At that time, Father Nikephoros was about 67 years old. His members and his eyes were completely altered and distorted by the disease.

There, Father Eumenios also lived there at the home for lepers. He also suffered from Hansen's disease, but with the medication he received, he had been completely cured. However, he decided to remain in the home for lepers for the rest of his life near his fellow sufferers, caring for them with much love. Thus he submitted to Father Nikephoros, to whom the Lord had given many gifts as a reward for his patience. A crowd of people gathered in the humble cell of the leper Nikephoros to obtain his prayers. Here are some testimonies of those who met him:

"While he was prostrate with wounds and pains, he did not complain, but he showed great patience." "He had the charisma of consoling those who were sad. His eyes were permanently irritated, and he had limited sight. He also had stiffness in his hands and paralysis in his lower limbs. Nonetheless, he endured all of this in the sweetest, meek, smiling, delightful way, and he was also pleasant and lovable." "His face, which was eaten away by the marks of his illness, and his wounds, shone. It was a joy for those who saw this destitute and seemingly feeble man saying, May His holy name be glorified."

Father Nikephoros reposed on January 4, 1964, at the age of 74. After three years, his holy relics were exhumed and found to be fragrant. Father Eumenios and other believers reported many cases where miracles occurred by calling on Saint Nikephoros to intercede with God.

The life of Saint Nikephoros was a brilliant example and model for everyone. He was pleasing to God because he had endured so much. For this reason, we have many testimonies that our saint received from the Holy Spirit the gift of discernment and a host of other charisms. We should note that most of the miracles are recorded, and today the saint gives generous help to anyone in need. Surely there will be many more miracles that not have not yet been made manifest.



Troparion, Tone 1

All the angels were astonished by the struggles and strict asceticism of the Venerable Nikephoros the Leper; / for like another Job, patiently enduring his pain, he glorified God, / Who has crowned him now with glory, distinguishing him through miracles. / Rejoice, instructor of monastics! / Rejoice, beacon of light! / Rejoice, for a delightful fragrance pours forth from your relics!

Kontakion, Tone 8

The valiant athlete of endurance and fortitude, / the steadfast diamond of patience and long-suffering was tried by affliction and sickness, / and in this way he glorified the Most High God, let us extol Nikephoros the Leper, / saying unto him: Rejoice, O namesake of victory!

—Courtesy of OrthodoxChristian.com and OCA.org

Choir Notes

“How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!”
—Psalm 84:1

We have entered a new phase in the era of COVID under changing health orders. As a result of the Governor’s recent directive, which our county is enforcing, our Liturgies will be served outdoors starting on Sunday, August 16. The debut outdoor service was a dramatic beginning, indeed, as it was accompanied by a highly unusual midsummer thunderstorm with strong winds and rain (we had been expecting searing heat). Our tents were secured by the surrounding birch trees, thanks to the helpers who erected them earlier in the weekend. The faithful seemed unfazed beneath the tent, as they witnessed the



fullness of the Divine Liturgy service unfold. After the Liturgy, the Communion service continued indoors, with a few people at a time entering the church to receive the Holy Mysteries or to light candles for personal devotion.

We realize that this new arrangement will require some flexibility and resourcefulness from our singers, servers, and congregants, so please bear with us as we experiment with what arrangement works best. We thank everyone for their patience during this time of restrictions on gathering for worship in the normal way. Please contact sergeichidlowsky@gmail.com if you would like to be included on the schedule of singers.



Books Are the Best Companions

A couple of days ago, I was rereading one of my old books from the days when a “liberal arts” education meant “liberal” in the ideal sense of the word, and when professors were careful not to display their ideological bent and were free to compliment students’ well-presented arguments displaying original thought (and grade accordingly). Those were the days even in the now “cancel cultural” bastion of not-so-liberal thought—the University of California in Berkeley.

Although I normally avoid the use of the personal pronoun in my contributions to this newsletter, this is an exception that must be personal because it concerns precious memories of my father and his effect on me, and who I turned out to become.

My Dad, Nicolas Kisseleff, always encouraged learning, no matter the subject, and even before I had reached the age of five, he was encouraging me to learn to read. He extolled the virtue of reading not just because it opened new worlds to a young and interested mind, but also because he saw that, as an only child, I was often lonely and missed the companionship of other children. I don’t mean to imply that my parents kept me away from other children, far from it, but during periods when there was no

opportunity to mingle with other children, I did miss the companionship of what I did not have—siblings.

Dad, who retained his love of learning until his last day on earth, would offer a simple little book and say the words I will always remember until my last day on earth: “When you learn how to read, you will never be alone.” Happily, I followed his advice, learned how to read and, indeed, have never felt lonely with a book in hand. Many books read in school at the ages 18 through 22 have a greater meaning when one’s eightieth birthday is several months away. John Steinbeck tales of Monterey and Salinas take on greater beauty now, and the Platonic Dialogues give greater urgency to thoughts of the world as it is today and much food for thought. Biblical history, and the history of Greece and Rome, also give rise to much new (and hopefully wiser) appreciation of the foundation of Western democracy, and new ideas.

So Dad, here’s to you and your endless pursuit of knowledge, and to the words you said to your little daughter such a long time ago and who, surrounded by her beloved books, has never known another lonely day—especially in this time of relative social isolation in the days of the pandemic. Thank you, Dad, and may Heaven contain as many books as will satisfy your endless curiosity!

—Lana Logvy

Orthodox Community Events

- **Holy Virgin Cathedral is open for private devotion: Friday through Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m.** Maximum of 10 people inside for up to 15 minutes. Face coverings and social distancing required. 6210 Geary Blvd. San Francisco. If you would like to put up a candle of any size for an upcoming service, please visit SFSobor.com/donate.



- **Online Prayer Requests:** Even though the SF Cathedral is closed, services continue, and prayer requests to **St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco** can be submitted online at <http://www.sfsobor.com>; St. John; Prayer Requests. There you may provide a list of names of your relatives and friends for



commemoration at the weekly *molieben* to St. John in front of his relics. The *molieben* is served every **Saturday at 4:30 p.m.** and is live streamed at <http://sfsobor.tilda.ws/livestreaming>. Please submit your list by no later than Friday at 3:00 p.m. for the following Saturday. Also, be sure to make a donation to the Cathedral to help them in this time of financial hardship. Or, write a letter to St. John, **c/o Holy Virgin Cathedral, 6210 Geary Blvd. San Francisco CA 94121**. Postal only. No e-letters please.

- **Ancient Faith Radio** offers **online audio and video programming**, 24-hour Internet Orthodox talk, music radio programs, live call-in shows, podcasts, and an extensive list of downloadable Orthodox content. Listen on your computer or mobile device at <https://www.ancientfaith.com>.
- **Orthodox Book Discussion** online with Father Nicholas Carr (St. Seraphim’s Cathedral). Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Next sessions: **August 19 and 26; September 2**. Book: “The Way of the Ascetics” by Tito Coliander. Please e-mail him at lanternnine@gmail.com if you would like to participate.
- **Redwood Empire Food Bank** distribution continues, and now takes place twice a month, **second and fourth Wednesdays, at 3:45–5:30 p.m. St. Seraphim Orthodox Church** parking lot, 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa, 707-584-9491. Please contact Tom Pellizzer if you’d like to volunteer: tndcot@gmail.com.

- **St. Seraphim Orthodox Church Streaming Prayers:** Morning and evening prayers are streaming live on Facebook per the monthly calendar. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/stseraphimofsarovsr/> for a current schedule.
- **RACS (Russian American Community Services)** continues to provide meals to go, grocery deliveries, and other help to low-income households and seniors in San Francisco during the COVID crisis. They also support a variety of charities (orphanages, missions, and shelters). To donate, please go to www.racssf.org.



✠ Our Council Members ✠

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- **Burlingame Church of All Russian Saints Choir Concerts from 2014–2019** are now online along with other musical resources. Visit their newly designed website: <https://www.allrussiansaintsburlingame.org/choirconcerts>.
- **Holy Assumption Monastery** in Calistoga is live-streaming their services, which are also archived on their Facebook page. Daily services include Matins at 5:30 a.m., Sixth Hour at 12:30 p.m., Vespers at 6:00 p.m., and Compline at 7:30 p.m. Visit facebook.com/holyassumptionmonastery for an up-to-date schedule and archived videos.



Online Donations

Just because some of us are sheltering at home does not mean that we can't continue to support our church. To make an online donation, or to keep up with your stewardship pledge, please go to our website, <https://www.stspproca.org>, and click on the "Donate" tab to make an offering. You can also select from the menu how to earmark your gift. Thank you for your ongoing generosity!

➤ *The next Parish Council meetings will be held on Tuesday, September 15, at 6:00 p.m. The next Sisterhood meeting is TBD.*

➤ *All our services are live streamed. Just go to our website, www.stspproca.org, and click on "Service Live Stream" under the "Streaming and Prayers" tab.*

To view previous services, click on "Service Archive."

➤ *Thanks to all who contributed photos to this month's newsletter: Nadia Stewart, Anna Judd, Anna Ferguson, Father Alexander, and Paul Johnson.*