

Sts. Peter & Paul Church Council News

December 2022–January 2023

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Priest's Corner

With the advent of Nativity Lent, we already hear the joyous refrains of “*Christ is born, glorify Him! Christ cometh from Heaven, meet ye Him!*” during the Vigil services, reminding us that the year is coming to an end and a new one is beginning. Lent is always a time for reflection and prayer, but also an opportunity to “take stock” by counting our blessings and seeing where we are on our spiritual path—especially at the beginning of a new year. To be sure, each year has its “ups and downs,” and this year has been no exception. Nevertheless, we still have much to be grateful for here in Santa Rosa.

To speak of “lows” this past year, one in particular comes to mind: the unsuccessful closure of our cemetery project. After ten years of work and significant costs, the project was doomed by the impossible expenses associated with the mitigation of special plant and animal species. When we embarked on this project years ago, we understood from the start that if this project were to be in accordance with God’s will, it would succeed. We persevered through many obstacles over the years in the knowledge that few things of value come without great difficulty. In the end, however, the aforementioned impossible costs seemed to be a clear indication to us of God’s intent in this regard. To try to force the issue further would be to risk bankrupting our parish—something that I truly believe would not have been well pleasing to God. From this point, the Sts. Peter & Paul Fund LLC, together with our Parish Council, are working on the best possible disposition of the property with the intention of covering all costs associated with the project, paying back loans from the Russian-American Women’s League, and it is hoped, realizing a net profit to the parish.

Indeed, however, much has been successfully accomplished for which we should be truly grateful. Several years ago, we laid out a plan of major capital improvements to our church building and surrounding property. I called upon our parishioners and friends to concentrate our fundraising activities around this plan,

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and I cannot find the words to express how grateful I am to all who answered that call with such great efforts and incredible generosity. Thanks to these efforts, we have completed and paid for almost all of the major projects we had envisioned several years back. Only a few details are still outstanding with regard to preparing the church for its full Consecration, and those, God willing, should be completed within the next few months.

Now that the cemetery project has closed, our major capital projects and expenditures are done, and our parish financial situation is stable, I believe it is time to go back to dedicating more of our time and fundraising efforts toward the charitable activities we have supported in the past. Our Russian Church Abroad has an excellent fundraising and charitable organization (the Fund for Assistance of ROCOR) through which we have channeled thousands of dollars in relief to Ukrainian refugees, hurricane and earthquake relief in Haiti, Mexico, and elsewhere, support for our ROCOR youth groups, missions, and other worthy causes. We were very successful in our 2017–2020 Wine Country Fire Relief fund, and I look forward to giving assistance to people in need on a local level as such needs may arise. Our Heavenly Father has rewarded our efforts with unprecedented success. Glory be to Him for this, and now, let us turn our attention to those in need to help in any way we can.

As we reflect upon this past year and prepare for the new one, it is good for each of us to learn from the ups and downs of the last few years, to remember the mistakes we made, the good things we should have done but didn’t, and, most important, the promises we made to God to do our best to be better Christians this year and every year. Let us, indeed, consider these things and truly show our appreciation to Our Lord for His unending patience with us by celebrating Him during the Divine Liturgy in our church, going to Holy Confession and receiving the most precious gifts of Holy Communion. Let us do more than just make a New Year’s resolution to be better, but as we hear in

the Divine Liturgy, truly “*commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ Our God.*” The celebration of Our Lord’s Nativity gives us yet another opportunity to recommit ourselves to our faith in Him. We have seen the benefits of such faith. May we make ourselves more worthy to receive those benefits even more bountifully in the coming year.

January 27 – Nina Russo and Nina Shikaloff

January 31 – Fr. Deacon Athanasius Ferguson

May God grant them all Many Years!

**We ask that you please notify us if we have missed anyone’s name’s day in our lists. Thank you!*

—*With love in Christ, Father Alexander*



Congratulations to the parents, godparents, and relatives of the newly baptized:

- **Joseph Sciambra**, who was baptized on the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, December 4; and
- **Darya Shelomentseff**, who was baptized on November 19, 2022.

And to all our Name’s day celebrants*:

- December 5 – Cecilia Montano
- December 6 – Alexander Bodulov, Alexander Cochrane, and Alexander Litvinenko
- December 7 – Katherine Gustav, Katherine Huhlov, Katherine Lerke, Katherine Logvy, Katherine Peterson, Katherine Poluektov, Katherine Ramish, Katherine Stewart, Katherine White, and Katherine Krassovsky Wolkow
- December 9 – George Huhlov and George Shliapnikoff
- December 13 – Andrei Kochergin, Andrei Lucas, Andrew Merriss, Andrei Mogilev, Andrei Peterson, Andrei Rykoff, and Andrei Tchirkine
- December 19 – Nicholas Alva, Nicholas Klimenko, Nicholas Litvinenko, Nicholas Lucas, Nicholas Newton, Nicholas Protopopoff, Jr., and Gloria (Colleen) Collins
- December 22 – Anna Judd
- December 25 – Gary (Peter) Collins, Daniel Alva, Noah Melake, David Montano, Sarah Person, and Sarina Tesfamariam
- January 1 – Eva Balitsky and Eva Handelih
- January 6 – Eugenia Riccard
- January 8 – Joseph Handelih and Steven Montano
- January 10 – Arsema Tewolde
- January 16 – Malachi Campbell
- January 20 – Bishop Theodosy (Ivashchenko)
- January 24 – Ian McWethy
- January 25 – Tatiana Bennett, Tatiana Churina, Tatiana Hidchenko, Tatiana Khlopoff, Tatiana McWethy, Tatiana Metlenko, Tatiana Nigodoff, Tatiana Schneider, Tatiana Shliapnikoff, and Tatiana Volhontseff

In Memoriam

With a degree of sadness but, as always, with faith in our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, we note the passing of:
 † **Ludmila Tkacheva**, a long-time active member of St. Simeon’s Parish in Calistoga, and later here at Sts. Peter & Paul’s, who passed away peacefully on November 5, 2022.

May God grant rest to the soul of His newly departed servant **Ludmila**, and I ask that you remember her in your prayers both in church and at home.



Arming Our Children with Spiritual Weapons

It is essential that we expose our youth to the teachings of the Church, and offer them serious facts about traditional Christianity, while letting them see that faith is not simply a religious expression of the ethnic heritage of their parents or of keeping a generational family tradition alive. If our youth don’t know the faith and are not helped in making faith their own, internalizing it into their hearts, how do we expect to



break the downward cycle of church attendance that is happening across the nation? If we insist on being aloof in our priestly bearing, how will the youth feel free to come to us with their doubts and struggles with belief in God, and curb the mass exodus of young people from the churches? How will these wonderful young people withstand the secularism, humanism,

and atheism that is being pounded into their young minds if we do not arm them with a faith that can withstand the challenges of professors and fellow classmates who set out to destroy “the provincial and ethnic beliefs taught by backward parents, uneducated grandparents, and self-serving clergy?”

We are at war! If we don't arm our children with spiritual weapons, they will be lost to the enemy, and we will have only ourselves to blame. If all our faith is to them is a backward religion they don't understand, and if they do not sense the love of Christ in the hearts of their parents, priests, and bishops, they will depart to the greener pastures of a society that has had it with religious pomposity, hypocrisy, and scandal. If the youth don't feel loved and respected by their bishops and priests, they will turn against all we stand for, and we will see them only at our ethnic church bazaars and the occasional funeral.

If these youth are not taught the true faith of Christ, and helped to make it their own by our example of holiness of life, and by our love for them, they will not have been given the armor and ammunition to withstand the atheism of our age, and they will have been lost.

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



Starosta / Warden's Corner

We had a very successful Christmas Bazaar and Food Festival. The weather held up beautifully, and it was really nice to have so many parishioners come together to create such a fabulous event. The list of volunteers is too lengthy to name individuals, but as a group many thanks are due for a job well done.

This year we relocated the bar and dining tables from the rear of the hall to the front decks, and under the tents we had a packed crowd.



The four columns for the church, which are being built in Crete, are just being finished and should be shipped any day. They will complete the current renovations to the church.

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



Sisterhood News

To all our very enthusiastic volunteers, thank you! You made Sts. Peter and Paul's annual Christmas Bazaar a huge success this year. Even though the rummage sale was much smaller in scale, as well as the jewelry booth, every station did well. The frozen food-to-go sales continue to grow each year. Some of the popular items sold out, even though more food was prepared. If you missed buying these items at the Bazaar because they were sold out, the Sisterhood will be making pelmeniy and cocktail piroshki for sale after Nativity for purchase. The Eritreans generously donated, cooked, and served an excellent luncheon. A popular traditional Russian luncheon was also served, and the à la carte station was bustling. For those who came to the Bazaar, different flavored vodka as well as other beverages were enjoyed out on our front deck this year. Russian desserts are always a big favorite. The regulars know to come early in the day if they want uncommon, delicious, homemade desserts, as they sell out quickly. The Russian tables had items for sale from Russia, which is always a popular place to buy unique gifts. The Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga was represented and brought many wares to sell, including flavored olive oils, bottles of balsamic vinegar, and various kinds of honey. Sts. Peter and Paul Church is very grateful for the continued support and donation to our Bazaar from the Russian American Women's League. Last but not least, to all of you who were working behind the scenes (you know who you are), we thank you for being the oil that made everything run smoothly.

Again, to all the women who tirelessly prepare meals for our parishioners every Sunday, shop, set up, serve, clean up, buy supplies, schedule, and keep everything organized, we are blessed by your service to the church. Our holidays are special and go beyond the regular lunches, as was our recent feast of the Entry of the Holy Theotokos into the Temple on December 4. Thank you for your continued generosity in giving your time and talents. If you would like to help out with future Sunday or holiday lunches, please contact our lunch scheduler, Sharon Buot, at 707-321-9893 or sharonbuot@comcast.net.

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus is on January 7, 2023. Sign-up lists are at the candle counter and in the hall if you would like to bring a dish to the potluck following the service. If you would like to help Anna Judd put the Christmas baskets together for the ailing members and the shut-ins of our parish, please call her at 707-823-2372 or email her at annajudd@comcast.net. Volunteers to help decorate the church on Tuesday, January 3, at 12:00 p.m. for the feast of the Nativity will be much appreciated. Many hands make light work!

—Anna Ferguson
Secretary for the Sisterhood Committee



Caroling

Christmas Caroling will be held on Sunday, January 8, 2023. We will go from house to house visiting our elderly and home-bound parishioners, ending at Rimma Kaliakin’s home for an after-party.

European Choir Conference

The Fourth Pan-European Orthodox Liturgical Music Conference, with the theme “Rachmaninoff and Sacred Music” will be held in London, UK, on January 26–29, 2023, at the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Mother of God and Holy Royal Martyrs. Languages of instruction are English, Russian, and French. Please visit www.aecmc.org to register. Scholarships from our choir fund are available.



Nativity Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom in the Year 386

Behold a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd’s song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.



Choir Notes

Youth Choir

The youth choir rehearsals are coming along really well. We are focusing on all participants to be able to be proficient in their vocal section, in addition to teaching Church Slavonic, music theory, and harmonization. We are so excited that their enthusiasm is high and their goals are being met. We are grateful for everyone’s support. Please contact Vera Peterson if you would like to join or help out: 661-305-6234 or msvnp28@gmail.com.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominions, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb. Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech. For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. **For** since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.



For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant's bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infant's food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.





Orthodox Community Events

- **Angels Unawares Homeless Outreach**, first Thursdays, **January 5**, 6:00 p.m. Welcome those without shelter in our community to a supper and stayover at the parish hall. Cooks and servers needed. RSVP Michael Dovey: 707-799-4117. St. Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral, 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa.



- **Saturdays**, 4:30 p.m., **Molieben to St. John of San Francisco. Holy Virgin Cathedral**, 26th Ave. and Geary Blvd., San Francisco. Submit names online by Friday at 3:00 p.m.: visit www.sfsobor.com, St. John Prayer Requests.
- **How Do We Align Ourselves with Christ?** Online Zoom discussion meeting, starting Wed., **December 28**, 7:00–8:30 p.m. Visit StNicholasMarin.org for link.
- **Feast Day of St. Seraphim (N.S.)**, **January 1**, 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers; **January 2**, 9:30 a.m., Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Benjamin followed by festive trapeza. St. Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral, 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa.
- **First Day Hike at Fort Ross**, Sunday, **January 1**, 2023, 10:30 a.m., Salt Point State Park, Grace Rock Loop Trail. Join Fort Ross Conservancy's Hank Birnbaum for the annual First Day Hike along the breathtaking coast of Salt Point State Park. Free to everyone but donations are greatly appreciated.

Pair this hike with a 2:30 p.m. **Fort Ross Guided Walking**



Tour & Tea. Meet at the Fort Ross Visitor Center. \$15/person plus California State Park parking fees apply. Learn the inside stories of Fort Ross, featuring a guided tour through the fort compound and introductions to the Kashia Pomo, Russian Era Alaska Natives plus the Ranch Era. After our



hour-plus tour, sit down at the samovar for a cup of hot tea, treats, and discussions. Fort Ross Historic Park, 19005 Coast Hwy. 1, Jenner, 95450. www.fortross.org.

- **Annual Vasilopita (St. Basil's bread) sale**, **Sunday, January 8**. All proceeds benefit St. Basil's Academy, a residence for underprivileged children in Upstate New York. Minimum donation, \$15. **Holy Nativity Greek Orthodox Church**, 1110 Highland Ave., Novato. www.nativityofchrist.org.
- **Father James Jorgenson** of St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church is teaching a series of **Thursday evening Bible studies** that resumes on Thursday, **January 12** at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. Please e-mail Father Lawrence to be sent the link for the online class: LMargitich@sbcglobal.net.
- **Holy Assumption Monastery Retreat** on Zoom, Sat., 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. **January 12** with Fr. Spyridon Jajeh, topic to be announced. Previous talks are recorded and can be found at <https://holyassumptionmonastery.com>. Please call 707-942-6244 or email sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com for more info.

- **Divine Liturgy** is being served one **Saturday** each month at 9:30 a.m., followed by a potluck outdoor lunch. Next Liturgy: **January 28, Our Lady of Kazan, Russian River**, Hours at 8:40 a.m.; Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. 17370 Neeley Rd., Guerneville, 95446. Contact Victoria Sabelnik for info and updates: kazanchurchrussianriver@gmail.com.

- **Annual Walk for Life West Coast San Francisco. January 21**, 2023, Civic Center Plaza. 10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Silent No More Awareness Campaign. 11:00: Orthodox Molieben for the

Unborn. 12:30–1:30 p.m. Rally; Walk 1:30. Stand for the lives of women who are hurt by abortion and for the lives of the unborn threatened by abortion. The walk will process peacefully down Market Street to the Ferry Building.

- **Tools of Spiritual Warfare Women’s Zoom Study**, Thursdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m. RSVP eleni@holytrinitysf.org. **January 28, 2023: In-person women’s retreat.** To sign up, please contact Rachel Wales at wales.rachel@yahoo.com. Holy Trinity Cathedral, 999 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco.
- **Community Crab Feed, Sat., February 4.** Delicious Greek appetizers, crab, Cretan wine bar, raffle, and silent auction. Music from Crete and performances by the Minoan Dancers. **Holy Nativity Greek Orthodox Church**, 1110 Highland Ave., Novato. www.nativityofchrist.org.



The Next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24, at 6:00 p.m. in the Admin Building.

☪ Our Council Members ☪

- Rev. Alexander Krassovsky 707-585-8330
- Fr. Deacon Athanasius Ferguson..... 707-812-4125
- Paul Johnson, Warden 707-696-5566
- Elisabeth Russie, Treasurer 415-328-1095
- Anna Ferguson, Secretary 707-812-4124
- Daniel Alva..... 707-570-7787
- Demitrios Handelih 707-292-2842
- Michael A. Mogilev..... 707-953-3636
- Lisa Joanna Smith..... 617-285-5211
- Alla Zaharoff 707-837-5044



*Old Russian
New Year's Eve Ball*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2023

RUSSIAN CENTER
2450 SUTTER STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

BEGINNING AT 7:30PM
COCKTAIL RECEPTION · SILENT AUCTION
FOLLOWED BY:
DINNER · LIVE MUSIC · ENTERTAINMENT ·
DJ · DANCING
DESSERT · MIDNIGHT CHAMPAGNE TOAST

NO HOST BAR AVAILABLE

COSSACK OR FORMAL ATTIRE

TICKETS: \$150/PERSON OR \$1,250 FOR TABLE OF 10

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
HOLYVIRGINCATHEDRAL.COM OR
ALLCOSSACKSUNIONS.ORG



FOR MORE INFORMATION: PALINA SUHONOS 925-935-6482

FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT ALL COSSACK'S UNION AND
HOLY VIRGIN CATHEDRAL PARKING PROJECT