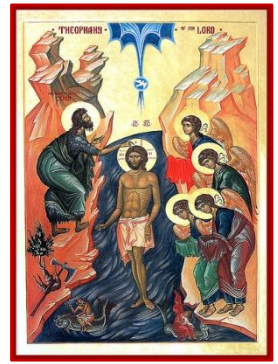


# Sts. Peter & Paul Church Council News

## December 2025 – January 2026

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### *Priest's Corner*

In our modern world, where politics have become so divisive, not only here in America, but in our Russian/Ukrainian homeland as well, along with the usual bustling about in our daily lives, losing sight of what is most important in our lives becomes fairly common. We tend to get bogged down in our earthly problems and concerns, while forgetting to be grateful for what we *do* have and the many blessings God showers us with all our lives.

One of the most admirable things promulgated by our American government over a century ago, (President Lincoln, in fact) was the establishment of a national day of thanks to God for His countless mercies bestowed upon our country throughout its history. Of all of our national holidays, Thanksgiving seems to be the only one, which has, at least somewhat, maintained its importance and relevance. Our very secular society has virtually eliminated any Christian spirituality from Easter – the greatest of all feasts – and the commercialization of Christmas is, unfortunately, legendary. Thanksgiving Day has always been a time for families to gather, consider the blessings they have and, indeed, to give thanks. At the very least, most people in our country do take this day to consider and appreciate the more important things in life. Unfortunately, even this feast is under the same secular and, particularly, commercial threats today, which have eliminated any spiritual meaning from our holidays and virtually every other aspect of our lives in this country.

It is for this very reason, that we, as Orthodox Christians, are particularly blessed, in that for us, every Sunday, every Liturgy is a day of thanks. The Greek word: εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*)- which means

“thanks” or “gratitude” is the root of the term Holy Eucharist - that most important part of the Divine Liturgy, during which the Holy Gifts of our Lord's Body and Blood are consecrated. The “Bloodless sacrifice of Praise” is the ultimate giving of thanks to God, during which we participate in the eternal

Mystical Supper through which heaven and earth are joined. During the celebration of *every* Divine Liturgy, we offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His mercy and loving-kindness. That eternal celebration taking place in the heavenly kingdom is available to us, here and now, whenever we participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Eucharistic celebration wherein Christ offers His Body and Blood for our spiritual and physical healing, is that moment in time when we are able to experience now, and participate in, the Eternal Banquet that awaits us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

\* \* \*

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and extend a hearty “well done!” to the members of our Sisterhood, Parish Council and all those who worked with them to make this year's Food Fest/Christmas Bazaar such a great success! Although this year's event was significantly “streamlined” from previous years nevertheless, the immense amount of work, which went into it was evident in the decorations, delicious food and gifts filling the church hall. Thanks also, to all who came to support us in this endeavor and we sincerely hope you will come back again and again to enjoy our hospitality in the months to come during the other events we conduct during the year to materially support our parish.

\* \* \*

Finally, the days of the Nativity Lent are upon us. Let us keep this holy time of preparation for the



bright feasts of the Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord very much in mind, especially when faced with the commotion, which often accompanies this time of year, always remembering “the reason for the season.”

**God Bless!**  
**Fr. Alexander**



### ***Welcome Father Seth and Family!***

As we joyfully welcome our new parish priest, Father Seth, his wife Sophia and son Clement, many have asked how they can help them feel truly at home here in Sonoma County. Moving across borders is no small nor inexpensive task, so this is a beautiful moment for our church family to come together in support. If you feel moved to help, your gift will ease their transition by helping cover their moving expenses and offer a warm welcome as they settle into their new home and our community. An example of how you can help would be to “sponsor” some of the moving expenses (up to \$7,000) or an improvement made to the house (“The new flooring in the house is gifted to Fr. Seth and his family by “*your name*”). Every contribution, large or small, helps surround our newest family with the hospitality, love, and care that define our parish. If you wish to join in this welcome, kindly contact Father Alexander or Paul Johnson for information on how to contribute, remembering that all such contributions are tax deductible.

### ***Stewardship Update***

Our Stewardship re-launch, begun at our Parish Feast Day this year, has been highly successful! Almost all of our existing stewards have increased their pledges - some quite significantly - and we have signed up a number of new stewards as well. If you have not yet signed up as a steward of our parish, please contact Paul Johnson or Aliona Russie to do so. As a reminder to all of our stewards, please check your records to make sure all of your pledges are in before December 31, 2025, so that they may all be included in your annual tax receipt. May God bless you all for your generous support!

**Congratulations to the parents, godparents and relatives of the newly baptized Maxima Iris Bodulow, who was baptized on November 22, 2025.**

### ***Congratulations to all those celebrating their Namesdays\*:***

December 5 – Cecilia Montano  
December 6 – Alexander Bodulov and Alexander Cochrane  
December 7 – Katherine Gustav, Katherine Huhlov, Katherine Lerke, Katherine Logvy, Ekaterina Peterson, Katherine Poluektov, Katherine Ramish, Katherine Stewart, Katherine White and Katherine (Krassovsky) Wolkow  
December 8 – Clement Davidenko  
December 9 – George Huhlov and George Shliapnikoff  
December 13 – Andrei Kochergin, Andrei Lucas, Andrei Mogilev, Andrei Peterson, Andrei Rykoff and Andrei Tchirkin  
December 19 – Nicholas Alva, Nicholas Klimenko, Nicholas Litvinenko, Nicholas Lucas, Nicholas Newton, Nicholas Protopopoff Jr. and Gloria/Colleen Collins  
December 22 - Anna Judd  
December 28 - Fr. Seth Davidenko, Gary/Peter Collins, Daniel Alva, Noah Melake, David Montano, Sarah Person, Sarina Tesfamariam, Eva Balitsky and Eva Handelih  
January 6 – Eugenia Riccard  
January 8 – Joseph Handelih and Joseph Sciambra  
January 9 – Steven Montano  
January 10 - Arsema Tewolde  
January 16 – Malachi Campbell  
January 20 – Ian McWethy  
January 24 – Bishop Theodossy  
January 25 – Tatiana Bennett, Tatiana Churina, Tatiana Hidchenko, Tatiana Khlopoff, Tatiana McWethy, Tatiana Metlenko, Tatiana Nigodoff, Tatiana Schneider, Tatiana Shliapnikoff and Tatiana Volhontseff  
January 27 - Nina Russo and Nina Shikaloff  
January 31 - Fr. Deacon Athanasius Ferguson

*\*) Fr. Alexander asks, that you please notify him if we have missed anyone's namesdays in our lists. Thank you!*

***God Grant them All Many Years!***



## *God is, simply, love.*

“Do not be irritated either with those who sin or those who offend; do not have a passion for noticing every sin in your neighbor, and for judging him, as we are in the habit of doing. Everyone shall give an answer to God for himself. Everyone has a conscience; everyone hears God's Word, and knows God's Will either from books or from conversation with other people. Especially do not look with evil intention upon the sins of your elders, which do not regard you; "to his own master he standeth or falleth." Correct your own sins, amend your own life.”

“Unite your soul to God by means of hearty faith and you will be able to accomplish everything. Do powerful, invisible, ever-watchful enemies wage war against you? You will conquer them. Are these enemies visible, outward? You will conquer them also. Do passions rend you? You will overcome them. Are you crushed with sorrows? You will get over them. Have you fallen into despondency? You will obtain courage. With faith you will be able to conquer everything, and even the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours. Faith is the greatest blessing of the earthly life; it unites the man to God, and makes him strong and victorious through Him. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.

“God, in whom we believe and in whom we trust, is not a complex Being, as He is also simply love. Amen.”

*St. John of Kronstadt*



## *Starosta's / Warden's Corner*

Our annual Food Fest went very well. After missing last year because of the consecration of the church, we were back on track for this year's event. A lot of effort was put in by many people—from food preparation to setup.

From setting up the stage and decorating the hall to putting up the tents, there was a constant stream of people coming by to help get things ready the week before the event. All weekend long, many people from the parish helped in various ways to make our guests feel welcome. Once the event was over, a number of people stepped up to help put things away and break down the tents. By midweek, things were back to the way they were. The Food Fest went very smoothly, and we are grateful for how well things progressed

through the days before and after the weekend. Thank you all!

The Sisterhood still has some frozen food to go available. Please see them if you are interested in purchasing any for yourself.

On the Saturday before the Food Fest, Misha Mogilev and Vera Peterson sat in on the radio program, *The Good Food Hour*, hosted by Steve Garner at KSRO radio (1350 AM, 103.5 FM) to help promote our event. Misha Mogilev has been doing this for about 15 years, bringing someone from our parish with him to sit in and talk about the festivities and providing the host with some samples of food and drink that we serve. Thank you for taking the time to help get the word out to the community.



A big thank you goes to the Collins family, especially Markus, Simeon, and Gloria, for the upkeep of the grounds between the church and the hall. Some others have worked at maintaining the grounds between the parking lot and Stony Point Road, along with an effort to clean up the leaves around the church. Your dedication to helping keep the area tidy is greatly appreciated.

We are now preparing for the Feast of the Nativity and the many eventful days that follow. We are looking forward to celebrating these wonderful days with all of you.

**Paul Johnson**

707-696-5566

starosta@sonic.net





## *Sisterhood News*

As usual, during the months of September and October, our sisterhood is focused on the preparation for the annual Christmas Bazaar. This year it was scheduled for the weekend of November 8-9. Starting from the early September, Aliona Russie was organizing a group of helpers to get together to make pelmeni for sale at the Bazaar. This group included a number of very dedicated people who were willing to come to the church hall to work on pelmeni during the weekdays.



They were gathering several times to work together to assure that we had enough bags of frozen pelmeni to sell at the Bazaar. The regulars were Zoia Litvinenko, Ira Goncharov, Diana Handelih and her daughter-in-law Maria Handelih, Natalia Fokina, Anna Ferguson, Anna Krassovsky, and Valentina Gromova. We also had help from our men - Alexey Khlopov, Kirill Bell, and Father Athanasius.

Kapa Huhlov was responsible for making small, cocktail size pirozhki, and also regular size pirozhki, baked and fried, with meat filling. Several people helped Kapa to make these very popular pirozhki with meat filling - Natalia Fokina, Olga Clark, and Valentina Gromova were making pirozhki, and John Poluektov was frying them.

Besides small pirozhki, we always sell pieces of puff-pastry based large pies. This year Natasha Shikalov made savory pies with mushrooms, Aliona with meat, and Kapa with cabbage.

Nadia Stewart was the head organizer for cabbage roll making, Lena Poluektov cooked several huge pots of our traditional Russian borsch, and Zoia Litvinenko made beef stroganoff. Vika Kochergin and Sasha Krassovsky did an excellent job displaying and selling a wide variety of Russian souvenirs, and the Mogilev family took care of the bar, with vodka tasting, that

always attracts lots of customers. Anna Judd was responsible for the desserts, with great help from several sisters - Olga Reighhart, Natalia Fokina, Evgenia Rickard, in addition to a few others. Nina Williams prepared nicely decorated packages of chocolates and baklava that people could purchase to take home as little festive gifts. Heartfelt thanks go to Diana and Maria Handelih, Kira Poluektov, Arina Bohn, and everyone who contributed sweet treats for the Bazaar.

Nadia Stewart and Ira Bogoslovsky worked hard on preparing, packaging, and selling to-go orders of our delicious food. A special big thank you is due to Sharon Buot for being a mastermind with detailed scheduling of all the aspects of the Bazaar. As usual, the sisters from the Calistoga monastery brought their



beautiful religious books, oils, vinegars, honeys, candles, and other gift items for sale. Also, our wonderful Eritrean sisters prepared and served their aromatic food and coffee both days of the Bazaar. We are truly grateful for their continued participation.

Even some of our youth got involved. Anja and Rose Merriss prepared little chocolate truffles that people enjoyed. Thank you for their enthusiasm and creativity!

Lots of people contributed their skills and, as a result, the Bazaar was successful in raising much needed funds for our church. Thank you all!



## *Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called* *(November 30 / December 13)*

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called was the first of the Apostles to follow Christ, and he later

brought his own brother, the holy Apostle Peter, to Christ (John 1:35-42). The future apostle was from Bethsaida, and from his youth he turned with all his soul to God. He did not enter into marriage, and he worked with his brother as a fisherman. When the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John began to preach, Saint Andrew became his closest disciple. Saint John the Baptist himself sent to Christ his own two disciples, the future Apostles Andrew and John the Theologian, declaring Christ to be the Lamb of God.

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, Saint Andrew went to the Eastern lands preaching the Word of God. He went through Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, he reached the River Danube, went along the coast of the Black Sea, through Crimea, the Black Sea region and along the River Dniepr he climbed to the place where the city of Kiev now stands.

He stopped overnight on the hills of Kiev. Rising in the morning, he said to those disciples that were with him: "See these hills? Upon these hills shall shine forth the beneficence of God, and there will be a great city here, and God shall raise up many churches." The apostle went up around the hills, blessed them and set up a cross. Having prayed, he went up even further along the Dniepr and reached a settlement of the Slavs, where Novgorod was built. From here the apostle went through the land of the Varangians towards Rome for preaching, and again he returned to Thrace, where in the small village of Byzantium, the future Constantinople, he founded the Church of Christ. The name of the holy Apostle Andrew links the mother, the Church of Constantinople, with her daughter, the Russian Church.

On his journeys the First-Called Apostle endured many sufferings and torments from pagans: they cast him out of their cities and they beat him. In Sinope they pelted him with stones, but remaining unharmed, the persistent disciple of Christ continued to preach to people about the Savior. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the Lord worked miracles. By the labors of

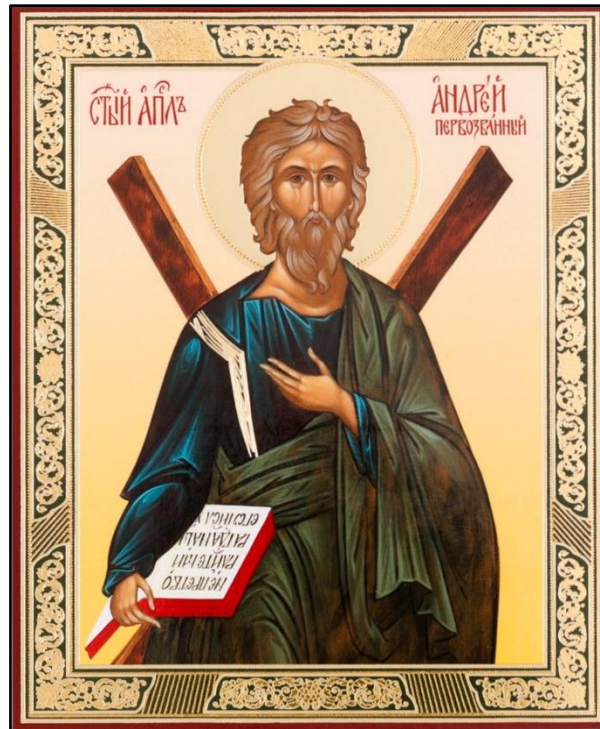
the holy Apostle Andrew, Christian Churches were established, for which he provided bishops and clergy. The final city to which the Apostle came was the city of Patra, where he was destined to suffer martyrdom.

The Lord worked many miracles through His disciple in Patra. The infirm were made whole, and the blind received their sight. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the illustrious citizen Sosios recovered from serious illness; he healed Maximilla, wife of the governor of Patra, and his brother, Stratokles. The miracles accomplished by the Apostle and his fiery speech enlightened almost all the citizens of the city of Patra with the true Faith.

Few pagans remained at Patra, but among them was the prefect of the city, Aegeatos. The Apostle Andrew repeatedly turned to him with the words of the Gospel. But even the miracles of the Apostle did not convince Aegeatos. The holy Apostle with love and humility appealed to his soul, striving to reveal to him the

Christian mystery of life eternal, through the wonder-working power of the Holy Cross of the Lord. The angry Aegeatos gave orders to crucify the apostle. The pagan thought he might undo Saint Andrew's preaching if he were to put him to death on the cross.

Saint Andrew the First-Called accepted the decision of the prefect with joy and with prayer to the Lord, and went willingly to the place of execution. In order to prolong the suffering of the saint, Aegeatos gave orders not to nail the saint's hands and feet, but to tie them to the cross. For two days the apostle taught the citizens who gathered about. The people, in listening to him, with all their souls pitied him and tried to take Saint Andrew down from the cross. Fearing a riot of the people, Aegeatos gave orders to stop the execution. But the holy apostle began to pray that the Lord would grant him death on the cross. Just as the soldiers tried to take hold of the Apostle Andrew, they lost control of their hands. The crucified apostle, having given glory to God, said: "Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit." Then a blazing ray of divine light illumined the cross and the martyr crucified upon it. When the light





faded, the holy Apostle Andrew had already given up his holy soul to the Lord. Maximilla, the wife of the prefect, had the body of the saint taken down from the cross, and buried him with honor.

A few centuries later, under the emperor Constantine the Great, the relics of the holy Apostle Andrew were solemnly transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Apostles beside the relics of the holy Evangelist Luke and Saint Paul's disciple Saint Timothy. After 500 years, the most precious skull of the glorious Apostle Andrew was sent by Basil I the Macedonian (867-886 A.D) to the city of Patras, Greece. Mehmed II (1421) during the Ottoman conquest of the Morea (Peloponnesos) gave the sacred skull of St. Andrew to Pope Pius II (1458-1464) in Rome. Then, in September of 1964, the pope returned the precious skull to Patras. It is now kept at St. Andrew's Skete on Mount Athos. The remaining holy relics of the holy Apostle Andrew and those of the Apostles Thomas, Luke, and Timothy were seized by the Crusaders during their conquest of Constantinople in 1204, and they were brought back to Rome.

Source: [orthochristian.com](http://orthochristian.com)  
[sainttandrewgoc.org](http://sainttandrewgoc.org)



## Archangel Homeschool Academy

Archangel Homeschool Academy is happily ploughing through the autumn and winter seasons at Saints Peter and Paul. Once again, we are so grateful to Father Alexander and the parish council for use of the space. The space allows us to break into three age ranges simultaneously and offer a variety of both academic and elective classes.



A favorite class is Music Theory taught by choir director, Vera Peterson. Subdeacon Michael Peterson engages our 5-9th graders in a rich, rigorous language arts course. One of the novels the students are

currently reading is *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster.

We've had a few quiet days with fewer students, due to a range of colds and sniffles that come with chillier autumn days, but we are picking up steam and looking forward to big changes and lots of activity leading into 2026.

AHA is currently closed for enrollment but please send any inquiries to Amanda Merriss at [asmerriss@protonmail.com](mailto:asmerriss@protonmail.com).



## Choir Notes

*"I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being."*

The role of the choir is a component of spiritual life and the theological framework of Orthodox Christianity. The voices singing the hymns and responses



don't just provide a musical backdrop, but help create an atmosphere of reverence. The Orthodox services are not only heard; they are experiences through all the senses that engage the soul. It is a very important and vital function of the church services. The commitment and practice of our choir members is getting us grounded in our repertoire.

I was blessed to attend the ROCM conference in Jackson, New Jersey, this year. Over 100 singers were in attendance and it was a sea of musical talent. We learned a lot and a plethora of information was received. What a great organization and may God continue to bless all the committee members. I am encouraging all of my choir members to take the time and attend next year's conference, which will be determined soon.

May our choir continue to grow and be blessed.

—Vera Peterson  
[msvnp28@gmail.com](mailto:msvnp28@gmail.com)  
 661-305-6234



## Newsletter Submissions

When submitting photos (original size, please) and other items for the newsletter, please email them to our editor, Misha Peterson, at [msvnp28@gmail.com](mailto:msvnp28@gmail.com) or you may text them to 661-305-8364.

—Michael Mogilev, Publisher



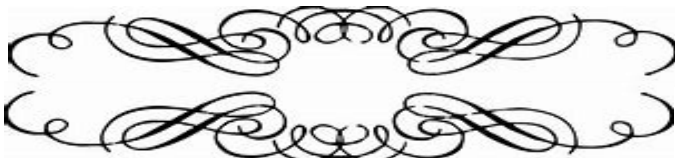
## ☎ Our Council Members ☎

Rev. Alexander Krassovsky.....	707-585-8330
Rev. Seth Davidenko.....	707-396-6024
Fr. Deacon Athanasius Ferguson.....	707-812-4125
Paul Johnson, Warden.....	707-696-5566
Elisabeth Russie, Treasurer.....	415-328-1095
Natalya Shikaloff, Secretary.....	480-621-9976
Demitrios Handelih.....	707-292-2842
Andrew Merriss.....	707-843-9818
Michael A. Mogilev.....	707-953-3636
John Reighard.....	707-235-8636



## Orthodox Community Events

- **Our Lady of Kazan Church, Russian River, Divine Liturgy, Sat., December 20,** Hours at 8:40 a.m. and Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. Following the service will be a LENTEN potluck meal. Please RSVP by Wednesday, December 17th, so we can best prepare to welcome you. When you RSVP, you'll also have the option to sign up to bring a Lenten dish, beverages, or volunteer. Please share what it is when you sign up. Please RSVP via <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084FADAB2EA7F8C34-60822373-12202025> 17370 Neeley Rd., Guerneville, CA 95446.
- **Children's Christmas Play, Sunday, December 21,** 5:00 p.m. **St. Seraphim Cathedral,** 90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa.
- **The Art of Iconography Workshop, February 2–6, 2026. St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Mission,** 724 No. Main St., Jackson, CA. \$700. To register, go to <https://westsrbdio.org/iconography-workshop/>



Presented by Russian Center of SF and San Francisco Pacific Academy

# Children's Winter HOLIDAY FAIR

Come share the warmth, joy and festive traditions from Eastern Europe and beyond!

Every child will receive a gift and take a photo with Father Frost!

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 | 1 PM - 5 PM**  
Russian Center of SF, 2460 Sutter Street, San Francisco

Holiday Performances in Russian & English  
Kid's Activities | Craft Vendors  
Traditional Holiday Food | Bake Sale

Celebrate the magic of the season with us!  
<https://winterholidayfair.eventbrite.com>

# Christmas Market

**Sunday, December 21**  
After Liturgy (one service starts at 9am)  
Cathedral Main Hall, 6210 Geary Blvd, SF

Gingerbread Cookie Decorating | Ded Moroz  
Activities for Kids | Local Christmas Vendors  
Chess | Food | Desserts | Cocktail Piroshki TO GO

Sign-up for kids cookie decorating and pre-order cocktail piroshki:  
[HolyVirginCathedral.com](http://HolyVirginCathedral.com)


Proceeds support current church renovation projects.  
Children's gingerbread cookie decorating proceeds support Russian School.



Because Women Deserve Better than Abortion.®

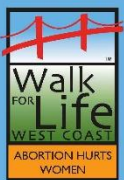
# WALK for LIFE WEST COAST

22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL



SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026 • CIVIC CENTER PLAZA • SAN FRANCISCO

Rally: 12:30pm  
CIVIC CENTER PLAZA  
Info Faire: 11:00am  
Saturday, January 24, 2026



Rally starts at Civic Center Plaza, walking down Market Street (2 miles). Walk ends at Embarcadero Plaza.  
BART stations at both locations. Ample parking.

Register and info:  
(415) 658-1793 | email: info@WalkforLifeWC.com

[WalkforLifeWC.com](http://WalkforLifeWC.com)

## Celebrate Maslenitsa with Russian Blini!

Delicious traditional crepes to indulge in.

## Join us for our Annual Blini Fundraiser!

Saints Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church  
850 St. Olga Court, Santa Rosa, CA  
off Stony Point Road ½ mile north of Todd Road

Sunday, February 15, 2026  
11:30-3:00



Delicious yeast-based crepes, a traditional pre-Lenten dish, served with melted butter and sour cream with optional side dishes of smoked salmon, herring and caviar.

\*\*\*\*\*

For pre-orders of Paskha or Kulich, please contact  
Nadia Stewart at (925) 708-1868

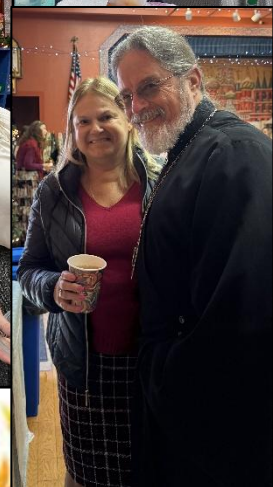
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# Parish Life

Previous page, right, left, and below  
Photos from our annual food fest  
November 8 and 9



Tatiana Nickolaevna (above)  
celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday  
on November 14<sup>th</sup>

If you have any photos you would like to submit  
for future editions, please send them  
(original size), to our editor,  
Misha Peterson. See Newsletter Submissions.