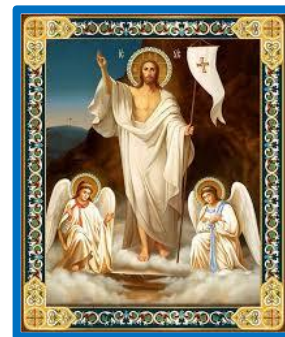


Saints Peter & Paul Church Council News

April – May 2026

M.A. Mogilev, Publisher
Michael Peterson, Editor
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850 St. Olga Ct.
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
mishamish@email.com
(707) 584-4092



Priest's Corner

Христос Воскресе! / Christ is Risen!

There is no more joyous greeting to an Orthodox Christian than these words. **Truly He is Risen!** These greetings are the very embodiment of our salvation. So great is their meaning, that our holy father among the saints, St. Seraphim of Sarov, greeted everyone who came to see him with these words, regardless of the time of year.

Having observed the very deeply spiritual services of Holy Week and now celebrate the joyous days of the Bright Resurrection of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, it is most important that we not lose sight of the meaning of these observances, not to be lost in the celebrations and not to lose that, which we gained during this last Great Lent. A reminder of the importance of this is given to us in the magnificent Paschal homily of St. Gregory the Theologian, who taught:



“Let us recognize our Dignity; let us honor our Archetype; let us know the power of the Mystery, and for what Christ died. Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become gods for His sake, since He for our sake became man. He assumed the worse that He might give us the better; He became poor that through His poverty might be rich; He took upon Himself the form of a servant that we might receive back our liberty; He came down that we might be exalted; He was tempted that we might conquer; He was dishonored that He might glorify us; He died

that He might save us; He ascended that He might draw to himself us who were lying low in the Fall of sin. Let us give all, offer all, to Him Who gave Himself a Ransom and a Reconciliation for us.”

Let us not allow the limitation of the calendar, nor even of time itself, to limit the joy and the uplifting of our spirits, which Great Lent and Holy Pascha give to us. Joy after joy, grace upon grace. These are the gifts, which we have, undeservedly, received from Our God, “*Who so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...*” (Jn: 3,16). He gave to us, through His Divine Son, our Holy Church, which was established through the descent of the Holy Spirit. Everything needed by us to be the eternal beneficiaries of this unspeakable gift of Divine Love, which no difficulty, no evil on earth can overcome -- is ours. It remains only, for us to accept it and to commit ourselves to it.

***Glory, O Lord, to Thy Most Precious Cross! Glory,
O Lord to Thy Passions!
Glory, O Lord, to Thy Holy Resurrection! In Truth,
Christ is Risen!
Fr. Alexander***



“GRATITUDE”

Wine Tasting Fundraising Event

Once again, our parish is undertaking another “avant-garde” fundraising event on Sunday, April 26, 2026 from 1:00PM-4:00PM. While there will both silent and live auctions, the main draw to the event is the tasting of several varietals from a number of excellent local wineries including: Caymus, Ferrari-Carano, Madoram, Woodenhead and others. The entrance donation of \$80 p/p will include a souvenir glass and unlimited tasting at all of the winery booths. Additionally, there will be a “finger food” table in the middle of the hall to try one’s hand at pairing wines with these various



foods. For those who do not wish to taste the wines or, act as a designated driver, a discounted ticket (\$40 p/p) will allow participation in the auctions and other activities of the event. For families with children, who wish to participate, there will be a “Kid Zone” with food and activities for children of all ages and, there will be adult chaperones to watch the younglings.

This fundraising event is very important as the proceeds will go toward the replacement of our HVAC system in the hall, which has been operating at 50% capacity for over two years. Please order your tickets on our church website (stspproca.org) prior to the event, as the entrance cost will be higher at the door.

Support your parish and have a good time with family and friends at the same time!

Congratulations to the parents, godparents and relatives of Lily (Lydia) Bean, who, was baptized in our church on February 21, 2026 and:

Congratulations to all those celebrating their Namesdays*:

- April 5 – Lydia Ammossow, Lydia Reoutt, Lydia Romanovsky and Lydia Sinkevich
- April 7 – Tikhon Peterson
- April 8 – Alla Zaharoff, Larissa Konina, and Larissa Saschin
- April 14 – Maria Markoff
- April 22 – Vadim Ponitkoff
- May 4 – Magdalena Merriss
- May 5 – Maria Ferguson
- May 6 – George Lysenko, George Lowery, Alexandra Chidlowsky, Alexandra Huhlov, Alexandra Krassovsky, Alexandra Logvy, and Alexandra Stewart
- May 8 – Markus Collins, Marcus Schluter
- May 10 – Svetlana Jones and Svetlana Logvy
- May 15 – Zoya Litvinenko
- May 17 – Pelagea (Paula) Cesik-Karuzic
- May 18 – Irina Saschin
- May 22 – Nicholas Balitsky, Nicholas Cesik Karuzic, Nicholas Schneider, Nicholas Spring, and Christopher Jones
- May 24 – Kyrill “Curt” Bell, Kyrill Mogilev and Kyrill Logvy
- May 28 – Holvardt Reighard

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



With a degree of sadness but, as always, with faith in our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, we note the passing of **Anatole Avdienko** - Head of one of the original Saints Peter and Paul Parish families, who passed away on March 1, 2026.



“Tolya” as he was well known by all, was always directly involved in parish life, helping with all of the first fundraising activities, serving as a member of the Parish Council for many years and as starosta in the early 2000’s. His wife Elena and children Elizabeth and Victoria were equally involved in many parish activities, particularly in the decoration of the church on major feast days and the hall during the Christmas

Bazaar. Victoria continues in that capacity to this day. Tolya will be sorely missed by all those who knew and loved him. May God grant rest to the soul of His newly departed servant **Anatole** and I ask that you remember him in your prayers both in church and at home.



Memory Eternal!



Teaching Children to Love God

Every Orthodox parent wants their children to grow up attending Sunday Liturgies and staying active in the life of the Church throughout their lives. Yet

many parents don't demonstrate the importance of having a personal relationship with God in front of their children. If you do not make God important, neither will your child.

Children observe their parents. They see hypocrisy and know when you are not following through with the teachings of the Church during the week. They hear when you take the Lord's name in vain. They notice when you reserve prayer to weekend service. They notice you only speaking of God on a Sunday morning.



Making the sign of the cross, lighting candles and burning incense only on Sundays teaches your children to compartmentalize their own faith, and leaves them defenseless in a world filled with temptations and distractions from things that are of a spiritual nature. If you do not demonstrate the importance of prayer before your children, you will leave them defenseless in a world that hates Christ. Your children need to pray with you, read the scriptures with you, be taught the faith by you.

If you do not make your home a domestic church, your children will be lost to Christ, and Orthodoxy will not be lived out beyond your own grave. If they do not see you living a committed life in Christ, they will turn from the faith, and Orthodoxy will not survive into the next generation.

*With Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon*



Starosta's / Warden's Corner

Our annual parish meeting went very well this year. As always, it is an opportunity for parish members and stewards to get updated on events over the



past year, ongoing projects, and plans for the coming year. Father Alexander made most of the major

presentations, highlighting changes over the last year and focused on goals for the rest of this year. Other presentations were made by our choirmaster, Vera Peterson, and the head of our Archangel Homeschool Academy director, Amanda Merris on their activities over the past year.

Natasha Collins and Katya Peterson presented an idea to offer CPR training and AED training for parishioners. We are looking forward to hearing more about their project.

We would like to welcome our new council members, Kyrill Bell and Subdeacon Michael Peterson. John Reighard had decided to step down as a member of the church council and from the auditing committee. We thank him for his service and for the work he has done with both groups. We would also like to welcome Ilya Poluektov as a new member of the auditing committee.

Thank you to those who have stepped up with Pascha preparations and to those who are actively involved in the Gratitude Wine Tasting fundraiser. Your help is greatly appreciated.

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



Sisterhood News

One of the big events for the sisterhood before the start of our Great Lent is the celebration of Maslenitsa, or Blini festival. This festival is always popular and brings a good crowd, which is a lot of work for the sisterhood but also a great opportunity for our fundraising efforts.

Natasha Shikaloff was in charge of this event this year, and she did an excellent job organizing everyone. Sharon Buot and Nadia Stewart were very involved, making sure that all the positions were filled well before the event. Sharon Buot and Olga Reighard worked diligently setting up our dining hall before the event.

We had an amazing team of hard-working ladies cooking pancakes in



our kitchen - Natasha Shikaloff, Lena Poluektov, Kapa Huhlov, Olga Clark, and Aliona Russe. All of them were true experts at cooking the most delicious pancakes, and had worked at the Maslenitsa festival in the previous years at our church. Their experience and dedication made everything run smoothly, for which we are grateful.

Nadia Stewart and Olga Reighard organized a dessert table, with a variety of fancy rich cakes, cookies, and pastries, contributed by a number of generous sisters, in addition to home baked healthy, low-fat oatmeal-raisin muffins contributed by Anna Judd.

Customers were warmly greeted by our team of servers, including Sharon Bout, Amanda Merriss, Deana and Evgenia Rickard, and Olga Fansler. We had a preset price meal with a few pancakes, a cup of chicken bouillon, and fruit compote and kissel, and also, we had a number of ala carte items, like pickled herring, smoked salmon, chopped



boiled eggs, and red caviar. People could add to their pancakes a variety of traditional toppings, like sour cream, melted butter, chopped green onions, syrup, and jam, without extra charge. Our customers really appreciated the festive atmosphere and all the delightful traditional food.



We thank Lena Poluektova for cooking a huge pot of delicious chicken broth, and Nadia Stewart for preparing fruit compote. Also, thank you goes to Misha Peterson, Natasha and Gloria Collins for serving as our cashiers. Everyone worked hard and the Blini Festival was a big success. Thank you all!

After the Maslenitsa we had our regular Sunday lunches. Lenten lunches have many dietary restrictions, and therefore, are not easy to make. But we have been fortunate to enjoy a wonderful array of strictly lenten dishes, lovingly prepared by our teams each week. We give special thanks to our dear

Eritrean sisters who recently provided a very nice Eritrean lunch for us.

The sisterhood has also worked on preparation for the Easter celebration. Aliona Russe was in charge of baking traditional *kulich* for sale. As during the previous years, our parishioners have a time-saving option to order *kulich* and *pascha* for their holiday table.

Anna Judd, as always, is organizing the Easter gift baskets for our elderly and infirm. Please contact her right away if you can contribute some gift items, can help with baskets' decoration, or delivery. All assistance is greatly appreciated. The baskets should be ready to go by Saturday, April 11th. So please bring your donations well ahead of this date.

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed their time and talents to our sisterhood special projects and our ongoing work. May we all have a blessed and truly joyful Pascha!



Saint Tikhon
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
Enlightener of North America
March 25 / April 7; September 26 / October 9

Part 1 of 2

Much has been written about Saint Tikhon about the time of his patriarchate. Yet, his influence is greater than just this short period of his life. He had a profound effect on Orthodoxy in North America.

Saint Tikhon was born as Vasily Ivanovich Belavin on January 19, 1865 into the family of Ioann Belavin, a rural priest of the Toropetz district of the Pskov diocese. His childhood and adolescence were spent in the village in direct contact with peasants and their labor. From his early years he displayed a particular religious disposition, love for the Church as well as rare meekness and humility.



From 1878 to 1883, Vasily studied at the Pskov Theological Seminary. In 1888, at the age of 23, Vasily Belavin graduated from the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy as a

layman, and returned to the Pskov Seminary as an instructor of Moral and Dogmatic Theology. He led an austere and chaste life, and in 1891, when he turned 26, he took monastic vows. The meek and humble young man was given the name Tikhon in honor of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk. He was transferred from the Pskov Seminary to the Kholm Theological Seminary in 1892, and was raised to the rank of archimandrite. Archimandrite Tikhon was consecrated Bishop of Lublin on October 19, 1897, and returned to Kholm for a year as Vicar Bishop of the diocese. On September 14, 1898, Bishop Tikhon was made Bishop of the Aleutians and Alaska. As head of the Orthodox Church in America, Bishop Tikhon was a zealous laborer in the Lord's vineyard.

He did much to promote the spread of Orthodoxy, and to improve his vast diocese. He reorganized the diocesan structure, and changed its name from "Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska" to "Diocese of the Aleutians and North America" in 1900. Both clergy and laity loved their archpastor, and held him in such esteem that the Americans made Archbishop Tikhon an honorary citizen of the United States.



On May 22, 1901, he blessed the cornerstone for Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York, and was also involved in establishing other churches. On November 9, 1902, he consecrated

the church of Saint Nicholas in Brooklyn for the Syrian Orthodox immigrants. Two weeks later, he consecrated Saint Nicholas Cathedral in NY.

As a true Christian missionary, however, it was not the building of temples that concerned Saint Tikhon primarily, but the building up of the Faith in temples not made with hands--human souls. To this end he made frequent tours of his vast diocese--Alaska, the U.S. and Canada, undaunted by the physical hardships which traveling often presented.

As an archpastor, Saint Tikhon encouraged the development of a missionary attitude not only among his clergy but also among the laity, in a sermon on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1903, he exhorted his flock

from the ambo of the Cathedral Church of San Francisco:

"Holding to the Orthodox Faith as to something holy, longing it with all their hearts and prizing it above all, Orthodox people ought ... to endeavor to spread it among people of other creeds. Christ the Saviour has said that *neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house* (Matt. 5:15) The light of Orthodoxy was not lit to shine only on a small number of men. The Orthodox Church is universal; it remembers the words of its Founder: *Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature* (Mark 16:15) ...We ought to share our spiritual wealth, our truth, light, and joy with others who are deprived of these blessings, but often are seeking them and thirsting for them...

"But who is to work for the spread of the Orthodox Faith for the increase of the children of the Orthodox Church? Pastors and missionaries, you answer. You are right; but are they to be alone? St. Paul wisely compares the Church of Christ to a body, and the life of a body is shared by all the members. So, it ought to be in the life of the Church also...The spread of Christ's faith ought to be near and precious to the heart of every Christian in this work. Every member of the Church ought to take a lively and heartfelt interest..."

In that same year, Bishop Tikhon returned to Russia for what was intended to be a brief visit. While in Russia, St. Tikhon was appointed to the Holy Synod, necessitating a longer stay.

Source: oca.org
roca.org

Special note: Combined church dates are written in the order of old calendar / new calendar.



Archangel Homeschool Academy

On February 11th, families with AHA made a pilgrimage to San Francisco to honor and visit all the sites associated with the beloved St. John Maximovitch.

The day started with a visit to the orphanage and church St. John ran upon arrival in the city dedicated to St. Tichon of Zadonsk. With nearly the entire school present, they were greeted by Ms. Yulia who gave them a tour of the church and commons spaces and the much-anticipated cell of St. John. Ms. Yulia shared of many miracles worked by the icons and people

associated with the orphanage including self-lightening icons, the Milk Giving Mother of God icon, and an unordinary icon of St. Demetrius.



From St. Tichon's the families jotted over to the new cathedral, Joy of All Who Sorrow, venerated Vladyka's relics and placed prayer requests in his mailbox. Bishop James recalls that it is affectionately called a "mailbox to heaven".

As a final stop, the pilgrims went to the Old Holy Virgin Cathedral on Fulton St. to see where St. John served. Bishop James was an excellent tour guide for school aged students. He taught the children more than history about St. John but about the history of the temple and about the two altars inside. Also fascinating was a panel with a large number of relics, some two thousand years old such as those of Mary Magdalene, the Apostles Andrew the First Called and Barnabas.

A major highlight for the families was the molieben for the students and family blessings under St. John's mantia. This concluded the pilgrimage for



AHA, seeing all the places he loved and served in this city. Being in places where such a beloved and revered saint had been keeps history alive in younger generations. As exciting as it can be to hear from adults who met him personally, the perspective of a young child is skewed by her innocent lack of time spent on earth. Fifty years ago, sounds ancient to an eight-year-old, so a repose in 1966 sounds compatible with the repose of Christ, and it is one reason why having frequent trips

to experience living history of our saints, especially one we are blessed to be near both in time and in geography, speaks to children without the need for cerebral logic. Over time as adults, they can recall memories of this pilgrimage and connect the dots from there.

Director Amanda Merriss and Bishop James of Sonora look forward to making the pilgrimage to San Francisco an annual field trip for AHA. Current students may increasingly deepen their knowledge and love for St. John and ask new and deeper questions each year, while incoming students may be blessed with the same opportunity as they grow, too. Such wisdom, this deep knowledge and love for our saints and Holy Fathers, is a foundational principle of AHA. We are so blessed to live near San Francisco and these blessed places.

Amanda Merriss
asmerriss@protonmail.com



Choir Notes

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 50)

As we prepare to embrace Holy Pascha, it needs to start from not only clean up our body and soul, but our surroundings. The choir has been very busy the past few months getting ready with hours of rehearsals. The dedication and commitment is truly inspiring.



So excited to see the youth engaging in much needed tasks of organizing and cleaning.

Thank you all for everything and may God

continue to bless the choir of Saints Peter and Paul.

Vera Peterson
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 or you may text them to (661) 305-8364.

—*Michael Mogilev, Publisher*



Our Council Members

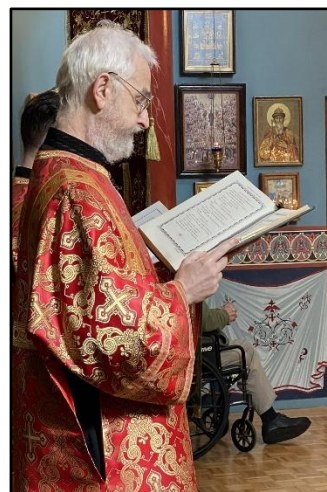
- Rev. Alexander Krassovsky 707-585-8330
- Rev. Seth Davidenko 707-396-6024
- Fr. Deacon Athanasius Ferguson 707-812-4125
- Paul Johnson, Warden 707-696-5566
- Elisabeth Russie, Treasurer 415-328-1095
- Natalya Shikaloff, Secretary 480-621-9976
- Kyrill Bell 415-426-4338
- Demitrios Handelih 707-292-2842
- Andrew Merriss 707-843-9818
- Michael A. Mogilev 707-953-3636
- Subdeacon Michael Peterson 661-305-8364



Orthodox Community Events

- **Newsletter Sponsorship** If you would like to assist the publication of the newsletter you may specify this as part of your stewardship. A donation of \$300 would cover the expenses for one bi-monthly issue. Please include your family name and we will show our appreciation by citing your donation as a sponsorship for the particular issue(s) you are donating to. You may also make a donation in memory of a loved one. Deadlines for publications are mid-month prior to each issue’s publication. The deadline for the June-July 2026 issue is May 15. Please contact our publisher, Michael Mogilev at 707-953-3636 or mishamish@email.com for donation details or you may specify your preferences through your sponsorship. Thank you, in advance for your support.
- Holy Dormition Orthodox Church in Santa Rosa's Roseland neighborhood is delighted to announce the

date for this year's **Celtic Festival is Saturday, June 6, Noon to 5pm!** (Please note that the festival is not on Memorial Day weekend this year.) We hope you'll join us for this celebration of Celtic culture, with Scottish and Irish dancing, toe-tapping music, games, crafts, good food, and much more! Check out the [Facebook event](#) to RSVP, share, and get updates. **Holy Dormition Orthodox Church Bulgarian Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada & Australia**, 1521 Rose Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95407 holydormitionchurch@gmail.com (707) 528-9705



Parish Life



*Celebrating birth-
days (clockwise
from above)
Simeon Collins,
Reader Alyosha
Khlopoff, and
Vadim Pontikoff.*

*(Above) Students from Archangel
Homeschool Academy
prepared and served one
of the lenten lunches.*



*Long time parishioner, Lida
Romanovsky (right) received a bouquet
of flowers from the
Sisterhood.*

*(Above and right) Preparing prosphora
for church.*



*We always welcome
photos of parish life at
Sts. Peter and Paul.
Please submit pictures
(original size) to our
editor, Misha Peterson.
See Newsletter
Submissions.*





(Above and left) From the Blini festival.

(Right) Preparing kulichi for Pascha



(Above) Newly consecrated Bishop Peter of Seattle celebrated Unction service with our clergy and with Fr. Viatcheslav and priests from St. Seraphim parish also in attendance.

