



Quarterly Bulletin of Saint John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church

Diocese of the West - Orthodox Church in America

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Priest Edward Henderson

The Future of Our Parish

If you either received this bulletin in the mail or from the candle desk at our church, you have in your hands one of 300 copies of our quarterly parish bulletin. Over 200 copies are mailed, mostly to people in the San Francisco Bay Area but also to people further away, who are interested in our parish. If you are reading the Russian language edition, you are probably an immigrant, who came to this country after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Likewise, you probably live east of Berkeley and Oakland in either Alameda or Contra Costa counties. Furthermore, you have found that there is a sizable community of people similar to you. There are indeed thousands, if not tens of thousands of people who were born in the Soviet Union but now live in your community.

For those of you who come to our parish for the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, you will notice that, on average, between 40-50 people are in attendance. If you come to the parish hall for Sunday lunch, there are usually between 20-30 people gathered. Consider also that our parish is the only canonical Orthodox parish in the East Bay that still uses a significant amount of Church Slavonic and worships according to the Russian Orthodox tradition. When I studied

in seminary, a controversy arose among the local Roman Catholic communities because their local bishop decided that parishes that had declined to less than 400 parishioners would be closed and merged with neighboring parishes. Our current official parish membership stands at 58 members and our our average Sunday attendance is even lower! So, the question stands before us: does our parish have a future? Secondly, what is that future?

The easiest solution is to continue as we are. If we continue to decline, the time may soon come wherein we will need to close the parish. This would be an enormous tragedy. Fortunately, we have not reached that point and we will not reach it if each of us actively do our part to serve the Church and our parish. Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves whether or not we ought to remain in our current location or consider relocating further east, nearer to most of our parishioners. Either decision will present challenges. However, neither option benefit the parish if we do not solve the problem of low attendance at the divine services and low involvement in parish life.

Our parish can only thrive if we have people who actively support it. This support manifests itself firstly by regular and active participation in the Church's divine services. Except for ill health or emergency situations, we should, without fail, attend the divine services on Sundays and Great Feastdays. This means we not only attend the Divine Liturgy but also Vespers and Matins. By attend, I mean show up on time and remain for the entire service, unless some extraordinary circumstance should arise. Let us all commit ourselves to attending more of the divine services. Let us also reach out to both our fellow Orthodox Christians and even our non-Orthodox friends and colleagues who are seeking a spiritual home and invite them to our church.

The second manifestation of support is practical. We need more people to donate their talents to helping our parish. We need more people to sing in the choir, to help read at the divine services, to serve in the altar or at the candle desk, and to help with the Sunday lunches. Likewise, we need greater financial support. We are blessed to earn enough income from our rental units and investments to cover our operational costs. However, whether we relocate or improve our current property will depend on your generosity.

Our parish has existed for nearly 100 years. Our own history is so rich and the treasures of that history have been and remain the men and women who comprised our community. It is now in our hands to decide whether or not the future of our parish will be one of decline and decay or of regeneration and flourishing. Please pray and discern as to how you can help our parish thrive now and for future generations.

Namesdays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries

August 1- Birthday of Valentina Laletina

August 16- Birthday of Boris Gerlovin

August 26- Namesday of Maxim Tikhomirov

August 30- Birthday of Elena Latour

September 30- Namesday of Vera Mikhailova and Sofia Katich

October 8- Birthday of Vera Mikhailova

October 13- Anniversary of Fr. Edward's ordination to the priesthood

If you would like your namesday, birthday, and/or anniversary included in the future, please contact Fr. Edward at revedwardhenderson@gmail.com.

Archbishop Benjamin awards parishioners

On Sunday, July 9, during his archpastoral visit to our parish, His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, awarded grammotas to four of our parishioners: Michael Temerin, Galina Pomatalkina, Tamara Mihailovsky, and Nina Kloian. May God bless them for their many years of dedicated service to our parish.

Special Announcement

On Sunday, July 30, Anthony Carson concluded his tenure as parish choir director. We are grateful to him for his hard work and dedication. We are also pleased that he will remain a member of our parish community for the foreseeable future. May God bless him for his service to the Church and in all his future endeavors. Daniel Alva, grandson of our late rector, Archpriest Nikolajs Vieglajs (+1992), and well known to our parish community, will thereafter serve as choir director. Daniel has previously served our parish as a substitute choir director. We look forward to this next chapter in his family's service to our parish and the many talents he will bring to our choir.

Upcoming Events

August 14-28: Dormition Fast

October 24-26: Diocesan Assembly in Santa Rosa, CA

Schedule of Services

Sundays: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am

Saturdays: Vigil *or* Great Vespers at 5:00pm

August, September, October services

Friday, August 18		Vigil	6:00pm
Saturday, August 19	Transfiguration	Liturgy	10:00am
Sunday, August 27		Vespers	6:00pm
Monday, August 28	Dormition	Liturgy	10:00am
Wednesday, September 20		Vigil	6:00pm
Thursday, September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos	Liturgy	10:00am
Tuesday, September 26		Vigil	6:00pm
Wednesday, September 27	Exaltation of the Cross	Liturgy	10:00am
Friday, October 13		Vespers	6:00pm
Saturday, October 14	Protection of the Theotokos	Liturgy	10:00am

More detailed service schedules are available on the parish website and at the candle desk.

Confession is available after Vigil/Vespers, before Liturgy, and as arranged with Fr. Edward.

Choir rehearsal is on Wednesdays at 7:00pm in the parish hall and 30 minutes prior to Vigil/Vespers and Liturgy. For future information about the parish choir, please contact Daniel Alva at: daalva@protonmail.com.

