



FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF CHRIST

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

“O Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord, all the Earth, and Sing unto His Name”

(Psalm 65:1, LXX)

There is a Latin proverb, which some attribute to Saint Augustine that states: *Bis orat qui bene cantat- He who sings well prays twice.* In the book of Exodus, it says that after the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea to freedom, “Moses and the children of Israel sang...” (Exodus 15:1). According to the Gospel of Mark, after the Mystical Supper, Our Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples sang a hymn (Mark 14:26). Singing, worship, and prayer are inseparable in the Orthodox Church.

We are blessed in the Orthodox Church with a wealth of hymnography, both from the Holy Scriptures and from the saints who composed our hymns. Such hymnography elevates our souls, enables us to pray and worship, and teaches us the Church’s theology. For this reason, it is necessary for those who sing in the Church to so do for God’s glory and for the benefit of all gathered. Singing in church is not a concert, yet the choir must strive to sing to the best of their ability.

Over the course of my time here, we have seen a vast improvement in the quality of the music and singing in this parish. We have been blessed with some very talented and dedicated choir directors. Likewise, we have a choir that is dedicated to the Church's vision of worship in spirit and in truth. I believe that so much of the growth of our parish is connected with the labors of our choir.

Nevertheless, just as it has been a long, arduous journey to forge the choir into that which blesses us today, so do we find ourselves struggling to maintain and make it even more excellent. This month, Daniel Alva, who has faithfully served as our choir director for the last year, will stand down. We thank him for his service and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Anastasia Klimko will once again return as a choir director here. However, her availability will be more limited than during her previous tenures. In reality, most of our choir directors remain with us for a year or so. The expense and stresses of living in this area are too overwhelming. Our parish has one of the best salary packages for choir directors, yet it is still a part-time salary, requiring them to find other sources of income. Some months, the work load is very light. During Great Lent and Holy Week, it is almost a full-time job. Thus, we should not be surprised that we have seen so many talented choir directors come and go because of these challenges.

It is clear to me that we need more people to be involved in our choir. Firstly, rather than having one choir director, I would like to see our parish develop a team of directors who can share the burdens of this job, especially during the more busy liturgical seasons. This will require the parish to fund their training and development. If you have training or experience as a choir director in an Orthodox Church, please consider offering your services here. If you are interested in being trained as a choir director, please contact me. Secondly, we need more singers in the choir. Singers should be either practicing Orthodox Christians or, at least, catechumens preparing to join the Church. While, in the past, we made attendance at weekday choir rehearsals mandatory, we will now simply strongly encourage it. We will still ask that singers attend the short rehearsals prior to a service, however, I or the choir director can make reasonable exceptions.

We know that God allows trials to befall us because they bring about the very best in us. It is always a joy when our services are served, sung, and participated in faithfully, piously, prayerfully, and joyfully. Let us take up this challenge for God's glory and the building up of His Church, keeping to Saint Paul's instruction to "be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:18-19)

Namesdays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries

August 1- Birthday of Valentina Laletina

August 6- Wedding Anniversary of Innocenty and Angelina Yiu

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

October 20- Birthday of Innocenty Yiu

October 29- Birthday of Jakub Kierdaszuk

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

Special Announcement

In August, Daniel Alva will stand down as our choir director and will be the choir director at Saints Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church in Santa Rosa. We wish him God's blessing in this new endeavor. Anastasia Klimko will be returning as choir director for weekend services. We pray and hope that we will be able to find choir directors to help with our weekday services. However, this may affect our service schedule, especially for weekday services. If you or anyone you know have experience directing a choir in an Orthodox Church and would be interested in directing our parish choir, please contact Fr. Edward immediately.

Upcoming Events

August 14-28: Dormition Fast

October 15-17: Diocesan Assembly in Portland, Oregon

“God is love, a most-gracious, all-wise, and omnipotent Being. Therefore, those who pray must believe that the Lord will give all things needful in abundance, since He is loving, and in wisdom, since He is all-wise. Since He is omnipotent, He will give to us in the time and place we least expect.” -Saint John of Kronstadt

Schedule of Services

Sundays: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am

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

August, September, October services

Sunday, August 18		Vespers	6:00pm
Monday, August 19	Transfiguration	Liturgy	10:00am
Tuesday, August 27		Vigil	6:00pm
Wednesday, August 28	Dormition	Liturgy	10:00am
Friday, September 20		Vigil	6:00pm
Saturday, September 21	Nativity of the Theotokos	Liturgy	10:00am
Thursday, September 26		Vigil	6:00pm
Friday, September 27	Exaltation of the Cross	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 Thursdays 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 Fr. Edward at: revedwardhenderson@gmail.com.

