

The Diocese of the West  
The Orthodox Church in America

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209-536-0701

# St. Susanna Orthodox Church

May 2009

www.stsusanna.com



*Pastor:*

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*Without leaving the Father's bosom,/ having lived with mankind  
as a Man,/ today You have ascended in glory from the Mount,  
mercifully raising our fallen nature,/ enthroning it with the  
Father on high./ The angelic hosts were amazed with awe,  
seeing Your great love for mankind!/ With them, we glorify Your  
condescension to us;/ with them, we glorify Your Ascension  
from us./ By it, You filled Your disciples and Your Mother with  
great joy./ By their prayers, and through Your great mercy//  
make us, Your chosen people, worthy of this joy!*

—Tone 6 Sticheron of Vespers for Ascension

## Through the Paschal Season and Onward to Ascension

Having celebrated a glorious Pascha, we now live in the Paschal light through the season until the Leavetaking on May 20, which is also the eve of Ascension. At His Ascension, our Lord Jesus Christ laid to rest all doubt that He is able to take our human flesh right into the heavenly realm, for that is what God has wanted all along: to bring us, His creation, into true citizenship of His Kingdom. Having joined our humanity with His divinity, He has enabled us to truly be of His own household, as St. Athanasius so eloquently explained: “If Christ is not truly God and truly man, then we have no salvation!” What greater glory can we desire?

The problem is that we too often forget that rather than opposition between the flesh and the spirit, there should be a sense of order. As God is spirit, and the flesh is creation, our spiritual understanding should lead our material actions. That is what Christ teaches us in the Beatitudes. We must look beyond the immediate reaction and invest our efforts toward that which is eternal.

## Our New Cupola

Thanks to the providence of God, through the generosity of Florence Craig and Natasha Koshelkova, we now have a “candle

set upon a hill.” The dedication of our church to Christ is now unmistakable. With great joy, we thank Florence and Natasha, whose kindness and goodwill have made this possible. Our cupola, beautiful as it is, looks as if it has always belonged atop our church—perhaps a sign of a necessary completion. In our many other works that our church does—the sacraments, charity, classes and other advancements of Orthodox Christianity in Tuolumne County, we are also, thank God, advancing as well.

However, an interesting question was recently posed to me: “Is it whether it is better to build a church or to feed the poor?” For some, such a thought is still a stumbling block. I say “still” because questioning the very existence of Christian worship places has been a tactic used of old as well. (For example, various Muslim regimes used to force Christians to make their churches invisible, and even build them underground.)

Establishing a visible Christian presence has always been an essential Christian ministry. Christ commands us to feed the poor, and yet He also establishes the understanding of His majesty and glory as necessary—specifically because it is the understanding of His majestic wisdom that has *taught* mankind to give alms. We have mercy because we love God, Who teaches us to love one another. We are told, in no uncertain terms, that we

\*Corner of Jamestown Rd.  
& Robinwood Ln.  
(2 blocks north of  
Racetrack Rd.)

(continued on back)

are to glorify Him, that those who are ashamed of Him, who do not proclaim Him, will be strangers to Him: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory....” (Luke 9:26)

To philosophically oppose the things of God (sacred space) to those which He Himself has commanded (giving alms to the poor) is a sign of a very serious misunderstanding, and is a typically materialist way of looking at things. On the other hand, one of the most zealous “feeders of the poor”—and orphans especially—was Saint John the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco. He cared greatly (and to great effect) for the humble and dispossessed, and he also led the building of the magnificent Holy Virgin (“Joy of All Who Sorrow”) Cathedral at 25<sup>th</sup> and Geary, in San Francisco.

Throughout scripture, God has insisted on sacred space—a place set apart for worship—both in the home, and in a place where a congregation can gather to worship and glorify Him. As I recall, His directions for the Temple in Jerusalem were quite elaborate. The Apostles continued to worship in the Temple until they were disbarred, and then, their efforts began the

first of many house churches, and within two generations, the first buildings dedicated as Christian churches were being built—even though such was a dangerous proposition due to periodic persecutions.

So it is that God requires our action on all fronts: feeding the poor, tending to others’ needs, glorifying Him by our testimony in sight, sound, action and those things that can speak of Him when we are not physically present—such as churches, such as cupolas. “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). It is not a question of either building the church *or* feeding the poor. We do both, because the first is evidence of a life much better than that we have on Earth, and if people are drawn into the church, then they will have everlasting food and they themselves will learn to give alms.

In Christ,  
*Fr. Andrew*

## “The Orthodox Church” NEWS MAGAZINE

Some of our parishioners have indicated that they do not receive The Orthodox Church in America’s official news magazine: **“The Orthodox Church.”** If you don’t, please let Alex Teshin know (536-9999) and he will work on getting the oversight corrected.

## Liturgical Schedule for May, 2009

- Sat., May 2**                    **4:30 p.m.—Bible Study in Parish Hall**  
6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **Holy Myrrhbearers Sunday**
- Sun., May 3**                    9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **Holy Myrrhbearers Sunday**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 6:1–7 and Mark 15:43–16:8  
*Note: The Parish Council Meeting will take place after Divine Liturgy.*
- Sat., May 9**                    **4:30 p.m.—Bible Study in Parish Hall**  
6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **The Sunday of the Paralytic**
- Sun., May 10**                   9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Sunday of the Paralytic**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 9:32–42 and John 5:1–15  
*Note: A potluck luncheon will take place after Divine Liturgy.*
- Sat., May 16**                   **4:30 p.m.—Bible Study in Parish Hall**  
6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**
- Sun., May 17**                   9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 11:19–30 and John 4:5–42
- Sat., May 23**                   **4:30 p.m.—Bible Study in Parish Hall**  
6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers
- Sun., May 24**                   9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy  
Scripture Readings—Acts 16:16–34 and John 9:1–38  
*Note: A potluck luncheon will take place after Divine Liturgy.*
- Wed., May 27**                   6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers with Litya for **The Ascension** (Leavetaking of Pascha)
- Ascension Thurs.  
May 28**                    6:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Ascension**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 1:1–12 and Luke 24:36–53
- Sat., May 30**                   **4:30 p.m.—Bible Study in Parish Hall**  
6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for the **Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**
- Sunday, May 31**                9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for the **Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 20:16–18, 28–36 and John 17:1–13

## June

- Sat., June 6**                    6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers with Litya for **Holy Pentecost**
- Pentecost Sunday,  
June 7**                    9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **Holy Pentecost**  
Scripture Readings—Acts 2:1–11 and John 7:37–52, 8:12  
*Note: As this is Pentecost Sunday, the Parish Council Meeting has been moved to the 14<sup>th</sup>.*
- Sat., June 13**                   6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **All Saints** (Leavetaking of Pentecost)
- Sun., June 14**                   9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **All Saints**  
Scripture Readings—Hebrews 11:33–12:2 and Matthew 10:32–38, 19:27–30  
*Note: A potluck luncheon will take place after Divine Liturgy on the 14<sup>th</sup>*  
**Note: The Parish Council Meeting will take place after Divine Liturgy on the 14<sup>th</sup>.**

## Prayer List

### PLEASE JOIN US IN GIVING THANKS TO GOD:

- For the skill and devotion of those beautifying our temple and gardens.
- For the beauty of the Mother Lode, and for the privilege we have been given to live here.
- That the Holy Mother of Jesus continues to care for the unborn.
- That many of our petitions are being answered.
- For Nadine's on-going successful therapy.

### PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR GOD'S HELP:

- "St. John, please intercede for us before God for the membership growth of St. Susanna."
- That St. Susanna Mission may receive a Church Planting Grant.
- For repose of the souls of our service men and women who have given their lives for the people of foreign lands.
- To safeguard all the troops who remain in heathen lands.
- To help us forgive the heathen fanatics who continue to murder our soldiers and their own citizens and children.
- That many may come to Orthodoxy through our witness and example.
- To bless our monasteries and the men and women who dwell in them.
- For the well-being of Matushka Anna and her family.
- For health and welfare for Ann, Fr. John, and Elisa.
- For Natasha's success in securing a permanent art teaching position.
- For the healing and comfort for Donna and Ann.
- For Rachel, Brandon, Monique, Trinity and Chloe in solving their problems.
- That Ashley will pass the CSET.
- For Elise Sevick who has become seriously ill and may be travelling to Finland for treatment.

To ask us to pray for you, your family or friends, please call Alex Teshin at 209-536-9999.

### St. Susanna Cleaning Team Schedule

*Blessed are those who love the beauty  
of God's house*

**Team 2—May 16th; 9:00 a.m.**

### MANY YEARS

#### **Birthdays:**

Sasha Worth	May 14
Mark Sevick	May 17

#### **Anniversaries:**

Nicolas & Rebecca Teshin	May 26
Leslie & Joe Hurst	May 28