Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Sophia

A Devotional Newsletter of St. Sophia Parish

St. Sophia Orthodox Church
195 Joseph St.
Victoria, BC
V8S 3H6
Canada

St. Sophia Orthodox Church

a Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

195 Joseph Street,
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada V8S 3H6

email: info@saintsophia.ca
website: www.saintsophia.ca

Services are in English

Saturday

Vigil – 6 p.m. – Всенощное бдение

Sunday

Hours – 10 a.m. – Часы

Divine Liturgy – 10:30 a.m. – Божественная Литургия

Vespers – 5 p.m. – Вечерня

Archpriest John Adams
Priest Philosoph Uhlman
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce

March 2018 Services

Saturday March 3 – Pannykhida 5:30pm; Vigil 6pm
Sunday March 4 - Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers - 5pm*

Saturday March 10 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday Veneration of the Precious Cross March 11- Liturgy 10:30am

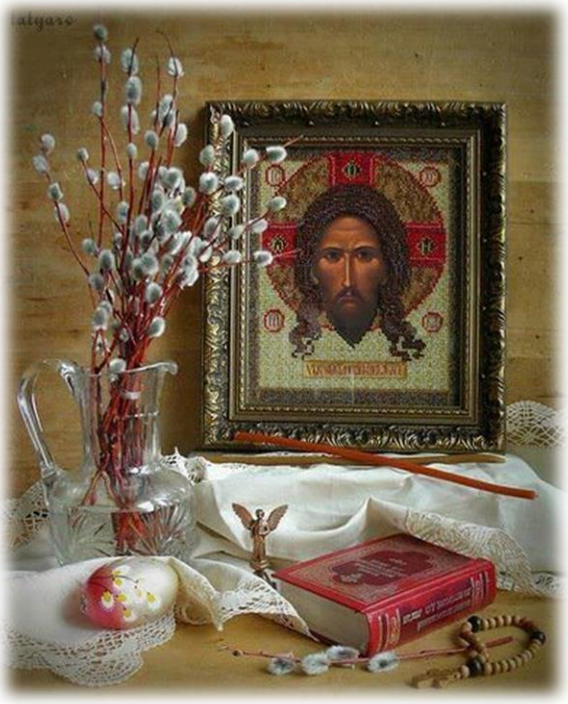
- *Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers - 5pm*

Saturday March 17- Vigil 6pm
Sunday- March 18 Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers - 5pm*

Saturday March 24- Vigil 6pm
Sunday - March 25 Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers - 5pm*



Saturday March 31 - Vigil 6pm for Palm Sunday; Pussywillows blessed & dispersed

Palm Sunday – April 1 Liturgy 10:30am

Month of March Saint's Days

Congratulations to Congratulations to Theodore, Leo, David H, Chad, Owen, and Patrick… May God grant you many years!

Church Cleaners

Thank you to the February Church Cleaners. May God reward your diligent and loving efforts!

Church Gardeners Needed

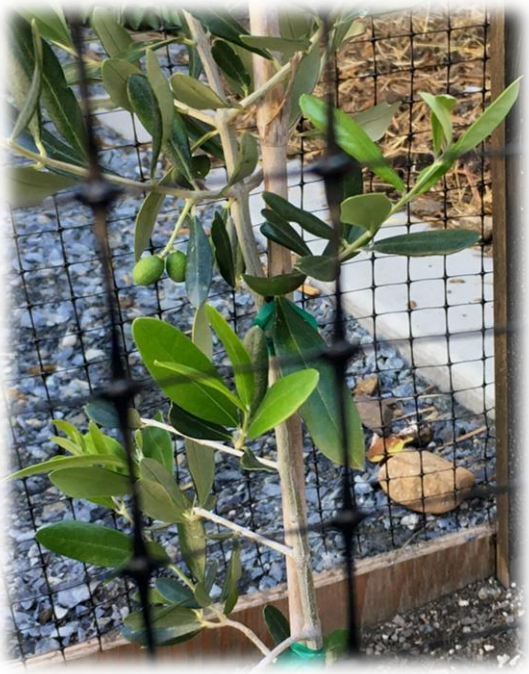
Dear Parish,

As you know, there are many wonderful opportunities to serve God together!

Please look to the bulletin board and see where you and your family may help and sign up together for a month, whether cleaning or gardening.

Our usual parish gardeners who have worked diligently for the past four years are unable to continue their wonderful work, and we do not have the finances to pay for outside help. May all your efforts contribute to building your little hut in heaven.

One of our three olive trees on the church property <u>with</u> olives!



The Flower Bunch

Thank you to the February monthly parish florists for beautifying God's House. The flowers for services were donated and wonderfully arranged.

Rejoice and Be Glad!

Thank you to Evguenia, who generously hosted the Blini Making Class at her home, in February. It was a joy and a wonderful learning experience for those who came.

Thank You!

Thank you Evguenia and Iouri who festively decorated the trapeza!

Thank you Evguenia, Svetlana, and Marina for making the *amazing* Blini for the Forgiveness Sunday Luncheon, February 18.

Thank you to our Kitchen Supervisor Zoe and her team Genevieve, Julia, Marina and Sophie.

And of course, thank you Reader Igor, Sam, and Nikita for taking down the tables and folding up the chairs afterwards. Hard to do after the serious Blini-ing!

St. Sophia Parish 2018 Annual Dues

Our Parish does not receive any official financial support. All you can see in our parish – is a gift. First of all, from God, but also the gift of people who help and volunteer their time at the Church, who volunteer their talents and

their money. Expenses for our parish's daily needs include water, power, heating, insurance and other immediate costs are also very high.

Vladyka Gabriel spoke regarding the importance of parishioners paying their annual Parish dues. They are an important source of income for the Parish and a very tangible way that parishioners can contribute to the ongoing life of the Parish.

Dues are $60 a year, per adult. Not only does paying these dues entitle you to vote at the Annual General Meeting, but most importantly it goes a long way to helping with the significant costs of running the Parish. (Editor's Note: Some parishes ask $25 per *month!*)

When you enter the Church, look at the beautiful mosaics and iconography. Consider the clergies' vestments. Smell the incense and the flowers. Listen to the music sung by the choir.

All of these things are made possible by donations from members of the Parish, as well as other items that are just as important to the ongoing functioning of the Parish but which are less visible: the heat, hydro, and the repair and maintenance of the building and grounds.

This year we are making it easier for you to pay your dues:

- Go to Paypal on the website and make an online payment for $60.50. Note to please make a payment of $60.50 to help us keep track. [$60.50 will identify that you wish the donation to go towards the dues.]

- Place a cheque for $60 in the donation box, with your name and Parish Dues written on the cheque memo.

- Use the Square- for online payment at the church.

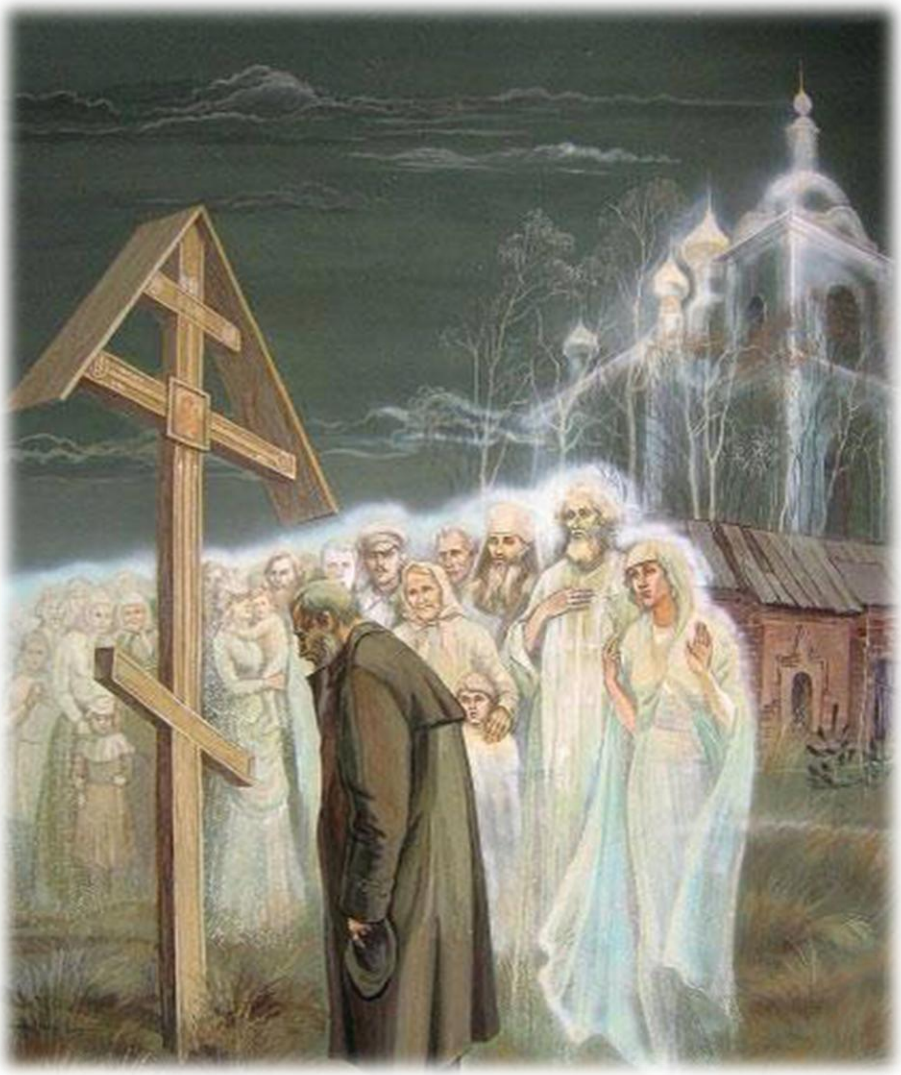
Archbishop Gabriel speaks of the importance for our paying the annual parish dues.

They are a vital source of income and a very tangible way we can contribute to the ongoing life of the Parish. Our parish does not receive any other financial aid. Dues are $60 a year, per adult. Not only does paying dues entitle one to vote at the Annual General Meeting, but most importantly it goes a long way to helping with the significant costs of running the Parish... For not only the beautiful visible, but also for less visible: the heat, hydro, and the repair and maintenance of the building and grounds. Thank you.

Pearls of Wisdom

Shine, Cross of the Lord, shine with the light of thy grace upon the hearts of those that honour thee!
Hail! Life-giving Cross, the fair Paradise of the Church, Tree of incorruption that brings us the enjoyment of eternal glory!
Hail! Life-giving Cross, unconquerable trophy of the true faith, door to Paradise, helper of the faithful, rampart set about the Church.
—Stichera of Great Vespers for the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross

The higher a person's position in society the more he should help others without ever reminding them of his position. — *St. Czar Nicholas II*

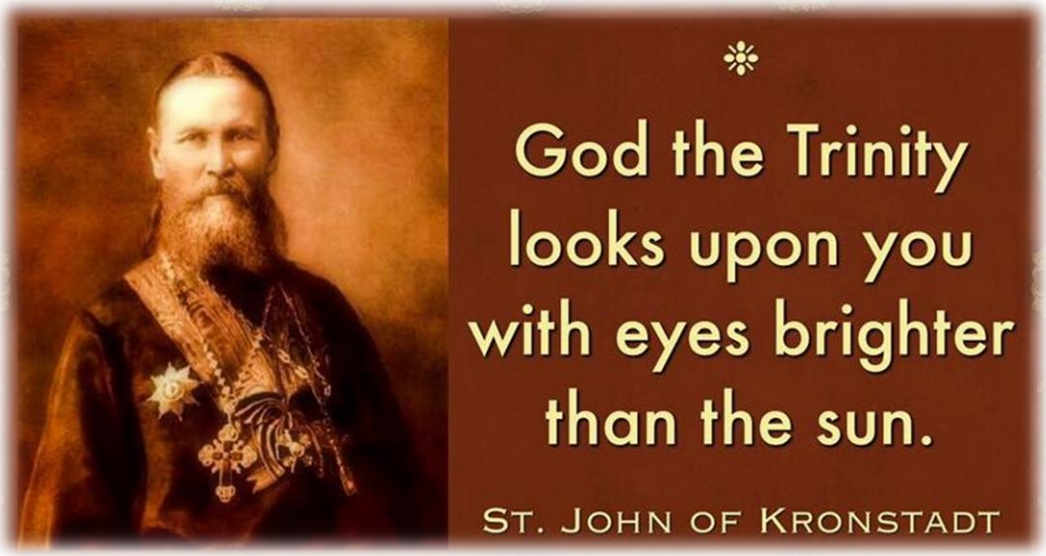


Let us venerate the Cross of the Lord, offering our tender affection as the cypress, the sweet fragrance of our faith as the cedar, and our sincere love as the pine; and let us glorify our Deliverer who was nailed upon it. (Isa. 60:13) — *Wednesday Matins of the Fourth Week of Lent, Ode 7*

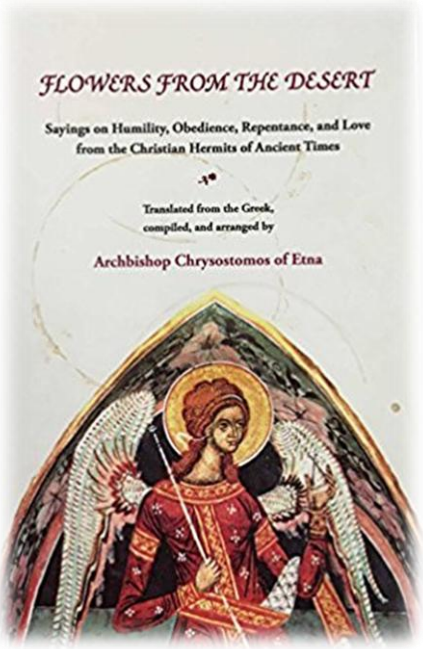
God is everywhere. There is no place God is not…You cry out to Him, 'Where art Thou, my God?' And He answers, "I am present, my child! I am always beside you.' Both inside and outside, above and below, wherever you turn, everything shouts, 'God!' In Him we live and move. We breathe God, we eat God, we clothe ourselves with God. Everything praises and blesses God. All of creation shouts His praise. Everything animate and inanimate speaks wondrously and glorifies the Creator. Let every breath praise the Lord! — *Elder Joseph the Hesychast*

Why do men learn through pain and suffering, and not through pleasure and happiness? Very simply, because pleasure and happiness accustom one to satisfaction with the things given in this world, whereas pain and suffering drive one to seek a more profound happiness beyond the limitations of this world. I am at this moment in some pain, and I call on the Name of Jesus—not necessarily to relieve the pain, but that Jesus, in Whom alone we may transcend this world, may be with me during it, and His will be done in me. But in pleasure I do not call on Him; I am content then with what I have, and I think I need no more. And why is a philosophy of pleasure untenable?—because pleasure is impermanent and unreliable, and pain is inevitable. In pain and suffering Christ speaks to us, and thus God is kind to give them to us, yes, and evil too—for in all of these we glimpse something of what must lie beyond, if there really exists what our hearts most deeply desire. - + *Fr. Seraphim Rose*

…At dawn, the Paschal service finishes in the church but continues in our souls. We started seeing everything in the light of Christ's Paschal glory, and everything looked different than yesterday. Everything is more beautiful, more sensible, more glorious. Only in that light of the Resurrection does life have meaning. – *St. Nikolai Velimirovich*



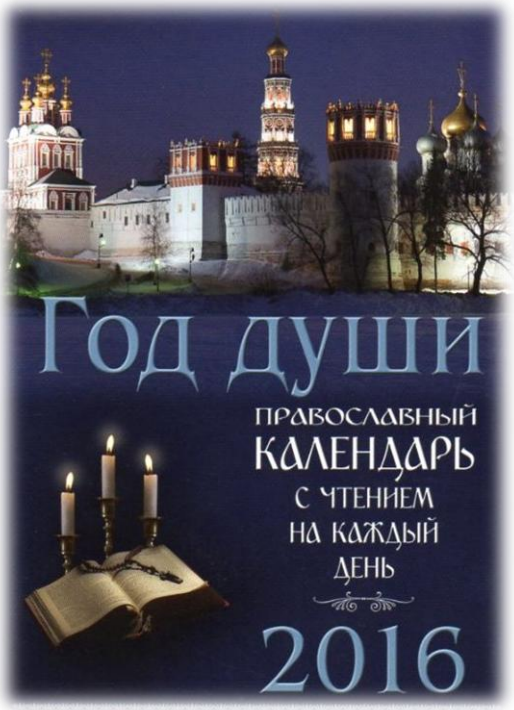
March Library Features



Flowers from the Desert

Sayings on Humility, Obedience, Repentance, and Love from the Christian Hermits of Ancient Times

Selected and translated by Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna. The author—well-known for crisp, witty, and accurate translations—has selected his favorite aphorisms and inspiring stories from the more than ten volumes of translations that he has made to date from the Desert Fathers.



«Год души. Православный календарь с чтением на каждый день. 2016 год». Кишинев, Изд-во «КАМНО», 2015, 384 стр.

Православный календарь на 2016 год содержит душеполезные чтения на каждый день года, выбранные из творений святых отцов, известных церковных проповедников и подвижников. При внимательном прочтении календарь поможет верующим глубже проникнуться духом церковного вероучения и смыслом ежедневной церковной жизни.

2016 calendar contains readings on every day of the year to help believers understand the spirit of the Orthodox faith and the meaning of everyday life in Christ.

Goldstream Picnic

Youth & Family

@ Private Group Site!

Registration & Non-Refundable Payment by Pascha!

* $40 per whole family or $15 per single youth/adult to pay for the group site and food

* Please pay in Barbara, thank you

* Church provides meat hot dogs, bread buns, condiments, chips, fruit and veggie platter, S'mores, hot and cold beverages.

* If you want to eat something other than what the church provides, please bring it.

Age 5 and under free; $100. per youth age 6 and up; $100. per non-assigned adult or couple; $50. per assigned teen assistant.

No child left behind due to finances! Please arrange your situation with m Barbara

The 100th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Russian Royal Family … A series of articles from various Russian Orthodox Language sources

Her Love Will Prevail

To say that Tsarina Alexandra (†1918), the Russian Tsar's wife, was under pressure says almost nothing about her. In fact she was under such tremendous pressure all her life with Tsar Nicholas II of Russia that it's almost a miracle she never complained. Yet only her profound faith in Christ and his ultimate sacrifice helped her cope with that pressure. True, she had a loving and supportive husband, but there are places human support cannot reach.

Consider the challenges St. Alexandra faced. After she married Tsar Nicholas II she moved to the Russian Court in the capital city of St. Petersburg. She happened to be of German descent (of a mostly Anglo-German mix) living during the war between Russia and Germany, when anti-German sentiment in Russia was so high that even the then-capital was officially renamed Petrograd to avoid the German sound. Newspapers bluntly hinted at her being a German spy, and court gossip abounded. Somehow the public chose to completely forget about her grandmother, who was the famous British Queen Victoria ruling the ally nation of Great Britain!

Another example. St. Alexandra was supposed to produce a male heir to the Russian throne but kept giving birth to girls, four of them one after another. When the fourth daughter, Anastasia, was born, the most popular Russian

newspaper at the time described the event in a front-page article under the headline, “What a Disappointment! A Fourth Girl!” Not really supportive, is it?! Finally, when she gave birth to a son named Alexei, it was found he had incurable blood disease hemophilia. It impaired the clotting of his blood, which meant that a simple bruise would make him suffer severe pain and might easily kill him. This disease was inherited, and came down from her German ancestry, so she actually was the cause of his sufferings. How is that for a mother to bear?

But even in areas where it was difficult to find fault with her, some ridiculous accusation would still arise. The day after the war with Germany broke out, she and her three elder daughters went to become hospital nurses. Alexandra wanted her daughters to become real nurses, not just appropriate pictures on fashionable magazine covers. She ordered simple uniforms for them, found a doctor who could teach the girls the basics of medical care and wound treatment, and got that doctor to work with the daughters in real operation rooms with severely mutilated soldiers. If they could not assist they would dress wounds. They would even cut soldiers’ nails! One would think you can’t really find fault with that exemplary behavior. Well, there were people who publicly accused the Tsarina of seeking cheap popularity, demystifying imperial women, and having a “common” association with unclean wounds and men’s bodies. She never said a word back…

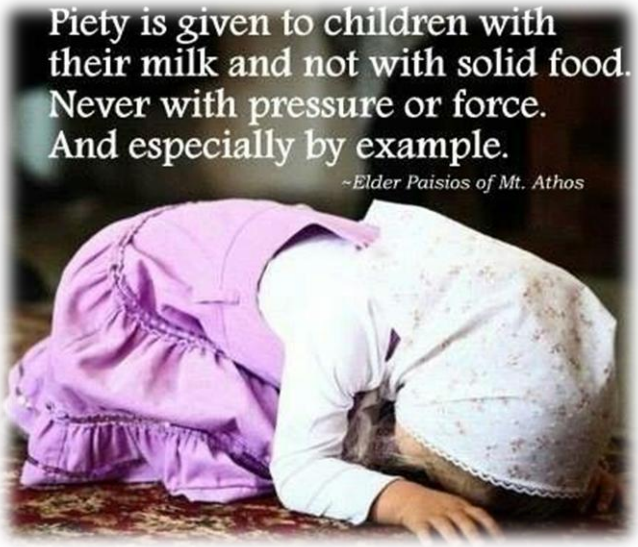
You get the idea now that Tsarina Alexandra was not very popular with the Russian media. Understandably, it made her devote most of her time to the family, and to Alexei after he was born. Of course, there were public accusations of being cold, haughty, snobbish, you name it. By that time she already learnt simply to ignore them, but her general health had already taken a hit and she had a lot of back pain for the rest of her life. However, it never affected her work as a nurse. She worked full time herself as a regular nurse in

a regular hospital providing an example to her daughters and to all staff.

There God revealed her gift of giving religious consolation to the sick and the dying. Many suffering soldiers reported (and many fellow nurses witnessed) how their pain would ease once Alexandra just sat by the bed, holding their hand and praying for them or talking to them about Christ and his immeasurable sufferings. She never refused a single request of that kind, sometimes leaving home in the middle of the night on a phone call to console a dying soldier who wished to see her before death. Just like sick Alexei, they were all her children and she was able to share with them her unlimited compassion and religious wisdom. In her own words, she believed "her responsibility was to be where people were suffering."

To those who still harbor scorn for the Royal Martyrs I would suggest reading the Tsarina's letters from Siberian imprisonment, after 1917, when the family had lost everything and were completely vulnerable to commissars, militant atheists and anti-monarchists. Those letters are published now. Her religious wisdom there takes on biblical profundity: "One must always and ever be thankful to God for everything one has, and what one has lost is even better, as it makes one brighter, cleaner. Never complain but hope, for God is so big we can just pray. I keep praying for my Russian Motherland which is crushing terribly at the moment… We are all fine, God thinks about us, locals keep sending us bread, fish, and vegetables secretly. Really, dear, don't worry about us. My heart is broken only when I think about Russia – what they did to it in just a year! But God let it happen, and then it should be so, to make people see the lies everywhere. It hurts to think that everything we cherished and were proud of has been shamelessly destroyed and trampled upon. Only this is good for the soul, which must grow and rise above the earthly, mustn't it? We all need to understand that God is above all, that he wants us to get closer to him through our sufferings. Love him as much as you can… Right now the country is dying but with God's help it will manage, he will show his strength and wisdom; we just need to wait, believe, and pray."
- *Excerpts from Andrei Manovtsev*

Practical Tips



Links

St. Sophia Orthodox Church, Victoria BC
http://saintsophia.ca/

Official site of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/indexeng.htm

Official site of the Montreal and Canadian Diocese
http://mcdiocese.com/en/

The Rudder: Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7
http://www.myocn.com/rudder/

St. Sophia's FREE Lenten Cookbook Recipes "Come and Dine"
http://comeanddinerecipe.blogspot.ca/

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Vancouver BC
http://russianorthodoxchurch.ca/en/

Morning Offering by Abbot Tryphon
http://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/

Western America Diocese Official Site
http://www.wadiocese.org/

"We knew not whether we were in heaven or earth… We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations."

The Orthodox Church

With these words, envoys sent from Russia by Prince Vladimir in the year 987 recorded their impression of Constantinople's awesome Orthodox Cathedral, Hagia Sophia. They had been sent to search for the true religion. Within a year of their report, Prince Vladimir and the Russian people were baptized in Christ by Orthodox missionaries. Today, as in Prince Vladimir's time, the Orthodox Church – fully aware that man is a union of body and soul – uses all the beauty of creation to move her faithful children to prayer and worship: icons, beautiful singing, sweet-smelling incense, and majestic services.

The Greek word 'Orthodoxia' means 'correct praise' or 'correct teaching' and in the Orthodox worship the praise and teaching are closely interwoven.

Jesus Christ founded His Church through the Apostles. By the grace received from God at Pentecost, the Apostles established the Church throughout the world. In Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, the True Apostolic Church continues to flourish, preserving the Faith of Christ pure and unchanged.

"Christ the Power of God,
and the Wisdom of God"

– First Corinthians

Troparion in the Second Tone

We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One, asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightest save what Thou hadst created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.

Kontakion in the Second Tone

O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the victorious image, uninscribed and divinely wrought, of Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true incarnation, we honour it with veneration.