



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

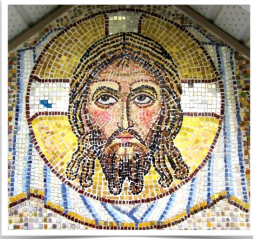
195 Joseph Street,
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email: info@saintsophia.ca
website: www.saintsophia.ca

Archpriest John Adams
Priest Philosoph Uhlman
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce
Deacon Olexandr Savitskyi

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February Services

Sat. Feb. 3 Vigil - 6:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Feb. 4 Liturgy - 10:00 a.m.

Sat. Feb. 10 Vigil - 6:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Feb. 11 Liturgy - 10:00 a.m.

Wed. Feb. 14 Vigil with Litya - 6 p.m. (Confession following)

Thurs. Feb. 15 **Feast Day - Meeting of the Lord in the Temple** Liturgy - 10:00 a.m.

Followed by Blessing of the Church Candles (bring your beeswax candles to be blessed!)

Sat. Feb. 17 Vigil - 6:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Feb. 18 Liturgy - 10:00 a.m.

Sat. Feb. 24 Vigil - 6:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Feb. 25 Liturgy - 10:00 a.m.



2024 Church
Mosaic New
Altar Angel
Calendars
Only \$15.00

Our calendar's feature image is one of our two newly installed mosaic Altar Angels.

These calendars are practical and essential, as they also contain Feast & Fasting Days at a glance... some of the Major Saints of the Day, and Daily Scripture Gospel and Epistle Readings.

These calendars are *vital* when looking ahead to plan one's holiday(s). *So very helpful!*

Speaking from painful experience, there's *almost* nothing worse than going on very special vacation, only to discover that one has accidentally planned it during a fast!!! 🙄 ~ Editor



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February Saints' Days

Congratulations to Xenia, John S, John T, Zoe and Kyra! God grant you many years!

Thank You Nativity Brassing Crew!

Thank you Vera, Genevieve, Michael, and Isidora, for helping Fr. Philosoph and fr. Gordon with polishing the censers, candle stands, lampada holders, and altar trays. If there is anyone who would like help with the upcoming adventure of Pascha Polishing, please contact fr. Gordon.

Thank You Everyone... For Filling the Non-Perishable Food & Clothing Hampers!

And many thanks to Michael and Laura, who dropped off these collections *many* times!

Thank You Youth Choir

For the Nativity Yolka Concert before the lunch under the direction of Andrei. Youth Choir begins anew on Sun. Feb. 4th. If you would like to register for the Lenten Spring session, please contact m Barbara beforehand. (Ages 7 - 17)

Thank You Church Cleaners and Floral Designers

Thank you to all who cleaned and created, during the busy two months of services in December and January! Please note that new February/March volunteer positions are available on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, please contact Emmanuelle.



The Little Convent | An Orthodox Christian Documentary

[A Little Convent](#)

Dear friends! We are sending you a film of our convent and hope that you will enjoy it. May God bless you all! Abbess Amvrosia and Sisters

An Orthodox Christian Documentary

Filmed by St. Photios Orthodox Theological

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Seminary, Etna, California. A beautiful film on the historic Holy Protection Convent in Bluffton, Alberta - now a jurisdiction of the American Eparchy of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece.

Holy Protection Convent is where many of our parishioners have visited in the past, as well as where - two of our own St. Sophia parishioners, remain - dedicating their lives in service to God as monastics. (Now Mother Nektaria and Mother Gabriela)

Appalachian Orthodoxy

Our parish sends donations to ROCOR's [Holy Cross Monastery](#), in Wayne, West Virginia.

Please see this monastery's [inception and wonderful history](#) (7 minutes on YouTube).

Also [Appalachian Orthodoxy: The Power of Beauty](#) (8 minutes in YouTube).



Pearls of Wisdom

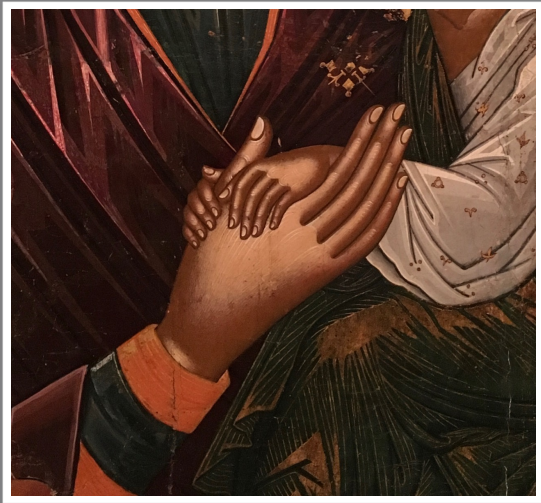
On today's Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, when the heavens meet the earth, God meets man, history meets eternity, when - as our people beautifully say – spring and winter meet, may we also open our hearts for an encounter with the Lord... Open your hearts, listen to the depths of your thoughts, desires, feelings, anticipations, nostalgias, yearnings, the pursuits of your hearts. For our hearts are created in the image of God and they yearn for God; the truth is often buried in passions, desires, appetites, ambitions, prejudices. Let us free ourselves of them and meet the Lord, for He always comes to meet us. He is the One who came, who is with us, Who always comes to be with us. ~ Bishop Atanasije (Homily on the Meeting of our Lord, Orthodox Christianity website)

On the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord: Here, the Creator is being held in the arms of His creation. Here, the One Who is infinite and omnipotent appears as finite and helpless, sheltered from harm in the arms of His own creatures, whom He Himself shelters from harm. His parents come full of hope for the future of this child, and yet it is He Who is hope itself, the hope of all the ends of the earth, the hope of every creature. ~ Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick, [ancientfaith.com](#)

[Meeting of the Lord in the Temple Feast Day Resource Links](#)

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How Can I Hold Thee?

Detail from Icon - Greece 2017

[St. Luke 2: 22-40](#) describes the Feast of the Presentation of the Infant Jesus Into the Temple. (February 15/2)

When Jesus was forty days old, the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph the Betrothed brought Christ to the temple in order to fulfill the law and dedicate Him to God.

The Orthodox Christian tradition of Churching a mother on her return to church with her child for a blessing, 40 days after the birth of the baby, is continued from the Jewish rite observed in this beautiful feast.

An ancient hymn for this Feast written by [9th Century female saint, St. Kassiani](#):

*How can I hold Thee as a Child,
Thou, who holdest everything together?
How do I bring Thee to the temple,
Thou, who art beyond goodness?
How do I deliver Thee into the arms of the elder,
Thou, who sittest in the bosom of the Father?
How dost Thou endure purification,
Thou, who purifiest the whole corrupt nature?"
So sayeth the Virgin, the temple, who containeth God -
Marvelling at Thy great condescension, O Christ.*

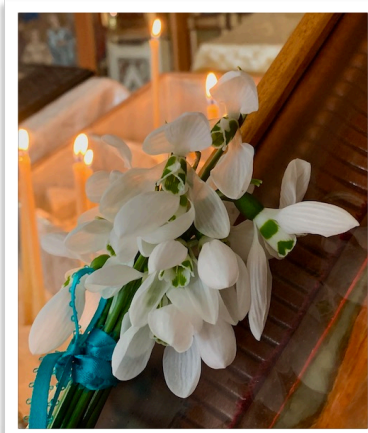
🕯️ Since 450 AD, church candles are also blessed on this day, because of the Elder St. Simeon's reference to Christ, as a Light of Revelation to the Gentiles. (Candlemas) 🕯️

Another Hymn by St. Kassiani is sung during Holy Week & can be heard here...

🎵 [The Woman Who Had Fallen Into Many Sins](#) 🎵

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[The Joyful Ringing of Candlemas Bells](#)

Snowdrop Flowers

Old English names for Snowdrop Flowers are Christ's Flowers, Purification Flowers, Candlemas Bells, and Fair Maids of February. They are named as such, in honour of the great and ancient feast day of [The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple!](#) (February 15/2) This feast has been celebrated since 450 AD, and church candles are also blessed on this day, as we remember Christ is our Salvation, and the Light of the World.

Centuries later, there arose a European folk custom that if, on the Feast Day of the Presentation, any burrowing animal who came out of his hole to see the light (and his shadow), would immediately return again to his den - predicting that winter would indeed be lasting six more weeks. European immigrants brought this folk custom to North America in the 1800's, however, and sadly, the civil calendar promotes "Groundhog Day" over the Feast of the Presentation.



[Life of St. Valentine](#) ❤️

[St. Bridget of Ireland](#)

Feast Day on Feb. 14/1

[Born in 451 AD](#)

[How to Weave a St. Bridget's Day](#)

[Cross from Rushes](#)

St. Brigid's (Bridget's) association with fire and the closeness of her feast day to the [Feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple](#) (also known as [Candlemas](#)), a day celebrating Christ as the Light Unto the Nations, links the two Feasts. St. Bridget is also known as *Brigid*, and affectionately as *Bride*, *Bridey*, or the *Mary of the Gael*. She is patroness of dairy maids, infants, midwives, blacksmiths, poets, nuns, and students. Along with Saints Patrick and [Columba](#) (Columcille), she is also the patroness of Ireland. St. Bridget is usually depicted in icons as a nun with a Cross woven from rushes and with a miraculous fire (a candle, lamp, or bowl of fire). May we strive to acquire the gift to see Christ in every person, as St. Bridget did.

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[St. Caedmon](#)

Feast Day on Feb. 24/11

St. Caedmon (mid 7th century AD) is the first known *English author* of the earliest recorded poem in Great Britain.

In the eighth century, Venerable [Bede](#) wrote that St. Caedmon was initially a herdsman, with an unpleasant singing voice.

One night, in a heavenly dream, St. Caedmon heard the angelic hymn - **Creation**. The next day he shared what he heard, and to the astonishment of all, sang this as beautifully as it had been sung to him.

When the holy [St. Hilda](#), abbess of [Whitby Abbey](#) nearby learned of

this, [she](#) encouraged St. Caedmon to join the Yorkshire [monastery](#).

This same Abbey had previously hosted the important [Synod of Whitby](#) in 664, which included the correct calculation date of Pascha... in order for Britain to celebrate it the same time as Rome and the East.

This St. Caedmon Icon is from the **Orthodox [Mull Monastery of Celtic Saints](#)**, which the sisterhood has sent donations to.

*There's still room in four [2024 Scottish Pilgrimages](#) this summer,
arranged by Mull Monastery!*

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Matagalpa 01/17/2023

Dear Orthodox Christians in Canada

I hope you are well with the grace of God the Trinity that illuminates the hearts of men because Christ is Born!

I wanted to send you a small letter but with great affection, to greet you and congratulate you in these days after the Holy Nativity and close to celebrating the Holy Theophany.

I want to deeply thank you for your expressions of affection towards us and our humble mission which is called San Juan de Shanghai in the city of Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

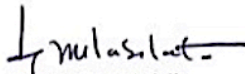
The challenge of missions when Salvation is contemplated from the Right Faith in places where Orthodoxy is almost imperceptible, becomes a path full of difficulties and limitations that only with the grace of God and his illumination radiates to the people who achieve know about this preserved Tradition that has touched their hearts.

Our path is nourished by what Luke 24, 46-49 tells us: "bringing the news of Jesus Christ about the forgiveness of sins", is the experience of knowing that cause and effect relationships are destroyed, that our past does not help us. pursue and we can begin as a blank page; since the news about forgiveness is the core of Christianity and has come to us through Christ himself, the image of the Father, who has become flesh among us.

With a heart full of gratitude I always ask for your prayers for our mission and your good intentions to promote missionary work that is null without the grace of God and the good will of people. I ask that God bless you as you look toward salvation through the mercy of Our Lord.

Through the prayers of the Ever Mother of God and Saint John of Shanghai, may the Lord have mercy on us and save us.

In Christ our Lord;


Father Daniel Valle
Rector of Mission San Juan de Shanghai
Matagalpa, Nicaragua
+505 82253614

From [Fr. Daniel](#)

St. John of Shanghai ROCOR Mission in Nicaragua

Our Parish Sisterhood (and some St. Sophia parishioners) have sent donations along to help support this mission.

[Please see if you can help too!](#)

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Gift of Holy Myrrh from the Hawaiian Myrrh- Streaming Iveron Icon

Our parish received a precious gift of Holy Myrrh from the Hawaiian Myrrh-Streaming Iveron Icon, from Fr. Olexandr and matushka Nataliya during their recent family visit to Oahu, Hawaii.

(Photo of the Icon above is from website listing some of its [Miracles](#).)

Watch the Hawaiian Icon's holy myrrh flow at Pascha [here](#) on YouTube!

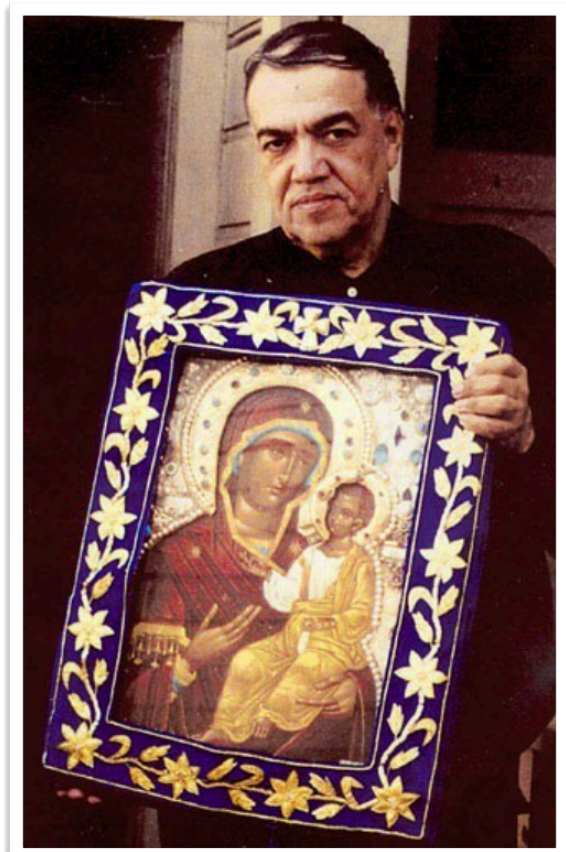
[Prayer & Myrrh Requests](#) may be sent to Hawaii.

More on the history of the miraculous **Montreal copy** of the [Iveron Icon held by Brother José](#), the Icon's keeper.

The original icon, is preserved in a monastery on Mount Athos, and according to tradition, was painted by the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke.

Many parishioners of St. Sophia Parish were blessed with the opportunity to be able to visit and venerate the Montreal Iveron Icon, when Brother José travelled with it to Vancouver BC, back in the late 1980's and early 1990's, before his martyrdom in Greece in 1997.

*We have an **un-streaming** copy of the Montreal Iveron Icon at our church.*

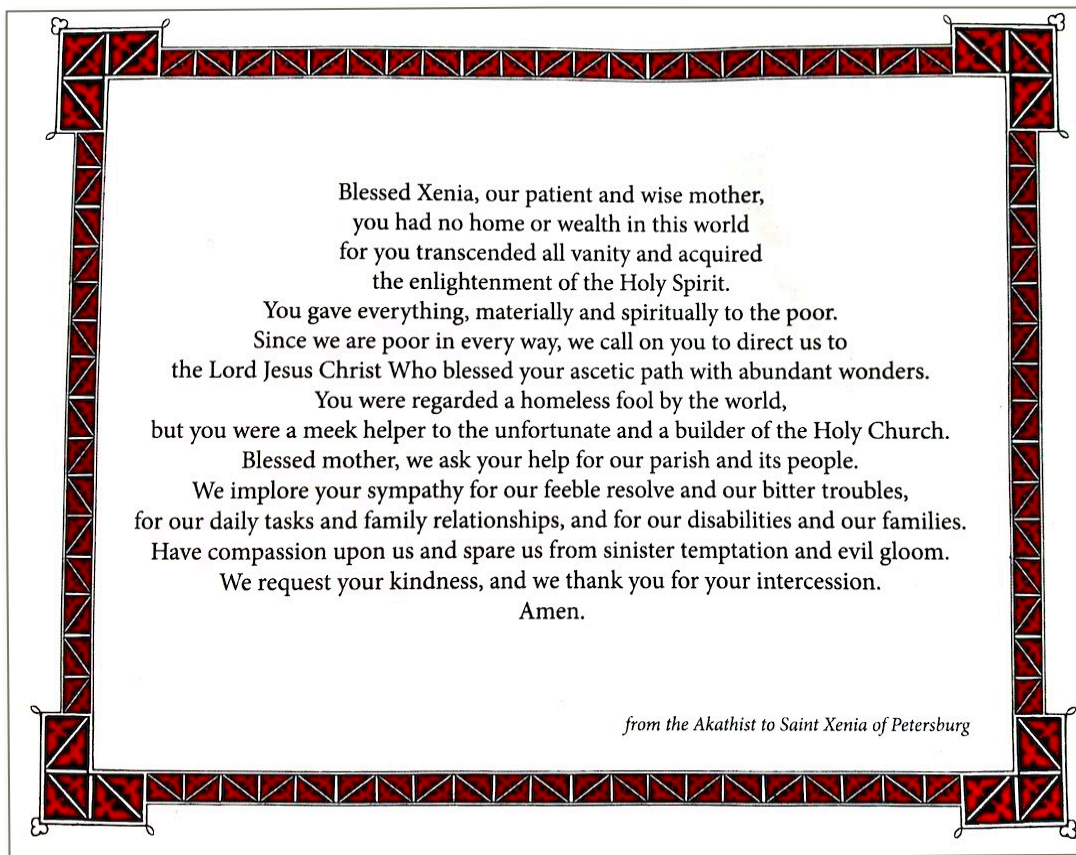


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Prayer Appeal From our Orthodox Neighbours at Victoria's Elk Lake All Saints of Alaska Church

Their parish has grown greatly, and they're looking to find another location to rent from. Of course, they're "not opposed to miracles, and if somehow they could buy a building - they would do so, with God's help". This is a prayer to [St. Xenia](#) their parishioners are saying, to help them find a new church building home... They'd be grateful for your continued prayers.



Those who turn to St. Xenia in prayer receive healing from illness,
and deliverance from family afflictions. She is also known for helping people find jobs,
find a home, or when seeking a spouse.

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[Krsna Slava!](#)

Following the Divine Liturgy on St. Nicholas Day, Milan, Sladja, family, and friends join together on their family's Slava Feast Day, while Fr. Philosoph performs the ancient **Slava Blessing**.

Links & Resources

- [St. Sophia Parish Website](#)
- [Come and Dine St. Sophia Parish fasting recipes](#)
- [Orthodox Christianity](#)
- [The Rudder Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7](#)
- [Synodal Website](#)
- [Western America Diocese Official Site](#)
- [Montreal and Canadian Diocese](#)
- [All Saints of Alaska Orthodox Church](#)
- [Abbreviated Prayerbook](#)
- [Blisswood](#)
- [2017 St. Sophia THE ARK Youth Quarterly](#)
- [2018 St. Sophia THE ARK Youth Quarterly](#)
- [2019 St. Sophia THE ARK Youth Quarterly](#)

*“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
Orthodox
Church

*the ceremonies of
other nations.”*

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.*