

## WORLD WIDE APPEAL

We greet you with the heartfelt joy during these festive days and pray that Christ blesses with all that you need throughout the year.

With the blessing of the First Hierarch of our Orthodox Church, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, we write to you on the eve of the Feast with an important appeal. As is well known, historical sites associated with our Fatherland are rare and precious in the Church abroad--the majority of these being our Orthodox temples themselves, together with some museums, cultural centres, parks, etc. If, however, these places are not cared for appropriately, are not served in piously and regularly, they will eventually come to ruin. In this way, regrettably, we too often see the loss of our historic homes, we find former temples in which the Divine Services are no longer kept, and we forget about the memorable places associated with our forebears. Through want of time, through the trials associated with the difficult financial situation throughout the world, we can lose sight of what nonetheless remains essential--the preservation of our spiritual heritage for those to come after us. Our forebears, no matter what difficulties they faced, remembered first to erect temples to God, cared for the services performed in them, and did not allow their children and grandchildren to lose their faith in God, forget their history or lose their native tongue. This mind, too, must remain in us today.

In such a spirit, we look toward one of our historic sites in need of preservation, and we turn to you for assistance. Situated on the banks of the Russian River in California is a small temple dedicated to the Kazan Icon of the Theotokos, which today is in sore need of repair. Founded by Archpriest Philaret Astrakhan of blessed memory--a man many of you remember as a great shepherd in the spiritual life--the church is located in a profoundly beautiful place, near Fort Ross: the famous first Russian settlement in the region. Until recently, services were kept in this church throughout the year, except in midwinter; and the grounds further served to host youth conferences, diocesan retreats and various other functions. Young people in particular were very fond of this place, and for this reason it was often used for the training of altar servers and choir singers.

The history of the church at Russian River has been well reported in our newspapers and Orthodox Church sites, and its memory is dear to many. Yet unfortunately, over time the structure has deteriorated, and is now in a state that demands our support and action if it is to be preserved for our children.

We do not, in this appeal letter, wish to burden you with formal requests for a specific sum, but instead will enclose with our words a printed estimate of the construction and repair costs, together with a few photographs of the temple and site. We ask you to see the need before us, and the responsibility we share, and to make every effort to support the preservation of this sacred place. Any sacrifice you can make will be received with great joy; and we will also welcome the names of those you wish to be commemorated at all services in the church.

*Online donations:* accepted at <http://www.sfsobor.com> (by credit card, PayPal, or WebMoney) or  
*Make cheques payable to:* Guerneville Russian Orthodox Church - Holy Virgin of Kazan  
*Mail to:* Guerneville Russian Orthodox Church, 6210 Geary Blvd. San Francisco, CA 94121

'Be merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful' (Luke 6.36)  
May the blessing of the Lord be upon you all!

5/18 Jan. 2011

+Archbishop Kyrill  
+Bishop Theodosy