

St.



Michael's School

Santa Rosa, CA



Fall, 2011

Here we are again. Another year has passed and it is time to share some of the fruits of our labors with those who have been so good to us, and to ask for their continued support. We take many pictures during the school year as a record of all the activities of the students. The spring of 2011 was particularly eventful and this newsletter will focus on a few of them. With all this non-book activity, you might wonder, "Where is the math, the grammar, the history, the science, and all the other academics?" Without a doubt, it is there, but who is interested in a picture of someone taking a math or history test?

Throughout our many years of teaching, we have been constantly reminded that children need to be active in order to understand and learn deeply. All the "extra-curricular" activities enliven the minds of our students and make them receptive to the more academic subjects. This approach to education has consistently borne good fruit, and as our Lord has said, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

The Mary Garden

In the spring of the year, we try to find an area of the church property which could use some attention and beautification. Last spring, we chose a small area which contains a statue of Mary, the Mother of God. The statue had been given to the church by some friends several years ago, and the surrounding garden needed refreshing. This was the perfect job for our younger students. As you can see, they approached the task with an abundance of inspiration and great determination.



Pascha Cheese

Making a bowl of decorated Pascha cheese has become a Holy Week school tradition. The idea of mixing all the wonderfully sweet cheeses you have not had for many weeks is most appealing, and the students enjoy creatively decorating each bowl with a variety of dried fruits and nuts.



A Trip to Old Faithful (California Version)

Geysers in the mountains just north of Santa Rosa are used as a source of thermal-electric power. Last spring we visited a very small geysers as part of our studies of geology and geography. Although this "Old Faithful" erupts at regular

intervals, it is not as magnificent as Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park. We did, however, enjoy the anticipation and the slight smell of sulphur.

Marbleized Paper

For the last few months of the school year, we were blessed to have a local artist, Melissa Titone, teach calligraphy. This class was true to its name - calli (beautiful), graphy (writing). After teaching the students the Italic script of letters and numbers, she taught us how to make beautiful paper. We will definitely offer this craft many times in the years to come.



A Pilgrimage to St. John Maximovitch

Only an hour's drive south of St. Michael's, in San Francisco, is another Orthodox Christian school, St. John's Academy. What wonderful hospitality was offered to us! We immediately felt a great kinship of spirit. We were given a tour of the school, attended some classes, ate lunch with the students, shared songs and recitations (we said The Lord's Prayer in Chinese) and, most importantly, were able to view and venerate the incorrupt relics of St. John Maximovitch. This was a deeply spiritual field trip for all, and one of the students exclaimed, "This was the best field trip ever!"



Woodworking Class

Year after year, woodworking has been a favorite class for many (perhaps all) of the students. We try to make each project a bit more challenging than the one before. One of the most complicated tasks is making a jigsaw puzzle, a project which involves drawing and painting as well as woodworking. The subject matter is up to the student. Here are pictures of the work of two 2011 graduates. The students also made frames for the puzzles.



St. Michael's School Fort

Last spring we put the final touch on the school fort. One of our school families had generously donated the wood for a new fort in order to replace the old one, which was built many years ago. After we built and painted the fort, it was time for an official designation. We finally (after about a year) finished the sign. The Greek letters mean "Jesus Christ, Conqueror." Moses Anderson did most of the design work, and Ashlian Webber kept her most discerning eye on all the details.



Tide Pool Field Trip

In about 40 minutes, we can be at the Pacific Ocean. One of our parents had some experience in exploring tide pools, so we looked for a low tide and headed west. What a wonderful adventure it was! We saw sea anemones, sea stars, bright red molds, crabs, and many other marvelous creations of God. Below is a picture of a crab on "sea pork."



The Last Day of School

Remembering the wonderful times we shared together often mixes a touch of sorrow with the joy of the last day of school. In May of 2011, we graduated three students, the youngest members of families that had been part of the school for many years.

Another dear family, with two more students, moved to Southern California. Yet God, Who is ever merciful, has sent three new, wonderful families to the school and returned another which had moved away for a year. We do not lose friends, simply gain new ones.

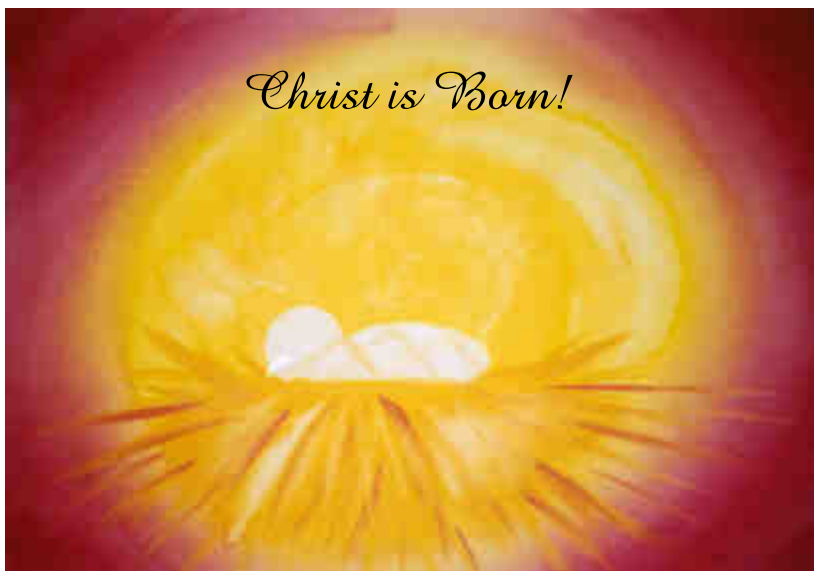
In the picture, the graduates are receiving their diploma and their "Old Fogey" I.D. card, which allows them to visit whenever they desire and to participate in all school activities. They often do find time to stop by, much to the delight of current students.

We hope that you have enjoyed the newsletter. Many times we have wished we could send more of them to our friends. If you would like to know more about the school, please visit our website at stmichaelschool.us.

It will come as no surprise to you that St. Michael's, as any private school, cannot operate solely on tuition. In an attempt to meet expenses, we have several fund raising events throughout the year. This newsletter begins the fund raising effort of the school year. We also have scheduled the following fund raising activities. Please join us. Details are on the school website.

- Sunday, January 22, 2012, Bowling Night at Double Decker Lanes, Rohnert Park, CA
- Friday, February 10, 2012, Spring Dinner at St. Seraphim's Orthodox Church, Santa Rosa, CA
- Sunday, April 29, 2012, Bowling Night at Double Decker Lanes, Rohnert Park, CA
- Saturday, May 26, Annual Celtic Festival, Holy Dormition Orthodox Church, Santa Rosa, CA

St. Michael's School is a ministry of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Mission, Inc., a (501)(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions made to the school are therefore tax deductible. Thank you for helping us provide a wholesome and enlivening Christian education.



This watercolor of the Christ Child in the manger is one of the paintings the students produce during the Nativity Season.

Now we have a little challenge for you. In many countries of the world, people do not use the "Merry Christmas" greeting we use. They proclaim (in their native language), "Christ is Born!" The person being greeted responds by saying, " _____ !"

Your challenge is to fill in the blanks. Take the first letter of each paragraph which describes a spring activity, plus the first letter of the introduction (H), and arrange them into two words.

First letter of each section _ _ _ _ _

Unscrambled solution: _ _ _ _ _ !

On behalf of all the school parents and their children, we pray that you have a most blessed Christmas and wonderful New Year.

Fr. Deacon James Hughes, Mrs. Katherine Hughes, Mrs. Christine Steineck