



**St. Nicholas
Orthodox Church**

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Diocese of the West

*Orthodox
Church in America*

Fr. Stephan Meholick,
Pastor

Protodeacon George
Golitzin

**IMPORTANT
DATES**

July 3-4

**St. John of Shanghai
& San Francisco**
@ Holy Virgin, SF

July 3

Ft. Ross Pilgrimage

August 5-6

**Transfiguration
of our Lord**

*Vigil, Divine Liturgy
and Annual Hike*

August 14-15

**Dormition
of the Theotokos**

*Vigil in San Anselmo
Divine Liturgy in
*Calistoga**

August 21

Square Dance

Mark your calendars now.

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

July 2026

A Birthday Worth Celebrating

This Independence Day marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. For a quarter of a millennium, the American experiment has endured through war, depression, social upheaval, and deep political division.



As Orthodox Christians, we know that our ultimate citizenship is in the Kingdom of God. No earthly nation can claim our absolute loyalty. Yet gratitude for our country is entirely appropriate.

We give thanks for freedoms that many Christians throughout history have not enjoyed: the freedom to worship openly, to build churches, to teach the faith, to gather in peace, and to pass the Gospel to our children and grandchildren.

Orthodox Christianity has flourished in this land. Immigrants arrived from many nations carrying different languages, customs, and memories. Here they built parishes, monasteries, seminaries, and charitable ministries. What began with missionaries in Alaska has become a Church spread across an entire continent.

Anniversaries invite gratitude, but they also invite reflection.

One of the great temptations of every nation is to believe that its blessings are permanent and self-created. Scripture warns against such pride. Prosperity, peace, and liberty are gifts that can be squandered.

Freedom survives only when people possess the virtues necessary to sustain it.

Freedom without responsibility becomes license. (*1 Peter 2:16*)

Rights without duties become demands.

Independence without gratitude becomes pride.

So as we celebrate this historic anniversary, let us do more than wave flags and watch fireworks. Let us pray for our nation, its leaders, its communities, and its people.

The founders gave us a republic. Generations before us preserved it through sacrifice and service. The question is what we will hand on to those who follow.

Will it be a nation marked by gratitude, virtue, and faith—or merely by comfort and self-interest?

That choice belongs to every generation.

Including ours.