

## Holy Assumption Monastery

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**Igumen Sergios (Gerken), *Priest-in-Charge***

### Vision

There has been a whirlwind of changes at the Holy Assumption Monastery over the past several years. Neighbors from Calistoga and Napa and, most importantly, friends of the monastery have energetically fueled construction and renovation efforts, restoring and renewing our little monastery, originally started in 1941 as the first Orthodox women's monastery in North America.

The years 2001 and 2002 saw the roof of our historic chapel refinished with wood-like concrete shingles. A new entry into the chapel was erected, with a crowning icon of the Dormition by Dimitri Shkolnik. The old six-foot-high cattle fence along the property was removed and replaced with a three-foot-high Victorian fence, 367 feet in length. And five new entries were created by contractor Ben Smith. Our two new wrought-iron main gates were forged by Assan Ismiloff of Napa. The garden was expanded, and a 14,000-gallon koi pond with three waterfalls was installed. A large arbor with Chinese wisteria now shades the enlarged outdoor dining area (which can accommodate up to 200 people). We use that area regularly for the ever-growing influx of worshipers and visitors.

In 2003 and 2004, we began renovating and retrofitting the two-story main monastery building, which dates back to 1891. All walls were taken out and studs replaced. Steel beams and supports were installed to safeguard our nuns from our famous California earthquakes. At this time, we were also blessed with the purchase of a small house on Lake Street, just four houses away from the monastery, which will become the new rectory for the priest who serves the community. This 1870 Victorian cottage was renovated, painted, and landscaped. The first full meal and "opening" of the cottage was held on Christmas 2004.

### Community Life

This current year finds us still working hard on our two-story main building. Services continue to be held daily, with morning prayer in the cell, Vespers at 6:00 p.m., and Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays and holidays.

All of these blessings have come to pass as a result of the tireless work and prayers of people desiring to see God's work succeed and His Word be preached.

Our future plans are to house our beloved nuns in this historic and blessed place, which will be an oasis of prayer, peace, and refreshment to all who come.