

Orthodox Church Etiquette

Cell Phones – Switching off cell phones or putting them into silent/vibrate mode before stepping into Church helps keep the services prayerful.

Confession/Communion - All Orthodox Christians are welcome to have Communion at the liturgy provided they have had a recent Confession and have spoken with the Rector in person, by phone, or via email PRIOR to the Divine Liturgy. Confession can be heard by the Rector or with your own parish priest/spiritual father. It is highly recommended that the aspiring communicant attend the Vigil on the eve of the liturgy service, and take confession during the Vigil or by appointment with the Rector.

Standing During Worship - The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church is to stand. Our Parish has no pews, except at the back (reserved for the elderly and disabled). When should you definitely stand? First of all, it is preferable to stand for the entire service if you are physically able to do so. But **always** during the Gospel reading, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora, the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal. Traditionally men stand on the right side of the nave, women on the left.

Lighting Candles Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the church, which is usually the best time to light them. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle or Gospel readings, during the Little or Great Entrances, from the Creed to the end of "It is Truly Meet" (The Eucharistic Canon), "Our Father" and during the homily.

Entering the Church (Late) – If for some reason one is late for church, please be mindful of what is happening during the service. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read, or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, or if the Rector is giving the homily, please remain in the back until it is completed.

Venerating Icons - When venerating icons ensure you are paying attention to where you kiss. It is not proper to kiss an icon in the face. When you approach an icon to venerate it, kiss the gospel, scroll, or cross in the hand of the person in the icon, or kiss the hand or foot of the person depicted. As you venerate an icon, show proper respect to the subject depicted in the icon.

Dress Code - Women with dresses and head-coverings, men with long pants and a nice shirt. Children: Athletic shorts, cutoffs, and spandex shorts are never appropriate church wear (for children or adults). Shoes should be clean and tidy.

Crossing Oneself - When you hear one of the variations of the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; at the beginning and end of the liturgical service or your private prayers; entering or exiting

the church, or when passing in front of the Holy Altar; before venerating in icon, the cross, or Gospel book. (The only time one should **not** cross themselves upon hearing the name of the Holy Trinity invoked is during the reading of the six psalms during Matins.)

When not to cross: At the chalice before or after taking Communion (you might hit the chalice with your hand); when the priest or bishop blesses saying, “Peace be to all,” bow slightly and receive the blessing; when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (kissing the right hand of the bishop or priest is appropriate, but not making the sign of the cross).

Handling the Holy Bread - After taking Holy Communion, and at the end of the liturgy, it is part of Orthodox tradition to receive a small piece of blessed bread. After Holy Communion, we eat a piece of holy bread or antidoron and to drink some wine (zapivka). After the Liturgy, we also receive the same kind of blessed bread after venerating the Cross. While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such, should be eaten carefully. Please monitor your children as they take the antidoron and teach them to eat it respectfully.

Crying Children – We have a room near the front door of the church on the right hand side where parents can take their children for a break.

Smoking – Please no smoking on parish grounds.