

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER JUNE 2017

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad www.albanyrocor.org

Rector: Protopriest Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

SUMMER HOURS: HOURS at 9:00 AM - LITURGY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.

JUNE NAMESDAYS

3	Eleanore Yarowski	6	Vincent Parella
	Elena Krisie	20	Zinaida Borscok
	Ellie Baker	23	Antonette Fritz
	Elena Pervychine		

MNOGAYA LETA! MANY YEARS to all of our Parishioners celebrating their Namesday in the month of JUNE.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR UPCOMING WEEKS

The **Feast of Pentecost** will be on Sunday, June 4th. Following the Divine Liturgy and kneeling prayers, a POT-LUCK luncheon will be held at the Church Hall (Last Coffee Hour of the Season).

The Sisterhood would like to extend our Coffee Hour luncheons to include the celebration of Pentecost on June 4th. We ask that all parishioners and their families join us for lunch and some outdoor activities for that day. Chicken, lemonade, ice tea and coffee will be provided, but we ask that everyone donate a side dish to share as well as dessert. We will be selling beer and wine and taking up a special lunch collection for the Holy Trinity Monastery. Please bring any indoor (twister, board games, cards) or outdoor (can jam, Frisbees, bean bag toss) games. Please contact Rae Lynn (Anastasia) Gonyea with what you will be providing by Friday, June 2., 695-6865) Thank you. We look forward to seeing you all.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

It is not allowed to say a word in the church to a nearby person, even if someone has met a friend whom he has not seen for a long time - this is done outside (the sacred walls). Church is not a barber shop, not a shop with incense, not a workshop, but a place for the Angels and Archangels, the Kingdom of God, Heaven itself. - St. John Chrysostom

VARENIKI MAKING FOR THE TASTE OF RUSSIA SALE IN NOVEMBER

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to you today with a request for help in our ongoing vareniki –making tradition. For many years Margo Beighey has been the organizer, chief filling maker (along with Nina V.), and dough maker of our vareniki. She is stepping down from this detailed job and has passed the torch, so to speak, to me. As most of you know, I work during the school year, but have summers off. I would like to continue the tradition of making vareniki, but would have to make them on Tuesdays during the summer. Tasia has agreed to help me with the filling, and Olga Kinnear will continue with ball making. I know summers are our time off from many responsibilities, BUT PLEASE, consider making time during the afternoon and evenings to come and help with ball making, rolling dough, pinching, cleanup, and packaging either Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. Thank you! The following are the Tuesdays I am planning on making Vareniki:

June 27

July 11

July 25

August 15 and possibly August 22

An email will go out the weekend before each date for people to sign up. Bring a friend or family member! I appreciate your time and help in this matter.

Rae Lynn (Anastasia) Gonyea 695-6865

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

SAVE THE DATE: The annual Church Picnic will be held on **SUNDAY JULY 23rd** at Cook Park in Albany. This is a fun day had by all and we hope that ALL of our parishioners will be in attendance. Good food, volleyball, soccer, bocci ball, playgrounds, other games. Mark your calendars and save the date.

CHURCH PLAYGROUND

The plans for the Church Playground have been approved by the Town of Colonie. We will need the help of our Parishioners, especially all of our strong able bodied young men, to prepare the grounds and erect the new playground. As soon as a date is scheduled an e-mail will be sent to ALL parishioners. Thank you to everyone who made the playground a reality, especially Natasha Smelova who attended meetings, dealt with the town and was a driving force in the fundraising for the playground. On Sunday, June 4th, following the Coffee Hour, we are requesting that ALL parents be present to discuss the work that needs to be completed to make the playground a reality. The playground will soon be delivered and we need to prepare the grounds, construct the playground, etc. There is a lot of work to be done and we need EVERYONES HELP.

NO MORE COFFEE HOURS FOR THE SUMMER COFFEE HOURS WILL RESUME IN SEPTEMBER

Thank you to EVERYONE who participates in the Parish Coffee Hours. From preparing the food, to setting up the hall and cleaning the hall afterwards. If you are interested in becoming a Coffee Hour Hostess – please speak to Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea so she can add you to the Schedule for September. If you don't feel you can take on the responsibility of hosting an entire Coffee Hour, but would like to help by providing a dessert, side dish, or the drinks, please speak to the Coffee Hour hostess directly. Any and all help would be greatly appreciated. Once again - THANK YOU to EVERYONE!

PENTECOST SALE AT JORDANVILLE

To support the monastery, and with the blessing of Fr. Alexis, Tania Taylor & helpers are going to the monastery for Troitsa (Pentecost) on 6/4 to sell piroshki & homemade baked goods. Tania is asking for people to contribute baked goods to sell. Please have them cut, wrapped & a suggested price before you drop them off. You can drop them off on Saturday, 6/3 at the church after 5 pm or call Tania 518-817-3426 to make other arrangements. All proceeds will be donated to the monastery & any left baked goods will be donated to the Monastery as well, unless otherwise instructed. THANK YOU!

TIKHVIN TRIP

Father Alexis and Deacon Father Michael will be traveling to Tikhin, Russia on June 26th and returning on July 22nd. During this time if anyone needs the services of a priest, they are requested to contact Father Michael Fritz .

CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

In order to keep our Church beautiful and clean, we have a cleaning schedule in effect. We realize that everyone is busy during the summer months, BUT the church still needs to be cleaned. If you are interested in cleaning the Church - this goes for men too, it is not ONLY a woman's job. To be truthful, it would be nice if men helped clean the Altar area at least once a month, so the dirt doesn't accumulate. Please contact Maria Hauf (253-9286) to see what weeks are still available. Thank you. Please remember -- it is EVERYONE'S Church and EVERYONE should be involved with it's cleaning and maintenance. THANK YOU.

COLLECTION FOR THE HOLY LAND

A collection will be held on Sunday, June 4th (Pentecost) for the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. This mission is essential in the effort to maintain sites in the Holy Land that are under the jurisdiction of ROCOR. They can only continue their work with God's help and support from parishes outside of the Holy Land. Thank you for your support of this very important mission. The needs of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem are extensive. All the properties under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad are cared for by the Mission. In some cases this means keeping a watchman or caretaker, in others - repairing a wall, house or cistern. The Mission supports all the clergy who serve at the convents, the monastics at Fara, and gives monthly allowances to the majority of sisters (those not on pension) at the Mount of Olives Convent. The Mission, also, pays all the expenses of keeping a person on duty in Jericho. Plus, there are office and travel expenses.

The Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad sends monthly stipends. A few organizations make Christmas and Easter contributions. Without this help, the Mission would not be able to function and meet its day-to-day expenses. But time, weather, earthquakes and neglect, due to lack of funds in the past, have taken their toll on the churches and buildings.

Currently, the Mission is trying to raise money to finish major repairs to the church in Gethsemane and the belltower at the Mount of Olives as well as restoring the IV century Monastery of St. Chariton. The Mission is, also, attempting to restore the Archimandrite's House at the Mount of Olives, which has a V century (circa) mosaic floor. This house is needed to put all the offices of the Mission under one roof, and to have a place to receive important visitors and pilgrims, a very important aspect of life in the Near East. The special expenses listed above can be met only through the kind support of friends, and we pray daily for all our benefactors.

COLLECTION FOR THE ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT FUND

A collection was held on Sunday, April 28th for the St. John of Kronstadt Memorial Fund. A total of \$1273.00 was collected. A brief history of the fund is printed below. If anyone was not in Church on the Sunday that the collection was held and wishes to make a donation to the fund, they may send their checks directly to: **St. John of Kronstadt Memorial Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 56, Utica, NY 13503-0056**

The St. John of Kronstadt Memorial Fund was established in 1954 by Archpriest George Pavlusik and the St. John of Kronstadt parish, and it continues its great benevolent work to this day by collecting donations and sending financial aid to needy parishes, monasteries, institutions and individuals in dire circumstances worldwide. In recent years, financial aid has been sent to some orphanages in Russia. The Memorial Fund's first president was Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery from 1954 to 1976, then from 1977 to 2008, Metropolitan Laurus of blessed memory, and currently His Grace, Bishop Peter of Cleveland is the memorial fund's president. Many, clergy and laity, have labored for the Memorial Fund over the fifty-four years of its existence, in imitation of St. John of Kronstadt, who brought help and relief to hundreds of thousands of his contemporaries. The fund continues this great legacy of love, being a source of help and relief to many of the faithful in parishes, monasteries and institutions around the world. Everyone is invited to join in this vital work began by our beloved patron saint, our Holy Righteous John of Kronstadt. You, too, can help by becoming a member of the Memorial Fund and/or by sending donations to the St. John of Kronstadt Memorial Fund in Utica, New York, and thereby continue the great work of almsgiving as was practiced by St. John. Please join us in this vital labor of love.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Church School for the Spring Semester of 2017 has concluded. We would like to thank all of the instructors and students who participated in the Church School.

The Importance of Church School

“Let the children come to me, so not to hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” Mark 10: 14-15

Christian education is a permanent challenge to the work of the Church. Not only did our Lord and Savior continuously teach the word of God during His early mission, but the Church as well from the earliest times looked upon Christian education as one of its essential ministries. As the first Christians joined the Church “they devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2:42

The greatest gift, the most precious inheritance that we have to give to our children is our Orthodox Faith. Jesus makes it clear that He wants children to come to know Him, and He considers it a grave offence for an adult to hinder this process or lead child astray: *“whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”* Matt 18:6

The Central aim of Christian education in our Church is to evoke and nurture faith in Jesus Christ according to the Orthodox vision out of which issues a genuine Orthodox way of life. The Church nurtures a living awareness of the risen Christ in our midst, who is the true Celebrant of Sacraments and the true Teacher of His people, and makes Himself known to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The whole range of Orthodox educational material- books, filmstrips, visuals, Bible Studies, lives of saints, contemporary discussion of Christian values- becomes effective to the degree that communicates the love and spirit of Christ.

The focus of our efforts to educate our beloved children in the Orthodox Christian Faith must remain in our Sunday School program. When we bring our children regularly to Sunday School we provide them with a gift of knowledge that has lifelong value and significance.

The need of Christian education is as immediate as when the disciples first appealed to Jesus: *“Teach us to pray.”* Luke 11:1

Christian education is an essential and abiding ministry in the Church. As other important ministries, it is never finished. It can be as vital and meaningful as the whole body of the Church makes it through provision of adequate personal, spiritual and financial resources.

The validity of Christian education is demonstrated by the truth that a well informed Christian is a spiritually committed Christian within the greater body of the Church. The commission of Christian education comes from the Lord Himself:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, to the close of the age.” Matt 28: 19-20

It is not ONLY the teachers job to teach the children, but the parents as well. We will be having a Church School meeting and we request that ALL parents will attend. The date and time of the meeting will be sent via e-mail. Your personal example and involvement in the religious education of your children are extremely important. The priest and teachers can not do the job alone. Here is how you can help develop the spiritual life and moral upbringing of your children.

- Register your child to our Church School Program.
- Bring them to Church School and to Church on time.
- Stay and worship at the Divine Liturgy in the Church.
- Be positive about Church.
- Discuss with them what they learned each Sunday.
- Give your personal example of Christian living.
- Emphasize regular repentance and Holy Communion.
- Put Church before every other activity on Sunday.
- Avoid criticism of others.
- Let your love for Our Lord Jesus Christ radiate.

Hope to see you all at the CHURCH SCHOOL MEETING.

NEW BABY

Congratulations to Bridget and Chris Yarwarski on the birth of their new baby. A healthy little man!! Theodore aka Theo aka Teddy ; Born 5/21/17 at 7:49pm 7 lbs 4 oz and 19 inches long. Congratulations to big sister Ellie; Grandparents Tania & Steve Taylor and Great Grandmother Margo Beighey and all those aunts and uncles.. Mnogaya Leta.

ELECTRIC LAWN MOWER FOR SALE

Anyone looking for an Electric Lawn Mower! Well you are in luck. John Raymond has an electric Lawnmower which was only used a few times and it's for sale. Please contact John at 952-6939 for details.

CHURCH FLOWER BEDS

A reminder to the people who have volunteered to be responsible for the flower beds around the Church. Please weed and plant flowers in your flower bed. If you are no longer able to take care of the flower bed assigned to you, please contact Margo Beighey (371-7758). If you were not assigned a flower bed, but would be interested in taking care of one, please speak to Margo Beighey.

A Rule for Altar Servers; Composed by St. John of Shanghai

PARENTS - Please share this article with your children if they are Altar Servers. Thank you!

- 1) To serve in the sanctuary, it is necessary to take the blessing of the priest, or at an hierarchical service, the Hierarch.
- 2) One must come to church before the beginning of the service.
- 3) On entering the sanctuary, one must face the Holy Table and, on weekdays, make three full prostrations to the ground, or, on Sundays and the feasts of the Lord, three profound bows from the waist.
- 4) Those persons who are not serving are not permitted to enter the sanctuary.
- 5) Only those who have gathered to serve may enter the sanctuary.
- 6) When vesting in their stikharions [servers' robes], servers should remove their ties.
- 7) When taking off the stikharion, it must be neatly folded or hung in its place.
- 8) In the sanctuary one should not engage in conversations, nor laugh, nor should one walk about the church, and particularly is this so during the Divine service itself.
- 9) All readers and altar-servers must be in stikharions. One must also obtain a blessing from the priest, or in an hierarchical service the Hierarch, to take off one's stikharion.
- 10) For communion of the Holy Mysteries, the servers, with the exception of the readers, take off their stikharions.
- 11) They should not touch the Holy Table nor the Table of Oblation (proskomidi).
- 12) They should not walk about in church during the reading of the Gospel, the Apostle or between the exclamations "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ..." and "And the mercies of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all."
- 13) Even before putting on the stikharion, their hands must be clean.
- 14) In the sanctuary and sacristy, nothing should be brought that is not used in the Divine services.
- 15) Sitting down, while wearing the stikharion, is not permitted.
- 16) Before taking candles or the liturgical fans out, the server should cross himself before the icon in the High Place and bow to the Hierarch or priest, who stands before the Holy Table. On returning, they should repeat this.
- 17) One must bear in mind that the sanctuary is the most holy place, and that it is required that one stand therein with the utmost reverence; in passing the High Place one must cross oneself, and one must always follow the service with attention.

18) During the "I believe" and the "Our Father, " all the servers go out onto the ambon to join in the general singing. [In the Russian practice, the creed and the Lord's Prayer are sung and not recited].

19) At the time when the clergy are receiving Holy Communion, the servers should stand reverently within the sanctuary; and during the sermon they should leave to stand on the ambon to listen to it.

20) Those who break the Church Rule for Servers, should stand on the left kliros [choir place] until the end of the service.

POSSIBLE CAMPING TRIP

We have the thought of a family camping trip. There are a number of camping opportunities in the Southern Adirondacks, not far from Albany. Due to services, it would have to be either a Friday evening and Saturday morning or perhaps a Sunday afternoon and Monday trip if the schools have upcoming Monday holidays.

If there is an interest among our parishioners, please let me know as soon as possible. We would want to do this trip between now and the end of June. Then again, perhaps we can plan for sometime after August. All are encouraged to participate.

Fr. Alexis

ST. SERAPHIM'S CAMP

Registration for St. Seraphim Camp in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania has begun. St. Seraphim Camp has been serving the Russian Orthodox community for over 25 years. Orthodox children entering grades 3 through 12 are accepted. Each day the children participate in The Law of God, daily prayers as well as the usual sporting events; river rafting, swimming, hiking, arts and crafts and bonfires. The camp has influenced thousands of lives over its history. We encourage you to consider the camp as a yearly part of your children's lives. All counselors are known to us and carefully chosen. If any adult would like to explore the possibilities of volunteering, they are free to contact us along with a letter of recommendation from their parish priest. The camp will begin on Sunday, July 30, and conclude on Sunday, August 6. More information and registration is available at www.stseraphimcamp.org

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

The Holy Orthodox Church is perhaps one of the last social institutions where dignity, protocol, respect, and reverence are maintained. This is primarily because when we come to the church and its services we are entering the Kingdom of God on earth, His habitation, and we choose to honor this sacred place by our attentiveness to what is proper and ordered. We have the opportunity to reflect the image of Christ within us by our actions. “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (Peter 2:9).

This guide is meant for personal reflection and not as a means of judging others. Keep in mind that there are different traditions even among the Orthodox faithful. We come to church to pray and worship God above all else, and that should be our only focus. While the following references the Divine Liturgy, it should be noted that proper etiquette should be applied to all the Divine Services of the Church.

Entering the Church

The Orthodox Divine Liturgy begins when the priest intones, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” We need to arrive early enough to receive this blessing. It is always appropriate to arrive in a timely manner, before the service begins. Doing so gives one time to get settled, to acclimate themselves to their surroundings, and to prepare oneself to offer themselves wholly in prayer.

Arriving late without due cause is always **inappropriate**. Arriving late causes distraction and is inconsiderate to the rest of the faithful, to the celebrant and to God. The same can be said for leaving services early. Experience testifies that coming to Church late is more a matter of “habit” than circumstance: there are those who come late, and those who don't.

One should refrain from venerating icons or lighting candles in the front of the church so as to not distract others from prayer nor draw undue attention to oneself.

If an occasional problem occurs and you have to come in late, enter the church and take your place among the faithful reverently without drawing attention to yourself. The times in which you should wait in the back of the church, or the narthex, before entering include: **when the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, when the priest is censuring or giving the homily, and when the Epistle or Gospel is being read, and during the Anaphora**. If you are unsure when is the best time to enter the church, ask one of the greeters for guidance.

We come to the church on time as if to a “Great Banquet,” with reverence because we are partaking of the very Body and Blood of Christ, our Savior. Coming to the Hours before the Divine Liturgy will ensure that you will be settled in plenty of time to pray without distraction.

Standing in Church

It is the custom of Orthodox Christians to stand throughout the services of the Church. This is because the traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church is standing. In “Orthodox countries” there are usually no pews in the churches. Benches and chairs are along the walls for the elderly and those who need to sit for personal reasons. If you need to sit during the Divine Liturgy, remember to stand at these times: when the Liturgy begins and the priest gives the blessing; during the Little and Great Entrances; when the priest is censuring the icons and the faithful; during the Gospel reading; at the Anaphora; for Holy Communion; and at the final

Blessing. Whenever a hierarch is visiting the parish, out of respect follow his example and stand and sit when he does.

Lighting of Candles

It is a pious Orthodox tradition to light candles for personal petitions and intercessions when entering the church and venerating the icons. Most parishes have designated candle stands or holders for these candles. It is not proper to light candles at certain times during the service—generally the same times when you should not enter the church, such as during the Little and Great Entrances, when the priest is censuring or giving the homily, or during the reading of the Epistle or Gospel and during the Anaphora.

Venerating Icons

The Orthodox Church teaches that it is proper to venerate (not worship) the holy icons as pronounced by the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicea in 787 A.D. The acceptable way to do this is to kiss either the hands or feet of Our Lord or of the saint depicted in the icon, or the scroll, the Gospel book, or the hand cross a saint is holding, **Please do not wear lipstick when kissing the icons.**

Additional Pious Customs

Crossing oneself

It is always appropriate to cross oneself at the mention of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; whenever entering or leaving the church; at the beginning of the Liturgy; when passing in front of the altar; when venerating an icon, the Gospel, or the cross; and at times for personal petitions. It is not necessary to cross oneself when the priest is giving a blessing or censuring the congregation. Instead, one should bow to receive the blessing. It is not necessary to ‘follow the priest’ as he censes the temple.

Bowing

Orthodox Christians bow when the names of the Theotokos and Christ are invoked. They also bow to the priest at his blessing, and when he asks forgiveness before the Great Entrance and again before Holy Communion. It is traditional for the Orthodox faithful to bow and cross themselves when they enter and leave the church, and when they pray before the icons.

Kneeling

In some Orthodox traditions there are times when kneeling is a pious practice in the Liturgy, the most notable being at the Consecration of the Holy Gifts. However, kneeling is prohibited during the Paschal season, from Pascha to Pentecost, as well as on Sundays, in honor of the Resurrection.

Special Considerations During Services

Refrain from socializing during the services

Save your greetings and conversations for next door during the time reserved for fellowship. We come to the church to greet God with our prayers and worship, not to distract others.

Texting is never allowed in the church

Unless you need to keep your phone on for an emergency, “Lay Aside all Earthy Cares”, as is sung during the Cherubic Hymn. Do yourself and others the favor of turning off your phone before entering the sanctuary to allow for your time worshiping to be as undistracted as possible.

Refrain from reserving places for others

Allow others freedom to come into the church and stand or sit where they feel comfortable, and especially make room for visitors especially seating at the back wall so they will feel welcome.

Lipstick

As stated elsewhere, do not wear lipstick while taking Holy Communion, or when kissing the cross, an icon, the priest’s or bishop’s hand, or any sacred object. It is best not to wear it at all in the church. Lipstick looks terrible smeared on icons, crosses, the communion spoon, and the priest’s or bishop’s hand. Hand-written icons have been ruined by lipstick; and even though the cross or spoon can usually be cleaned after everyone venerates, it’s not very considerate to those who follow. What is the answer? If one insists on wearing lipstick to church, please blot your lips well before venerating and do not approach the chalice to receive Holy Communion while wearing lipstick.

Leg crossing

In many cultures throughout the world, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered very disrespectful. In North America there are no real taboos against such action, rather, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable. Should we do so in church? No. Not because it is “wrong” for us ever to cross our legs, but because it is too casual—and too relaxed—for being in the presence of God. When we get settled in our favorite chair at home, we lean back, kick up our legs, and allow our minds to wander. Remember, sitting in church is a concession, not the norm of prayer. We should remain attentive (i.e.: “Let us be attentive”) at all times as a soldier prepared for (spiritual) battle before his commander. Should we sit, we must do so attentively and not too comfortably that our minds not wander off the “one thing necessary.” Also, please be aware that people from some cultures are offended by the crossing of legs or by arms behind the back. Keeping your feet on the ground also enables you to remain attentive and to stand when necessary.

In and Out

Certainly parents should have ready access to the doors to take small children out of the nave and even outside if necessary if they are distracting or need a short break. Let us avoid the temptation to congregate around the back archway and narthex, and challenge ourselves to move forward into the nave. It should go without saying that adults and teens should be able to hold their place for the entire time, with moving around or going in and out of the nave during the entire time of the service.

Receiving the Antidoron (Blessed Bread)

When receiving the antidoron (literally translated, “instead of the gifts”) after Holy Communion or after venerating the cross at the end of Divine Liturgy, be mindful not to allow the crumbs to drop, since this is blessed bread. Children will need assistance so that they do not take too many pieces, and so they are not careless in handling the bread. After receiving the blessed bread, return to where you were standing and be attentive as the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Holy Communion are being chanted at this time.

Leaving Church

The respectful protocol is to leave the church only after the final blessing, and after venerating the cross held by the priest at the end of the Divine Liturgy. If you choose to leave before the Prayers of Thanksgiving are completed, please exit the church quietly and refrain from conversing until after you have exited the church so as not to disrupt those who wish to hear the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Communion. It is not acceptable to be in the residence next door, kitchen, or an administrative office at any time during Liturgy. Those who leave early deprive themselves of a blessing. After exiting the church, it is customary to face the doors of the church, bow, and make the sign of the cross before walking away.

Greeting the Priest and Bishop

In our modern culture, we greet one another with a handshake. The exception to this is when we greet a member of the clergy. We do not shake a bishop's or priest's hand; we kiss it with reverence and ask for a blessing. The proper way to do this is to approach the hierarch or priest with right hand over left, palms facing up, and then bow while saying, "Master, bless" to the hierarch, or "Father, bless" to the priest. If either places his hand in yours while blessing you, this is an appropriate time to kiss his hand. We kiss his hand because we are honoring Christ, whom he represents and receiving His blessing.

Church Clothing

Whenever we are preparing to come to church, we should remember that we will be entering the House of God. This requires that we dress modestly and with reverence. Generally this will mean that we want to wear our best clothing. At any age it is not appropriate to wear shorts, pants that are too casual, short skirts, tight-fitting or transparent garments, garments with low necklines, or strapless tops. Orthodox traditions **require** women to wear **dresses or skirts** with covered shoulders and backs and a **headcovering**. Although men are not required to wear a suit and tie, they will want to make an effort to dress as if they were going to an important event. Clothing with logos or printed material distracts others from praying. Men and boys must remove their hats when entering the church. What could be a more important meeting than that with God Himself? The purpose in choosing our clothing wisely is that we model what is important to us by how we dress.

Photography in the Church

Whenever photography will take place during a service at an Orthodox church (including special events such as weddings and baptisms), please make sure to instruct photographers that pictures and videos may not be taken from behind the priest or standing in front of the altar.

Children in Church

Christ said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 9:14). It is possible for young children to remain in church throughout a service if they are taught to be quiet and respectful. Many parishes have cry rooms or nurseries for those who are too small to be quiet throughout the whole Liturgy. This room should **ONLY** be used by mothers with fussing babies or toddlers - **NOT** by children who are old enough to stand during the services. Never allow a child to have anything in his mouth when he comes to Holy Communion.

It is never appropriate to allow a child to run in church, to roam about during the services, play loudly, or carry toys that make noise. Eventually, children will be able to spend longer times in the Liturgy. That is where they should be, but remember the reason for coming to church is to pray

and worship. Plan to have your children use the restroom and get a drink before church begins, and don't allow them to come and go continually.

Parents often bring little snacks for young children to keep them occupied and quiet in church. This is fine as long as it is discreet and quiet and the parent sees to cleaning up any leftovers. By the time a child is 3-4 years old this will most likely be unnecessary. And by the time a child reaches age 7 they are mostly capable of fasting the entire morning of Holy Communion. **Chewing gum is never appropriate in church.**

Explain to your childre that they are visiting God's very special house, and they will need to have very special manners there.

Above all: "In all things give glory to God."

Our American culture of the 21st Century is rather casual, even subtly anarchist, in its approach to life. Dress, music, language, values, morals, and entertainment all reflect a trend to "downgrade" life from what God intended it to be. We mustn't allow this prevailing tendency to enter into our Christian piety, whether at home or at church. And having, fostering and recognizing Christian piety, should not be seen as a "bad thing." Most church etiquette is based on simple common sense and a respect for God and others. We are in church to worship God in Holy Trinity. The priest announces, "In the fear of God, with faith and love, draw near." If we approach our lives and our worship together with this in mind, then we will be people of proper church etiquette.

Adapted from Holy Transfiguration Church on Church Etiquette.