

SACRAMENTS

Our Orthodox faith is built on many beautiful sacraments and religious services. We have seven sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, Communion, Confession, Holy Marriage, Holy Orders, and Holy Unction.

BAPTISM

Baptism is the first Sacrament a child will receive. Through baptism, a child becomes a member of the Orthodox faith. It is recommended that the child be baptized before his or her first birthday.

Baptismal guidelines:

1. The Sponsor (Godfather or Godmother) must be an Orthodox Christian. If the Sponsor is married, the marriage must have been blessed by an Orthodox priest.
2. The role of the Sponsor is directly related to infant baptism. Since the infant is unable to make the necessary confession of faith, the Sponsor stands and vouches for it.
3. The Sponsor should be ready to recite the Nicene Creed either in Greek or English. For three consecutive Sundays after the baptism, the Sponsor should carry the neophyte for the Holy Altar to receive Holy Communion.
4. According to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, one name of Orthodox Christian origin should be given to the child at the time of baptism.
5. The day, time, and other arrangements of the baptism must be made with the priest. Please call the church office to discuss these arrangements at least one month before the baptism.
6. The Sponsor should provide:
 - a. A complete change of clothes for the child
 - b. One bottle of olive oil
 - c. A Gold cross for the child
 - d. Three white candles
 - e. One of each of the following: bar of soap, hand towel, bath towel, sheet
 - f. Martyrika
7. In the event that an un-baptized infant is near death, an Orthodox priest may be called to perform a clinical baptism. In the absence of an Orthodox clergyman, a layman or any other Christian may baptize the infant by sprinkling water on the child while repeating the following three times: "The servant of God (name), is baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit."
8. Those who wishing to become an Orthodox Christian must receive catechism from an Orthodox priest. After receiving instruction in the faith, the candidate is accepted into the church by one of three ways prescribed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Canon 95) as appropriate:
 - a. Baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son, and Holy Spirit by triune immersion
 - b. Chrismation
 - c. Confession of Faith.

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9. Proof of baptism must be established by an authentic document. The priest must undertake to instruct the applicant in matters of the faith and practice that govern the inner life and outward behavior of the Orthodox Christian. If the applicant has not been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity in a Christian church by the principle of "oikonomia," he or she must be baptized as prescribed in the Service Book.

COMMUNION

As material food nourishes and sustains our physical bodies, so does the Holy Eucharist nourish and sustain our souls in sacramental union with God. Orthodox Christians (who have been baptized and chrismated into the faith) prepare themselves prayerfully and responsibly for the acceptance of Holy Communion. Then, after proper preparation Orthodox Christians may approach the Holy Chalice of the Lord reverently during the Divine Liturgy.

Orthodox faithful are encouraged to participate in the weekly Eucharist, including children whose early Christian upbringing in the church is critical to their overall spiritual formation as active and serious members of Christ's Holy Body of believers. If a person is confined to bed and cannot attend the Divine Liturgy at church, call our priest and he will make arrangements to visit the person and offer him or her Holy Communion.

Kindly call in advance to make arrangements, unless it is an emergency.

CONFESSION

Holy Confession is an important sacrament for the faithful. It need not necessarily precede the reception of the Body and Blood of our Savior, although it is greatly encouraged. Confession may be made any time a communicant feels the need for spiritual catharsis -- especially when the communicant has fallen into serious sin. The recommended practice is that the faithful go to Confession at least twice a year.

Please call Father Michael at 704-334-4771 to schedule your confession.

HOLY MARRIAGE

To be in proper canonical and spiritual standing, an Orthodox Christian must be married in the Orthodox Church. Note the following information and requirements before a wedding is performed:

1. All couples preparing to marry in the Cathedral are required to attend 4-5 premarital sessions with one of the priests. This is offered as a forum to address various aspects and challenges of Orthodox Christian marriage and family life. The priest will assist the couple during one of the

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sessions to complete the necessary ecclesiastical forms for the application of the marriage license, as well as direct them on how to obtain their civil marriage license. No wedding invitations should be printed until the date of the wedding has been cleared with the priest and the parish office.

2. If the bride and/or groom have come from Greece after their 18th birthday, when applying for a church license, must present a Certificate of Eligibility for Marriage from the Bishop of their own town or province in Greece.
3. The following are necessary for the ceremony:
 - a. Rings for the bride and groom.
 - b. Stefana (crowns).
 - c. Two candles.
 - d. Civil marriage license.
4. Marriages are not performed on the following days:
 - a. Epiphany, Easter Sunday, and during Great Lent.
 - b. From August 1-15.
 - c. August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Forerunner).
 - d. September 14 (Elevation of the Holy Cross).
 - e. From December 13-25 (including Christmas Day).
5. The Best Man (Koumbaros/Koumbara):
 - a. Must be an Orthodox Christian.
 - b. Must be a pledging member of the church.
 - c. If from another community, prior to the wedding he/she must present a letter from his/her parish stating that he/she is a member in good standing.
 - d. If married, his or her marriage must have been blessed in the Orthodox Church.
6. If the bride or groom is under 18 years of age, a letter of consent from the parents must be presented at the time they apply for the ecclesiastical marriage license.
7. Divorced persons wanting to remarry:
 - a. If the previous marriage was the result of a civil service, a civil divorce paper must be presented.
 - b. If the previous marriage was blessed in the Orthodox Church, that marriage has to be officially dissolved by an Orthodox Church Court.
 - c. The original document attesting to a Church Divorce must be presented at the time of application for a church marriage license.

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