St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

8 Lowell Street, Lawrence, MA 01840

Guidelines for Worship in Our Church

Beloved in Christ,

The prayers, movements, and sacred images of the Divine Liturgy draw us into worship. Please follow these guidelines with reverence, patience, and kindness toward those still learning. Attend to your own prayer and conduct, welcome visitors warmly, and leave sensitive corrections to the clergy and those entrusted with that responsibility.

Entering the Church

The Divine Liturgy begins Sundays at 10:00 a.m. with “Blessed is the Kingdom.” Arrive early to light candles, venerate icons, and settle into prayer; attending Orthros is also encouraged. If late, enter quietly. Remain in the narthex during the Little and Great Entrances, censing, or Gospel. If you are unsure, ask an usher when it is a proper time to enter.

Standing and Sitting

Follow the red service book (Liturgy begins on p. 91). Stand for the opening blessing, Entrances, Gospel, censing, Anaphora, Holy Communion, and dismissal. Those with health needs may sit.

Lighting Candles Light candles on arrival, not during solemn moments of worship. Supervise children near flames. A donation for each candle is customary.

Venerating Icons and Relics

We venerate icons; worship belongs to God alone. Cross yourself, bow, and kiss the saint’s hand or feet, or the Gospel, scroll, or cross depicted. Remove lipstick and lip gloss first.

Children in the Divine Liturgy

Christ welcomes children (Matthew 19:14), and they belong in worship. Teach them patiently to stay with you, speak quietly, and respect icons and furnishings. No running, jumping on pews, or noisy toys. Attend to restroom needs beforehand when possible. If a child becomes very disruptive or after the third time and the child is not quieting down, step into the narthex or room at the back of the side Chapel, briefly, then return. The congregation should meet ordinary childhood sounds with patience, support, and gratitude for the blessing of children among us.

Dress for Worship

Dress modestly and respectfully. At our Church, jeans, shorts, baseball caps, short skirts, spaghetti straps, crop tops, midriff tops, and excessively tight, sheer, or revealing clothing are not appropriate. Men and boys remove hats upon entering; altar servers and ushers must follow these expectations. Parents should guide children. Regardless of how people present themselves when first coming to the parish all are called to welcome visitors graciously.

Prayerful Attention

Save conversation for after services; keep the narthex, pews, and side Chapel quiet. Turn phones off; for emergencies, silence them and step outside if needed. No texting or social media. Follow the red service book, join the responses, and keep feet on the floor rather than crossing legs. Minimize movement, make room for others, and ask ushers for help if needed.

Receiving Holy Communion

The Eucharist is the true Body and Blood of Christ, received by prepared Orthodox Christians in good standing. Prepare through prayer, fasting as appropriate, repentance, and confession under spiritual guidance. Ask Father about any uncertainty. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to worship but should not approach the chalice; Orthodox visitors should speak with Father about local practice. Approach quietly, follow directions, remove lipstick, and ensure children have no food or gum. Stand during distribution if able. After receiving, quietly read thanksgiving prayers (red book, pp. 128–131).

Blessed Bread and Dismissal

Antidoron is blessed bread, given out by the Priest at the end of the Divine Liturgy as a sign of hospitality. It is not Holy Communion; however, it is blessed. Handle it carefully and help children avoid crumbs. Remain through the final blessing and dismissal; fellowship follows.

Greeting Clergy

For a blessing, place right hand over left, palms up, and say “Father, Bless” (priest) or “Master, bless” (bishop); kiss his hand when offered.

May our conduct at worship help one another pray and draw closer to the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To whom be all glory.

In Christ,
Fr. Ephraim Hastings
Pastor

Divine Liturgy • Reverence • Hospitality
(Thank you to the Cathedral of St. George for the framework of this resource.)