



Welcome to Saint Mary Magdalen Orthodox Church

Thank you for joining us today. We are happy to have you with us for the Divine Liturgy this morning, and we hope that you will stay for coffee and fellowship afterwards.

If you have never been to an Orthodox service before, we hope that this card will give you an outline of what we're doing today. On this side is a description of the Church space; on the reverse is a synopsis of the Liturgy itself. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask one of us after the Liturgy has ended.

Please help us keep a quiet and prayerful atmosphere in the chapel. During the service, we will often cross ourselves and bow, sometimes all the way to the floor. Do not feel obligated to join us in this, but feel free if you are so moved.

The Choir stands on one side of the chapel, and the Faithful fill up the other and the front. There are some chairs along the sides. While we normally stand for the entire service, feel free to sit if necessary. There are certain times when everyone stands: during the Little and Great Entrances, the Scripture readings, and during the Anaphora (see other side). Generally, if you hear someone say "Stand aright!" please stand.

At the back of the chapel, by the door, you will see a table with candles for sale. At the same table, there are small loaves of bread called *Prosphora* (Greek for "Gifts"), which the Faithful give to the Priest with a list of the names of their family and friends, both living and dead, to be remembered during the Liturgy.

In the center of the chapel is an icon for veneration, with stands for candles, which the Faithful offer as a sacrifice and a symbol of the light of Christ. Icons are sometimes called "Windows to Heaven." We do not worship icons, but by kissing them, we venerate the person or event shown. Candles are carried in the two Entrances, as well as at the Gospel reading, and incense is offered as a symbol of our prayers rising to Heaven as a taste of spiritual sweetness.

In the front of the chapel is the *Iconostasis*, which separates the Nave, or main body of the Church, from the Altar. Generally, only Clergy and Acolytes are permitted in the Altar, and only priests go through the Royal Doors (the opening in the middle). In the center of the Altar area is the Holy Table, where we celebrate the Eucharist; in the back left corner is the Table of Preparation, where the bread and wine are prepared before the Liturgy.

While we wish everyone to feel welcome, we do ask that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by fasting present themselves for Communion. Some of the Faithful may offer you a small piece of blessed bread; this is called *Antidoron* (Greek for "Instead of the Gifts"). We offer it as a sign of welcome and fellowship to those not receiving Communion. Thank you for your understanding.

The riches of the Orthodox Faith are hard to summarize on a single sheet of paper. Again, we're happy to answer any questions after the Liturgy.

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The service we celebrate today is the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople. This Liturgy has been in its present form, with a few exceptions, since the ninth century. It is divided into two parts: the Liturgy of the Catechumens (those preparing for baptism), which centers on the readings from Scripture, and the Liturgy of the Faithful, which centers on the Eucharist.

THE LITURGY OF THE CATECHUMENS

The Liturgy begins with a blessing: “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” We begin with the end; the Liturgy we celebrate here is a reflection of and a participation in the glory of Heaven. The blessing is followed by the Litany of Peace, a series of prayers with the refrain “Lord, have mercy.” (This is the first of many litanies you will hear this morning.) The Litany is followed by two Antiphons (selections from the Psalms), interspersed with shorter litanies.

Then, while the Choir sings the Beatitudes, the Clergy make the LITTLE ENTRANCE, carrying the Gospel Book out from the Altar, through the church, and back to the Altar again.

After the Little Entrance, the Choir sings the Troparia and Kontakia, a series of short hymns for the Sunday, our patron Saint, and any special Feasts, and then the Thrice-Holy Hymn, an ancient hymn that mirrors the hymns of the angels around the Heavenly Throne of God.

A Reader or Subdeacon then reads passages from the Old Testament Prophets and the Apostolic writings, with Psalm verses in between, while the Priest censens the church. Then the Priest comes out from the Altar and reads from the Gospel. A sermon usually follows.

The Liturgy of the Catechumens concludes with more Litanies.

THE LITURGY OF THE FAITHFUL

After a short Litany of the Faithful and a censening of the church, the Choir sings the Cherubic Hymn, while the Clergy solemnly make the GREAT ENTRANCE carrying the bread and wine, which will become the Body and Blood of Christ, from the Table of Preparation, through the church, in the Royal Doors, and to the Holy Table.

After another Litany, we sing the Creed together, reaffirming our Orthodox Faith.

The Priest then begins the *Anaphora* (Greek for “Lifting up”), where we give thanks to God for all that he has done for us, we remember Christ’s institution of the Eucharist, and we ask that the Father will send the Holy Spirit to make the bread and wine the precious Body and Blood of Christ.

After another Litany, we sing the Lord’s Prayer.

The Clergy and People then say pre-communion prayers together. The Choir sings a selection of hymns while first the Clergy and then the Faithful receive the Eucharist “for the healing of soul and body.” This is the center of our worship, the sacrament that unites us all with each other, with all the saints who have ever lived, and with Christ himself.

When all have received, the Priest returns the Body and Blood to the Table of Preparation while the Choir sings hymns of thanksgiving. The Liturgy proper concludes with some final prayers and blessings. There may be some announcements, after which the Priest will bring out the Cross for the Faithful to kiss. Please join us for a snack afterwards.