



St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church

Etiquette Guidelines

Welcome to St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Lubbock, Texas! We're so glad you are joining us today. Whether you are a first-time visitor to our parish or a regular parishioner, we encourage you to read the Etiquette Guidelines below. These guidelines will help you know what to expect during our services and how to ensure your time worshipping with us in community blesses you as well as those around you. If you have any questions at all, *please do not hesitate to ask!*

Our Building is the House of God

- We ask you to be respectful from the time you walk in the doors to the time you leave and treat our building and everything in it with care.
- The Parish Hall is for fellowship after the service, and we encourage you to stay after the service to eat and drink with us! We invite you to worship the Lord and ask that you remain out of the Parish Hall, and in the service, as much as you are able.
- Please be gentle with the doors leading into the Parish Hall; they slam quite loudly.
- Please take as good care with our bathrooms as you would your own at home. We have paper products for replenishing and wipes and brushes for messes.

All are Welcome, Especially Children

- At St. Andrew, as well as at any Orthodox Church, you will find children are present with us throughout the services. We don't have a cry room or a separate nursery. In fact, Orthodox Christianity encourages children to be as much a part of worship as the adults, for Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, for such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 9:14).
- Because of this and the fact services can be quite long, you will hear and see a lot of what makes children ... children. Please be patient with the "joyful noises" and "wiggles" that come from our children.
- That being said, if you have children who join us, you can help them learn how to develop devotion by doing the following:
 - Bring quiet toys to church, such as colors, books, stuffies, blankets to play on, etc. and help them play quietly, especially during the Homily and Holy Communion. Toys with wheels or make noises are best avoided.
 - Encourage children to whisper and use "inside voices," except, of course, when we encourage everyone to say the Lord's Prayer and sing, "Lord, have mercy!"
- It is perfectly acceptable to take your children outside or into the Parish Hall for a moment if they are crying, upset, or just need a break! However, while in the Parish Hall, we ask that you keep your children from playing with the toys until after all the services are concluded.
- The courtyard – and not the sanctuary – is the perfect place for children to run around after the services. Please help us teach the sanctuary is *always* a sacred space, even after services.

Our Worship Involves All the Body and All the Senses

- At an Orthodox Church, you will find that your entire being is involved in worship: sight, smell, sound, touch, and even taste. You will observe icons and burning candles; smell incense; hear chanting and prayers (and sounds from our many children!); and watch as people stand, sit, kneel, and even walk around.
- Standing is the traditional posture in the Orthodox Church. You are welcome to sit throughout the service as you need. We ask that if possible, however, the congregation stand when the clergy **censes** the altar or the church, during the **reading of the Gospel**, and throughout the **distribution of Holy Communion**. The Lord is in our midst in a special way in these sacred moments, and we honor Him not only with our hearts and minds, but our bodies, as well.
- You will also observe our worship involves veneration – bowing down and/or kissing – not only icons, but also the cross, relics of the Church, and the hands of our clergy. You are welcome to venerate as you feel comfortable.
- You are welcome to light candles and venerate icons during the service; however, please remain out of the narthex (entrance to the church) until everyone has had a chance to come into the building, which is usually after the Homily.

Eastern Orthodox Communion & The Blessed Bread (Antidoron)

- Communion in the Eastern Orthodox Church is reserved for baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians who regularly avail themselves of Holy Confession.
- Because the Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, approaching the chalice and taking communion is a very serious matter. Here is how you should prepare and take communion at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church to avoid any accidents:
 - Men and women: **blot your lipstick and chapstick**. Absolutely no mouth products should be left on the spoon to be mixed back into the chalice.
 - When it is your turn to take communion and you approach the cup, **clearly state your Orthodox baptismal name** for our clergy.
 - Come as close to the chalice as possible, with your head **over the communion cloth and tucked under your chin** to prevent any of the Holy Eucharist from missing your mouth and falling to the floor.
 - At St. Andrew, **we ask you to take communion off the spoon**. Please close your mouth around the spoon (no opening mouth for the Holy Eucharist to be dumped in) and make sure **all of the Holy Eucharist is off the spoon before backing away**.
 - Use the communion cloth to blot your mouth, if necessary.
 - Please only take one or two pieces of bread when you move on from communion so there is enough for everyone.
- *Everyone*, including visitors, are welcome to partake of the *antidoron*, or blessed bread, that is distributed at the end of the service!
- Please try not to drop crumbs from the blessed bread on the floor. Because this bread has been blessed, we treat it with respect.