

## **PARISH INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES**

**BIRTH OF A CHILD:** It is customary in the Orthodox Church for prayers to be offered by the priest for the mother and child on the day of the child's birth or shortly thereafter. The family should notify the priest and invite him to visit and offer the special prayers and the blessing of our Lord and the Church.

**THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:** Before Orthodox parents begin planning and arranging a baptism of their child, the priest should be contacted to schedule the date and time of the ritual and provide the families with instructions and guidance. Only Orthodox Christians baptized and practicing the Orthodox faith and who are enrolled as members in good standing in an Orthodox Parish are permitted to serve as God-parents/sponsors. God-parents/sponsors from other parishes are required to provide our priest with a letter from their priest verifying their ecclesiastical status and membership. By ecclesiastical dispensation, non-Orthodox relatives of Inter-Christian marriage families may serve as baptismal witnesses. The priest provides information, guidance and assistance to parents in pre-baptismal consultations and correspondence. The names given to children must be Orthodox Christian names of recognized saints.

### **THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF**

**CHRISTMAS/CONFIRMATION:** Christians of the protestant or Catholic faiths who are baptized in the name of Holy Trinity, Father, son and Holy Spirit with water and who desire to join the Orthodox Church are received through the sacrament of Chrismation. The priest is available prior to the scheduling of the sacrament/mystery to provide instructions on

the Orthodox faith to the person/s who are converting to Orthodoxy. People wishing to join the Orthodox Church who are not baptized are received in the Orthodox Church following instruction and through the Holy Sacrament/Mystery of Baptism.

**THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:** When Orthodox Church members plan to get engaged to their future spouses, they should notify the priest so that he may congratulate them, offer the blessings of our Lord and provide them with guidance and instructions as well as ecclesiastical regulations relative to the conduct of the Holy Sacrament of Marriage. Marriages are not permitted during fasting seasons. The Sponsors/Κουμπάροι must be Orthodox Christians enrolled, practicing the faith and members in good standing in their local Orthodox Church. Sponsors/Κουμπάροι coming from other parishes are required to provide our priest with a letter from their priest documenting their ecclesiastical status. Marriages are prohibited when they are canonical relationship impediments. Inter-Christian marriages are permitted by special ecclesiastical dispensation (ECONOMIA) providing that the non-Orthodox partner is baptized in water, in the name of the Holy Trinity and the couple is willing to baptize and raise their children in the Orthodox Church. Orthodox marriages are not permitted between Orthodox and non-Christians.

**DIVORCE:** Whenever marriages are terminated by civil divorce, the church requires the couple to apply through their priest for an ecclesiastical divorce. The priest is required by the bishop to verify the grounds and applications for an ecclesiastical divorce and submit them to the diocesan ecclesiastical court for a hearing and judgment. The Church only permits the

granting of ecclesiastical divorces for certain reasons and grounds. Before a family breaks-up and goes to a lawyer, they should consult and seek the advice and counsel of the priest who is required to exert every effort to evolve reconciliation.

**SICKNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION:** Whenever someone is sick particularly with a terminal illness or hospitalized, the priest should be notified so that he may visit the sick, offer prayers and give Holy Communion and anoint with Holy Unction Prayer Oil.

**FUNERALS:** When an Orthodox Christian dies, the priest should be notified so that he may assist the family of the deceased in making all the necessary arrangements, schedule the services and so he may provide prayers, comfort and consolation to the bereaved.

**BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** It is prudent for Orthodox Christians to select their burial place and to advise family members of their preferences relative to dress, flowers, memorial, headstone, a list of people that they want family to notify and any instructions that they wish to give to their families.

**TRISAGION AND MEMORIALS:** It is ritual custom in the Orthodox Church for the Trisagion Service and Memorial prayers to be offered for the repose of the souls of deceased relatives immediately after death, prior to the funeral service and at the graveyard committal service. Memorials are also conducted on the third day after death, the ninth day, the fortieth day, six-month anniversary, first year anniversary and the third year anniversary. It is also ritual custom to provide the priest with the names of the deceased members of our families for commemoration at the Saturdays of Souls. The people may also provide the priest with

names of the deceased for commemoration in prayer at the liturgy. These prayers to our Lord petition Him to grant forgiveness for the offences of the deceased and to grant their souls “repose/rest in a place of refreshment where there is no pain sorrow and suffering.”

**LITURGICAL COMMEMORATIONS OF THE LIVING AND THE DECEASED:** Lists of the names of the living or deceased members of our families that we wish the priest to specially remember and commemorate in the liturgy should be submitted to the priest prior to the liturgy.

**SATURDAYS OF SOULS:** Our Church has set aside four days annually for worship services dedicated to the remembrance and commemoration of all departed Orthodox Christians. Three consecutive Saturdays prior to the start of Great Lent and the Saturday before Pentecost are Saturdays of the Souls.

**KOLIVA/MEMORIAL SERVICE BOILED WHEAT:** It is Orthodox Church ritual custom to offer Koliva –boiled wheat whenever memorial services are conducted. The basic ingredients of Koliva are wheat that symbolizes everlasting life, raisins that symbolize the sweetness of Heaven and powdered sugar that symbolizes the purity of the Christian life. In the center of the Koliva tray is a cross that reminds us of the love of God.

**MEMORIAL LUNCHEON/MAKARIA:** After the committal service/burial at the cemetery, a memorial luncheon/Makaria for the family, relatives and friends is held in memory of the deceased. Normally the menu consists of fish in remembrance of our Lord eating fish after His resurrection from the dead. Usually, Brandy and Paximathia-dry biscuits accompany the meal.

**CREMATION OF THE DEAD:** The Orthodox Church forbids the cremation of the dead because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and will be rejoined with the soul at the Last Judgment. Although cremation has become more popular in our society, Orthodox Christians are reminded to respect our theology and sacred tradition.

**ARTOCLASIA-BLESSING OF THE LOAVES**

**SERVICE:** One of the oldest services conducted in the Orthodox Church is the Artoclasia, the blessing of the five loaves, the wine and the oil. This sacred ritual commemorates the miracle of our Lord's multiplication of the five loaves and two fish with which he fed over 5,000 men, plus women and children. (John 6:1-15, Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17) Orthodox Christians normally invite the priest to conduct this sacred service on their feast day celebrations to offer thanksgiving for God's blessings and to offer prayers for their health, salvation and well-being.

**PARAKLISIS-SUPPLICATION SERVICE:**

This sacred ritual may be conducted by the priest at the request of Orthodox Christians at any time either publicly or privately for the intercessions of the Holy Mother of God for the health and blessing of members of their family. This sacred service is usually conducted during the fifteen-day fasting period in preparation for the feast day of the Dormition/Repose/Assumption of the Virgin Mary on August 15.

**THE COMPLINE SERVICES AND PRAISES**

**(HERETISMOI):** The Compline Service together with the Praises is conducted during the five Fridays of Great Lent. This ritual is dedicated to the incarnation, life, mission, ministry death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

**HOLY WATER BLESSING SERVICE:**

In the Orthodox Church there are two major Holy Water Blessing Services. There is the Great

Agiasmos Water Blessing Service that is conducted on the Feast day of the Epiphany/Theophany, January 6, and is usually observed on the nearest Sunday. This feast day is also called the Festival of Lights because it commemorates the manifestation/appearance of the Holy Trinity at the baptism of Jesus. Rubrics require that Christians fast in preparation for the communing the Holy Water of Epiphany. This sacred water is sprinkled on the Orthodox Christians and is reserved in little bottles that are distributed by the priest and kept in the home or business icon and prayer corner. The Minor Holy Water Blessing Service may be conducted any time and it is usually conducted for blessing of the foundation of new homes and businesses and also on numerous other occasions and special events when we seek the blessing of our Lord through the dipping of the Holy Cross in the Holy Water and by sprinkling the homes, businesses or other objects.

**PREPERATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION:**

Our Lord said: "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the body of the Son of Man (Jesus) and drink His blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who eats my body and drinks my blood (Holy Communion) has eternal life." (John 6:53-54). Holy Communion is the bread and wine consecrated and transformed into the Body and Blood of our Lord and offered to the faithful for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. To receive Holy Communion, the faithful people are required to prepare by asking forgiveness from any relatives, friends or co-workers that they may have injured either by careless words, un-Christian actions or in any improper or unethical way. People must seek the Sacrament of Penance and Confession before the priest prior to taking Holy Communion for any serious crimes and offenses. People must fast from meat and dairy products in accordance with their physical ability in preparation for Holy Communion. Fasting from foods and iniquities in preparation for Holy Communion may vary according to each person's commitment and

ability, but compulsory on the morning prior to coming for communion. Only baptized, confirmed and practicing Orthodox Christians are qualified to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Church rubrics do not permit Orthodox Christians to married outside of the Orthodox Church to receive Holy Communion.

**CHURCH ENROLLMENT, MEMBERSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP SUPPORT:**

All Orthodox Christians must be enrolled in the parish and fulfill their annual obligation to support and maintain the Church and its sacred ministries through membership/dues offerings, the annual summer stewardship drive, candle donations and tray collection, special offerings, memorial donations, gifts for sacred objects, special drives, projects and generous love-offerings. No one should support the church minimally, miserly or grudgingly but generously and joyfully and in accordance to their financial ability. (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

**SUNDAY MORNING POST-LITURGICAL RECEPTIONS:**

The Ladies Philoptochos Society sponsors the weekly post-liturgical receptions in the Father Christides Memorial Auditorium. People who wish to host a weekly reception are invited to contact the Ladies Philoptochos Society. If you plan to host a reception please be mindful to abide by the fasting calendar of the Orthodox Church.

**RENTAL OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER FATHER CHRISTIDES MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM:**

Due to insurance and liability requirements our community center auditorium is available for rental to our members ONLY. Please contact Parish Council President Nick Konides (cell) 609-425-0179 for more information and rental arrangements.

**PEW LITURGY BOOKS:**

The faithful people are invited to please use the bi-lingual pew liturgy books to follow and

participate in the liturgy. The books were originally donated by Archon, Mrs. Gust C. Kraras. Most recently the Soteris Ladies Philoptochos Society donated new books. The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated during most of the year. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil is conducted Sundays of Great Lent and on the feast day of St. Basil.

**SUNDAY BULLETIN:** The weekly St. Demetrios Sunday Bulletin, prepared by the secretary and by our priest is available at the narthex/vestibule. This weekly publication contains the commemoration of the day, scripture lessons, announcements and Greek and English scriptural meditations.

**SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE:** From October through May, worship services are on the winter schedule. The Orthos begins at 9:00 A.M. The Divine Liturgy at 10:00 A.M. Holy Communion is offered at 11:00 A.M. and the Homily thereafter. If there are memorial services, Artoclasia or other services, they are conducted prior to the homily. From June through September, worship services are conducted on the summer schedule. The Orthos begins at 8:30 A.M. the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 A.M. Holy Communion at 10:30 A.M. followed by the homily. Weekday services on major holy days when services are conducted follow the same schedule.

**KOINONIA NEWSLETTER:**

The monthly Koinonia Newsletter is prepared by our Church staff and contains a pastoral message, parish news, events and announcements. It is available electronically or by mail.

**NEWS AND INFORMATION:**

Information about our parish, our address and service schedule are provided for publication to all the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce publications and local newspaper church listings from Ocean City to Cape May.

**OFFICE HOURS AND PHONES:** The church office phone is 609-522-0152. The Pastor's Study Phone is 609-729-7041. The Secretary will be in the office from 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is a door bell with camera at both the church and hall doors to announce your arrival (if doors are secured). The Priest and President may be easily reached for emergent or other matters by phone. Fr. Michael's cell phone is 667-328-1083 and Parish Council President Nick Konides' cell phone is 609-425-0179. All of these phones are able to take messages if no one is available to answer the phone.

**ST. DEMETRIOS PARISH COUNCIL:**

The Parish Council and the priest are responsible for the governance, administration and management of the parish according to canon law and the supervision and direction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Metropolis of New Jersey. The Parish Council reports annually to the Parish Assembly and prepares and presents the annual budget.

**ALTAR SERVERS:**

Young boys aged 8 through 18 are eligible to serve in the holy altar of the St. Demetrios Church. Interested young men are invited to contact Father Michael and volunteer to serve and come to church on time wearing a white shirt and tie, polished shoes, bathed and neatly dressed.

**LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY:**

For any information regarding the Ladies Philoptochos, the current president of Ladies Philoptochos Society is Constantina Bilios.

**DEMETRIOS PARENT TEACHERS**

**ORGANIZATION, PTO:**

The president of the St. Demetrios Parent Teachers Organization is Toula Tsiamis, contact 973-870-2257. The PTO supports, operates and maintains our parish Greek School.

**GREEK SCHOOL:**

Mr. George Ploumanearas is directing the St. Demetrios Greek School under the supervision of the PTO.

**SUNDAY CATECHETICAL SCHOOL:**

Under the direction of Father Michael. Classes on the Bible and instruction on our Orthodox faith are offered for our parish children every Sunday from October through May. Classes are held after the children attend the liturgy and receive Holy Communion.