Considerations for Reverence and Sanctity in Liturgical Worship

The Lord God bless you!

A kind reminder about helping preserve the sanctity of our church temple and liturgical worship.

Please understand that this reminder is not a legalistic, exclusivist set of rules. There is no intention to reprimand, target, or judge anyone. ***If there is anything here that upsets you, makes you feel unwelcome, or that you have a question about, I urge you, do not hesitate—contact me directly.***

Our worship in the Lord's temple is distinctly and purposely focused on, and attentive to, the holiness of our offering of prayer, both individually and together as one parish community. Nothing of our actions or presence at church services are aimed at drawing attention to ourselves nor desiring to exercise exclusivity. Nothing is arbitrary.

We are all loved, considered, wanted as parishioners, and welcomed. Each and every one of us have a special place at church—regardless of the specific way we serve one another. Singing in the choir, serving the altar, cleaning the church, attending services frequently, praying for one another, offering, kind words and support during difficult times in life, helping to wrangle children, being an example of love or joy or kindness or respect— these actions (and many more), both in the church temple or amidst our fellowship, are visible realities and experiences of this focus on and attentiveness to that holiness of our offerings.

Especially since we see a lot of new families joining our parish, please, keep in mind these indispensable practices and observances of our church attendance and conduct during divine services and fellowship:

Modesty, reverent dress for church all services
For men and male children: please avoid wearing tight fitting or revealing clothing, sweat pants/workout clothing, shorts, sleeveless shirts, and hats.

Modest, respectful attire includes pants and shirts (either button up, polo, or short sleeves) [plain is optimal—please use discretion with graphics or writing on shirts] Suits, ties, etc. are not mandatory.

For women and female children:
Please avoid wearing tight fitting or revealing clothing, shorts, or sleeveless shirts. In the Orthodox tradition, women (and even female children) wear head coverings. Veiling is certainly encouraged, but not mandatory. *No one should ever discourage veiling. To do so is an offense against modesty and sanctity.* Many misconceptions have sadly been circulated about veiling. It is not an "old, ethnocentric practice of Greeks and Russians". It is not reserved only for nuns and married (or widowed) women. It's not an oppressive, patriarchal mandate to suppress women's rights. In our church—globally and through time and ages—veiling is observed according to church order (note, bishops, priest and all monastics wear head coverings) and as an expression of recognizing sanctity. What's Holy is veiled.

Modest, respectful attire includes skirts with a blouse (either button up, polo, or short sleeves [plain is optimal—please use discretion with graphics or writing on shirts and skirt length]) and or dresses.

No food or drink in the church
Please avoid bringing and/or consuming food and drink in our church—especially with a mind to the uniqueness and holiness of the reception of Holy Communion. This includes water bottles or even sippy cups or food/drink for children. The Orthodox tradition is that we fast from eating and drinking anything from midnight before the reception of the Eucharist at Divine Liturgy.

Unfortunately, food and drink remnants (e.g., wrappers, cookie crumbs, water bottles, sucker sticks, soda cans, etc.) have been left in the church after services. This has led to pests (flies, gnats, ants).

We are most sympathetic to the needs of our young members and all our visitors. We ask that those needs be addressed and better enjoyed in the Parish Hall, not in the church temple.

We understand that this may be an inconvenience for some families or persons. We ask for your forgiveness and prayers. But we also ask for your support, commitment, and patience in these matters—this helps us maintain the sanctity of our church worship together.

After service concludes, some Holy Water cups are being left behind in the window sills and on the benches, sometimes partially full. As a reminder, please respectfully deposit these cups in the container under the Holy water.

All animals are prohibited from entering the church
This includes service animals as well. We also ask that you refrain from bringing animals into the parish hall. If there is any question regarding this practice, please reach out to Fr. Alexis.

Fr. Alexis Baldwin, Rector