

Common Questions by First-Time Visitors or Inquirers

Q: What does “Greek Orthodox” mean?

The term Greek Orthodox may refer either to the Orthodox Church as a whole or to the churches of the Eastern Roman Empire or “Byzantine” areas. Greek Orthodox also refers to the style of liturgical rite used in the Church.

In the western world, Greek Orthodox mainly refers to Orthodox Christians of Greek descent. However, non-Orthodox people sometimes apply the term to all Orthodox Christians without regard to ethnicity, much as the term Roman Catholic is used to refer to all those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church, despite not being of Italian ancestry.

Q: What language are your services in?

Our Divine Liturgy is done in English and Greek, with most of the prayers done in English, while the hymns which are chanted by the choir or the cantors are usually in Greek. Vespers and Matins (Orthros) are chanted in both Greek and English. The sermon is given in Greek and English.

Q: Do I have to be Greek or Orthodox to attend services?

You do not have to be Greek or Orthodox to attend services. Everyone is welcome to attend and inquire about our theology and liturgical practices. In fact, we have visitors in our church almost every Sunday.

Please note that you need to be baptized Orthodox, in good standing, to receive of the Sacraments. Being Greek does not automatically make you Orthodox, or vice versa.

Our priest is available if you have any questions regarding your attendance at our church. Please feel free to contact him via text, or email a couple of days before you visit and he’ll answer any questions you have.

Q: What is a good service to attend if I’ve never been to an Orthodox service before?

Vespers service on Saturday afternoon (please check schedule beforehand) is probably the easiest to follow along, and the simplest. It is recommended that you speak to the priest beforehand.

Q: How will I fit in your congregation if I’m not Greek?

You will fit in just fine. We have many people who are not Greek, whether they are converts or married to a Greek Orthodox person. Remember, Orthodoxy is universal. You do not need to be Greek to be a member of the Church. Also remember that there are many Orthodox churches that offer different things in terms of language and liturgical styles. The priest will help you explore all those things.

Before thinking about fitting in, it is suggested that you simply learn about Orthodoxy and also get to know the congregation at St. Demetrios. Orthodoxy is not something you can jump into with both feet. It takes time and patience.

Q: I’m an Orthodox Christian but visiting for the first time. What should I do?

It is important that you contact the priest and let him know you are visiting, especially if you wish to receive Holy Communion.

Orthodox services can be overwhelming or confusing for people who are being exposed to them for the first time. Please feel free to speak with our priest after the service regarding your experience, as well as any questions you may have. On Sundays, coffee hour is the best time to talk with our clergy and members of our congregation.