Our Faith

The Orthodox Church is one of the three main Christian groups (the others being Roman Catholic and Protestant). Around 200 million people follow the Orthodox tradition. It is made up of a number of self-governing churches (Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, etc.) that are united in faith, doctrine and worship. The Orthodox Church shares with other Christian churches the belief that God revealed himself in Jesus Christ, and in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The Holy Spirit is seen as ever present in and ceaselessly working throughout the whole body of the Church.

The Orthodox Church presents a way of life and belief that is expressed particularly through worship. By maintaining the correct form of worshipping God, passed on from the very beginnings of Christianity, Orthodox Christians believe that they confess the true doctrine of God in the right (lit. orthodox) way. The Bible of the Orthodox Church is the same as that of most Western denominations, except that its Old Testament is based not on the Hebrew, but on an ancient Jewish translation into Greek called the Septuagint, the version more frequently quoted in the New Testament. The wisdom of the Church is central to the Orthodox way of life. By maintaining the purity of the inherited teachings of the Apostles, believers are made more aware of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit being present in the beginning, today and always. While there are many prayer services and sacraments, the center of worship and faith is the Eucharist as celebrated in the service of the Divine Liturgy to fulfill the command of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

The doctrines of the Orthodox Church were established at ecumenical councils through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, primarily during the first eight centuries. Although initially Eastern and Western Christians shared the same faith, the two traditions began to divide after the seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 AD and formally split over the conflict with Rome in the so-called Great Schism in 1054. In particular, this happened over the papal claim to supreme authority over all Christians and over the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer and fasting are an important part of the Orthodox Christian daily life. For many Orthodox Christians a beloved form of prayer is the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” The following seven principal Mysteries or sacraments are at the heart of the Orthodox Church: Baptism, Chrismation, Communion (Eucharist), Marriage, Confession (Penance), Anointing (especially of the sick) and Ordination. While much more could be said, the Nicene Creed, recited without alteration, presents a concise summary of the faith. For more information go to: https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith.

Welcome!

St. Olympia Orthodox Church in Potsdam, NY, is young worshipping community under the Orthodox Church of America, Diocese of New York/New Jersey. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am and are preceded by Matins. Great Vespers are on Saturday at 5 pm.

We are a multi-ethnic parish and thus far have had “cradle Orthodox” from Albanian, Eritrean, Greek, Ukrainian, Romanian, Middle Eastern and Russian roots as well as worshipers who have chosen to become Orthodox. Our musical tradition is as varied as our parishioners.

We may be the only parish in the U.S. (or anywhere, for that matter) to have St. Olympia the Deaconess as our patron saint. Her life has been a true inspiration to us. You can find out more about this remarkable woman and about our church at http://stainlesspiaorthodoxchurch.org/ We are also on Facebook.

While some events are held on the college campuses, until we can purchase our own church building, most services are held in a restrictions. So... we invite you to ask us where we are located. Just e-mail Fr. Peter at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com or phone (716) 342-8520.

St. Olympia Chapel, Palm Sunday 2018
A Brief History of our Parish in Photos

Left: Fr. Peter Irlan, our first resident priest, offers the Eucharist to a young child.
Right: Fr. Luke Majoros blesses a college student as a catechumen.

Left: Sing a joyful noise unto the Lord!
Right: Mother Sophronia, an Iconographer, presents the parish with an icon of the Burning Bush and reveals its meaning.
Below: celebrating the 5th anniversary of the parish with our youngest members (Feb. 2017).

Right: Dr. David Ford gives a presentation on the life of St. Olympia just after Archbishop Michael (seated right) names her the patron saint of the parish.

Below: Family and friends celebrate the Feast of Feasts, the Resurrection of Our Lord, with the Vespers of Love and a parish dinner (Pascha/Easter 2018).

Above: Fr. Peter blesses a child on his eighth day.