



SAINTS PANTELEIMON, ANNA & PARASKEVI GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΠΑΝΤΕΛΗΜΟΝΟΣ, ΑΝΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ

Ελληνορθόδοξο Κοινότητα Μάρκχαμ και Περιχώρων | Μάρκχαμ ΟΝ | Καναδά

Greek Orthodox Community – York Region | Markham ON | Canada



UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE & THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA

FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL INFORMATION

Beloved in the Lord,

“... Do not grieve like those who have no hope, because if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, so must we believe that God will bring with Jesus all those who have died believing in Him.” - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Our hope in the Resurrection is the pinnacle of our faith, as St. Paul tells us, if Christ is not raised from the dead; our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). As Orthodox Christians we are a spiritual family. In the same way that a family rejoices and prays together at a baptism or wedding, we come together to grieve, support, and pray together at the most difficult time, the loss of a loved one. The time leading up to death, the loss of a loved one, and taking the steps forward into a new world without our beloved one physically present are all difficult times. *Christ and His Church are here to support you.* The following information may seem overwhelming, but is offered as a resource, in order help prepare and guide you through these difficult times. *Rest assured, we are always here to help.*

Spiritual Preparation

When preparing for the passing of a loved one it is important to be in contact with your Parish Priest. While our loved ones are still with us, it is important that we do everything possible to make them comfortable, supported and loved, and spiritually prepared. In the Orthodox Christian Church we do not practice *'last rites'* but rather always, and at any time, pray for the health and salvation of our beloved. It is important to ask the Priest to come and visit at home or in the hospital as soon as we learn of a negative prognosis, so that our loved ones can participate in prayer, Holy Confession, and receive Holy Communion, and have the spiritual support needed.

Note: Orthodox Christians must be conscious to receive Holy Communion, if they are unconscious, a prayer can always be said. If someone is nearing the end, but struggling to let go, it is advised that the Priest come and read a prayer for the peaceful separation of soul and body. When our beloved pass, if possible, a trisagion (memorial) prayer should be read after their passing.

Practical Preparation

It is important to have a support structure and action plan in place, so as to not have added pressure while mourning. Having a family member as designated representative, preplanning with the funeral home, and notifying the Parish Priest of an imminent death are always helpful. Preplanning can help avoid situations of pressure or duress in trying to mourn the passing of a loved one, but also planning a dignified funeral.

- *Preplanning:* Preplanning is encouraged, as the loss of a loved one is difficult. Doing everything possible to give yourself the time to properly mourn is valuable. Please contact your funeral home of choice to plan.
- *Organ Donation:* This is viewed as an act of love in the Orthodox Church. It's best to speak with your Parish Priest when planning on organ donation.

When funerals are not permitted:

- Funeral Services are not prayed for Non-Orthodox Christians. We can always say a prayer for the departed, but Funeral services are reserved for Baptized Orthodox Christians who are in *good standing* with the Church.
- The Orthodox Christian Church does not practice *cremation*. If a loved one wishes to be cremated, only a trisagion (memorial) is prayed, before the cremation, with the body of the deceased present, and not in the Church, but in the Funeral Home Chapel. If finances are an issue, there is support and guidance available from the Parish Priest, our Community, and Funeral Home.
- If someone has *left the Orthodox Church* for any reason, a funeral service will not be prayed. Examples of reasons constituting leaving the Church are: Not being married in the church, joining another religion, or publicly rejecting the faith and teachings of the Orthodox Christian Church.



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- As no one is permitted to take the life of another, likewise no one is permitted to take his/her own life; that is, *suicide* is viewed by the Church as self-murder, and consequently as grave sin. Only when a doctor certifies that such a person as mentally ill and had lost his/her sanity can a Church funeral be held. In cases of mental illness, and with the permission of our Archdiocese, the church always shows compassion for the deceased and the family by praying a full funeral.

Viewing & Trisagio (memorial prayer)

Viewings typically take place the evening before the funeral at the funeral home. If you would like the Priest to come and say a prayer during the viewing the funeral director can arrange for it. Typically, the trisagio prayers are prayed at 7 PM and last 10 - 15 minutes including a small sermon.

Funeral Service

Funeral Services take place at the Church, typically at 10 AM. The family meets at the Church and waits in the Narthex (*Church foyer*). Five minutes before the funeral, the funeral directors assemble the pallbearers and family. The pallbearers bring the casket in from the hearse, meeting the Priest at the doors of the Church, and process into the Church, followed by the family. The Family sits in the front right pews during the service, and the pallbearers on the left (*or with their family members*). The Funeral Service is prayed and the Priest/Bishop give the Sermon at the end of the Service. Those in attendance pass by the casket paying their respects. The family is the last to pass the casket. Everyone returns to their seat after the recessional. Once everyone has returned to their seats, the Priest covers the deceased with the burial shroud and anoints them with oil and wine. The casket is sealed and not opened again. The Priest then leads the casket out of the Church, followed by the family, and gives the final blessing at the doors of the Church. The family immediately processes to the cemetery for the interment. At the cemetery the Priest leads the casket, carried by the pallbearers, to the grave. A trisagion (*memorial*) is prayed and the casket is lowered into the ground. Beginning with the family, all those in attendance place dirt or sand and/or kolyva (*wheat*) into the grave. After the interment those in attendance traditionally attend a memorial luncheon.

- *Flowers*: Flowers are best sent to the funeral home or cemetery (graveside). Any flowers sent to the Church in memory of the deceased will be placed outside of the Church (*as is customary in Greece*). The only flowers permitted in the Church are a casket spray (on top of the casket) and a maximum of two arrangements from immediate family (children & grandchildren), on either side of the casket. All other arrangements will be placed outside the doors of the Church. This requirement is in line with that of baptisms or weddings, where only two arrangements are allowed. The Church is the house of God, and it is not permissible that the altar and icons be hidden or impeded by anything.
- *Picture*: An 8 X 10 picture placed on an easel to the right of the casket. This picture must be a bust only (*chest and head shot*) of the deceased. The photo must not be containing any other imagery. This same photo can be used at memorials.
- *Kolyva (wheat)*: Traditionally a bowl of undecorated wheat is placed on a table in front of the picture of the deceased. This is typically raw, but sometimes boiled. This wheat is thrown into the grave symbolizing the hope in the resurrection and new life.
- *Inside the casket*: It is custom in the Orthodox Church to not bury our beloved ones with Crucifixes or icons. Pictures, letters, or other items may be placed in the casket, keeping in mind the sanctity of the Church, and that we are created in the image of God and filled with His grace.
- *Eulogy*: As a directive of our Archdiocese, only the Orthodox Christian Clergy can speak in the Church, with the blessing of the Parish Priest. The Priest or Bishop gives a sermon at the end of the Trisagio and/or Funeral. The sermon will not incorporate a biography or write up by the family but will be based on the Gospel and tradition of the Orthodox Church. That being said, it is nice to give a copy of any eulogy to the Priest so that he can better speak about the deceased in relation to the sermon. The appropriate place for any other eulogies or speeches is at the Makaria (*memorial luncheon*).
- *Other Clergy*: Only Canonical Orthodox Christian Clergyman can participate in the services of our Church, always with the blessing of the Parish Priest and the Archbishop if the Clergyman is of another Orthodox Christian Jurisdiction.
- *Church Fees*: Our Community charges a small fee for the maintenance, operation, and upkeep of our Church with regards to Funerals. Please contact the Office to discuss Sacrament Fees. Honorariums for the Clergy and Church staff are at the discretion of the family. Church Fees and Honorariums may be given by the family or taken care of by the Funeral Home at the direction of the family.



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- *Memorial Donations:* Donations cards for charities may be placed in the Narthex along with a book of condolences. If you would like donations in memory of your loved one made to the Community, the legal name is “*St. Panteleimon Church*”. Tax receipts will be sent to the donor, and you will receive a letter with all the names and addresses of those who have donated in memory of the deceased.

Makaria (*Mercy Meal or Memorials Luncheon*).

It is customary, but not required, to offer a fish luncheon after the Funeral Service in memory of the deceased.

- Our Philoptochos (*Friends of the Poor*) Ladies have taken on the responsibility of preparing memorial luncheons as a fundraiser for their cause. Additionally, our Community offers Catering Services with a preferred caterer that gives a portion of the profits to our community. Please contact the office for more info on the makaria – 905.887.7311
- Typically, receptions take place in the Community Hall for convenience and to support our Community.
- Memorials Luncheons always take place after the internment, upon returning from the cemetery.

Memorials

It is tradition in the Orthodox Christian Church to pray memorials on the 3rd day, 9th day, 40th day, 3 months, 6 months, one year, and three years after the passing of Orthodox Christians. Typically the 3rd and 9th day memorials are usually encompassed by the funeral services in themselves, as in North America funerals take place days after the passing, and not immediately as in Orthodox Countries. With regards to the 40 days, 3 month, 6 month, 1 year & 3 year memorials, these typically take place on the Sunday nearest to the date. This may change do to other Church events and celebrations, or feasts of the Church, where memorials are not allowed, or clash with the celebration at hand.

- To arrange a memorial please call the office.
- Please leave your name, the name of the deceased, indicate which memorial it is in terms of time, the preferred Sunday, and arrange for the coffee after Church. The office will coordinate with the Parish Priest and Philoptochos, and will call you back to confirm the arrangements.
- On the Sunday of the memorial, the family may bring flowers and the picture used at the Funeral to the Church before 9am. It is important that the family arrives for the beginning of Liturgy; please check the Church Service Schedule for times. Families with memorials typically sit in the front pews. The memorial takes place at the end of Liturgy. It is recommended that the families of the deceased prepare for Church through fasting and prayer, and if possible Holy Confession, so that they may receive Holy Communion during the Liturgy where the memorial will be prayed. After Church, it is customary for coffee to be offered in the Church hall, along with the Kolyva (boiled wheat), cognac, and paximadia (biscotti), in memory of the deceased. Additionally, our office can assist you in organizing a memorial luncheon.

Memory Eternal

The Church always prays Memory Eternal at every trisagio, funeral, and memorial service. It is important to remember that although our loved ones have passed, they are alive in Christ, and for us to honour their memory; *we* must be alive in Christ. It is important to remember our loved ones in our prayers, to pray for them at any opportunity we can, in Church by bringing their name to be commemorated during liturgy, at the Saturday of the Souls before Great Lent and Pentecost, or by arranging a memorial with the Parish priest at any time. The best way we can honour the memory of our loved ones is *by living a Christ-like life*, by being alive in Christ through our faith, prayers, thoughts, words, and actions. The Church is here to love and support us, and to help us move forward into this new reality without the physical presence of our beloved.

We hope and pray that God gives you strength as you face this difficult challenge, the loss of a loved one. Difficulties, spiritually, emotionally, and logistically are unavoidable when facing death, don't forget, you are not alone.

***Christ is Risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death,
and to those in the tombs, He has given life!***