

## **Receiving Holy Communion**

The Eucharist is the heart of the Christian life, the means by which each child of God is nourished with God's grace and mercy. The central moment of the Divine Liturgy every Sunday is the reception of Holy Communion; after all the prayers and preparations have been concluded, the priest turns to the congregation and says, "With reverence for God, faith and love draw near." This is a universal statement. All are called to receive the Divine Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ each time it is offered. For this reason, at St. George Church we encourage Orthodox Christians to receive Holy Communion regularly, rather than only a few times a year.

## **Preparation to Receive Holy Communion**

Preparation for Holy Communion should be seen as a way of life; we are constantly preparing ourselves to meet with Christ. Preparation is not a matter of trying to become "worthy" of God's grace (which is impossible), but rather of opening ourselves more fully to the mystery of God's presence in the sacraments.

Those Orthodox Christians who wish to receive Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy are encouraged to abstain from food and drink throughout the morning, so that our first nourishment that day is the Body and Blood of Christ. Young children, the sick, and those who must take medication with food or water are generally exempted from fasting. Preparation to receive Holy Communion is not limited to Sunday mornings, however. It is also a matter of living a Christian life throughout the week. The "three pillars" of the Christian life which help us to prepare for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday are [fasting](#), [prayer](#), and [almsgiving](#).

## **Holy Communion and Non-Orthodox Christians**

Non-Orthodox Christians are not permitted to receive Holy Communion in our Church. We do invite our non-Orthodox guests, however, to come forward at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in order to receive a piece of blessed bread (antidoron), which is our expression of love and hospitality for our visitors.