

## Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

4752 State Route 23

Windham, New York 12496

### Preparation for Holy Matrimony

**Meeting With Priest:** Two months prior to arranging a wedding at the Assumption Church one must meet or speak with the priest to make arrangements and necessary paperwork which is required to perform a sacrament in the Orthodox Church. Each situation is unique. The Archdiocese needs time to process your license to marry.

**Membership:** In order to receive a sacrament in the Greek Orthodox Church, one must be a member of their parish. Membership at the Assumption is \$150 per year for a family; \$100.00 per year for a single person. If one is a member of another parish and wishes to receive the sacrament at the Assumption a membership fee of \$100 is requested. One must bring a letter of membership of good standing two months prior to the marriage.

**Koumbaros or Koumbara:** The Sponsor must provide a **letter of membership of good standing** in their parish; and must provide a valid **Orthodox Baptismal Certificate**. If they are not a member elsewhere they must pay a membership fee of \$100 and become a member of our church. To be of good standing also means that if the Koumbara is married they must have been married in the Orthodox Church, and provide a **marriage license from the Archdiocese**. If they have been divorced, they must have obtained an **Ecclesiastical Divorce**, and provide that documentation. There shall be no impediment on their background. They are considered free and clear. Non-Orthodox persons may be members of the wedding party, but may not exchange the rings or crowns, and therefore may not be the Koumbaros.

**Setting the Date:** When scheduling your wedding, please be aware that no marriages are permitted during the following fast periods:

1. New Year's Day, January 1
2. The Great Lent
3. Easter Sunday
4. Pentecost Sunday
5. The Fast of the Dormition, Aug. 1-15
6. The Beheading of St. John the Baptist, Aug. 29
7. The Elevation of the Cross, Sept. 14

8. The last two weeks of Advent, Dec. 13-25
9. Christmas Day, Dec. 25
10. Weddings are **not permitted** on Wednesdays and Fridays, which are considered fasting days. If you would like to have your wedding on a Wednesday or Friday you must submit a letter to the Archdiocese and they will consider each request individually.

**Archdiocese Registry:** In order to obtain a license to marry in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the couple must both provide a copy of their **baptismal certificates**. Only one member needs be Greek Orthodox. The other spouse may be any one of the **seven accepted Christian faiths** who baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity. **Chrismation** may be requested prior to baptism if the couple wishes. If the other spouse was never baptized, **Baptism** may be necessary. A Christian may not marry a non-Christian. If either party was **married prior, or to each other** in a civil service or to another person a copy of their marriage certificate; divorce certificate; or death certificate must also be provided. **As well as filling out the long request to marry form, they must also complete the supplementary form. If one of the couple is from another jurisdiction/state/country a freedom to marry certificate must also be obtained from the priest of their home parish.**

**State Marriage License:** A **marriage license from the state** must be obtained for the solemnization of the marriage by the Church. The license may be obtained 60 days before the intended wedding. The license may not be used until 24 hours after its issuance and is valid for 60 days. A male under 21 years of age and a girl under 18 years of age require the consent of parents to obtain a marriage license. The license may be obtained in any town or city in the State of New York and may be used anywhere in the state. The **license must be brought to the church on the night** of the **rehearsal**, which is usually set for the night before the wedding. If the couple is from out of state they must obtain a New York State marriage license. You may call the Windham Town Hall if you have any questions on a marriage license at (518) 734-3431.

**Rehearsal:** The rehearsal for the wedding is usually performed the night before or the weekend before the wedding. The entire wedding party must be present for the rehearsal, as well as both parents (and grandparents if they are able to make it.) It is also advised that the couple bring all of the items necessary for the wedding so that they may be set up prior to the wedding. The Bride's family traditionally sits to the left; the Groom's family sits to the right.

**Items necessary for the Marriage:** There are a number of items which are necessary to perform a marriage which are your responsibility to purchase and bring to the church at the rehearsal. These include the **rings, crowns, silver tray** (this has to be large enough to fit the Holy Gospel on it), **1 lb of Jordan Almonds** (to represent your children and your children's children), **two decorative candles** to be held by the bride and groom. Optional items include two large decorative candles for the front of the church and a runner for the center aisle, and other decorations that you may wish to bring. If the

florist is bringing flowers we will be at the church three hours prior to the wedding so it will be open, but our church is unlocked, so it is always open.

**Gratuities:** It is traditional that the gratuities are gifted from the Koumbaros. Tips should be presented in a manner dignified for church services in envelopes. There is a suggested gratuity for the **Priest, Chanter,** and a **\$50 clean church** fee for the Sexton.

**Photography:** We encourage photography to capture your special day. Please have your photographer speak to the priest before the ceremony. They may stand at a respectable distance from the wedding party. We only ask they do not stand on the altar stairs (Ambo), or interfere with the wedding.

**Holy Communion:** The Sunday before the wedding it is recommended that the couple attend Divine Liturgy and that they (who are members of our faith) receive Holy Communion (after preparation by fasting and Holy Confession).

**Pamphlets:** It has become a custom to distribute pamphlets to explain the marriage ceremony to your guests. This can be especially important if one of the betrothed is not Orthodox to explain the symbolism and beauty of the event. Please ask Father if you are interested and he can show you examples from past weddings.

**Hall:** If you wish to use our church hall and have it catered by one of the local catering restaurants, the hall may be used for the day. The use fee is \$350 for members; \$700 for non-members. We have 18 round tables which each sit eight.