



## **MEMORIAL SERVICE GUIDELINES**

*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. JOHN 12:24*

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To arrange a memorial service for a loved one, please consult our church administrator using the guidelines below. For more information on the traditions for commemorating the dead, refer to page 3.

### **CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR**

Telephone: +44 (0) 203 887 0692, +44 (0) 207 229 7260

Email: [info@stsophia.org.uk](mailto:info@stsophia.org.uk)

#### **1. NAMES**

Please provide the names of the Orthodox Christians for whom the memorial service is intended.

#### **2. KOLLYVA**

Indicate if you will provide *kollyva* or if you need assistance obtaining it. On the day of the memorial, give your *kollyva* to the verger, who will arrange your offering on a table with candles.

*Optional:* Bring a framed photograph of the deceased or flowers.

#### **3. DONATION**

Given our ample supply of the usual memorial offerings—*prosphoron* (liturgical bread), *nama* (Eucharistic wine), and olive oil for the church's lanterns—we instead suggest a £20 donation to help with the procurement of other necessities for the Holy Altar, such as incense, candles, liturgical vessels, and vestments.

#### **4. DATE**

Discuss possible dates with the administrator, considering the following:

- Memorial services are usually offered after a person's death on:
  - The 40th day
  - The 3rd, 6th, and 9th months
  - The 1-year anniversary and subsequent annual anniversaries
- These are not strict obligations, but a traditional timeline for families to follow. It is common practice to select a day with a regularly scheduled Divine Liturgy that is nearest to the precise commemoration date.
- Memorial services are conducted just before the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, in the presence of the congregation.
- Our Cathedral celebrates the Divine Liturgy every Sunday, and on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, as well as certain Saints' days that fall during the week. You may choose any of these Liturgies for your memorial service, provided there is no conflict with the restrictions noted below. Additionally, you may sponsor a Divine Liturgy and memorial service for a loved one on a day without a scheduled Divine Liturgy, for an honorarium of £250.
- Memorial services are not permitted on the days listed below (inclusive dates). For a detailed breakdown of these restrictions, please refer to the next page.
  - From 18th December to 7th January
  - From the Saturday of Lazarus to the Sunday of Thomas (the week before and the week after Pascha, which is on a different date each year)
  - On any Feast Days of our Lord or the Mother of God

## PROHIBITED DATES FOR MEMORIAL SERVICES

*Memorial services are not permitted on the days of the liturgical calendar included in the list below. This comprehensive list also serves as a helpful overview of the festal cycle. For your convenience, the dates of movable feasts for the years 2025, 2026, and 2027 are provided.*

- **From 18th December – 7th January**
  - Note that this period includes the following feasts:*
    - 25th December—Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
    - 26th December—Synaxis of the All-Holy Mother of God
    - 1st January—Circumcision of Our Lord
    - 6th January—Holy Theophany of Our Lord (Epiphany)
    - 7th January—Synaxis of John the Baptist
- **2nd February**—Presentation of our Lord in the Temple
- **25th March**—Annunciation of the Mother of God, Greek Independence Day
- **Movable Period: From Saturday of Lazarus – Sunday of Thomas**
  - 2025: 12th April – 27th April [Easter Sunday on 20th April]
  - 2026: 4th April – 19th April [Easter Sunday on 12th April]
  - 2027: 24th April – 9th May [Easter Sunday on 2nd May]
  - Note that this period includes the following feasts:*
    - Palm Sunday
    - Holy and Great Friday, The Passion of our Lord
    - THE RESURRECTION OF OUR SAVIOUR (Pascha/Easter)
    - Bright/Renewal Friday, Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring
- **Movable Thursday: The Ascension of our Lord, Feast Day of our Cathedral**

*Ascension is 40 days after Pascha, always on a Thursday*

  - 2025: 29th May
  - 2026: 21st May
  - 2027: 10th June
- **Movable Sunday and Monday: Pentecost & Monday of the Holy Spirit**

*Pentecost is 50 days after Pascha, always on a Sunday*

  - 2025: 8th & 9th June
  - 2026: 31st May & 1st June
  - 2027: 20th & 21st June
- **2nd July**—Deposition of the Mantle of the Mother of God at Blachernae
- **6th August**—The Transfiguration of Christ the Saviour
- **15th August**—Dormition of the All-Holy Mother of God
- **31st August**—Deposition of the Cincture of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- **8th September**—Nativity of the All-Holy Mother of God
- **14th September**—Elevation of the Holy Cross
- **28th October**—Holy Protection of the Mother of God, Ohi Day  
*Outside of the Greek tradition this is celebrated on 1st October*
- **21st November**—Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple

## COMMEMORATING THE DEAD

Just as we continuously pray for the well-being and salvation of the living, we do not cease to pray for those who have died. Christ proclaimed, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25), affirming that death is merely a temporary separation. Our prayers for the dead express reverence and love, sustaining the memory of our loved ones within our community, and reaffirming our faith in the resurrection of the body and soul for eternal life. During every Divine Liturgy, as the priest prepares the Holy Gifts, he commemorates both the living and the departed, uniting the entirety of the Church within the chalice. Although we can freely pray for everyone, commemorating people by name in a liturgical context is specifically for baptised Orthodox Christians.

### SATURDAY OF SOULS

On our liturgical calendar, Saturday is deemed the most appropriate day for commemorating the dead, since it is the day when Jesus descended into Hades before His Resurrection. In Orthodox countries where weekly Saturday liturgies are celebrated, a memorial service is customarily read each week. Two specific Saturdays of the year are specially dedicated to the general commemoration of all the departed faithful, known as “Saturday of Souls”. The first occurs two Saturdays before the beginning of Great Lent (the day before Judgement/Meatfare Sunday), and the second is the Saturday before Pentecost. Other special days for commemorating the dead are observed according to regional and local customs, but these two Saturdays are universally recognised for general commemoration.

### THE TRISAGION SERVICE

There is also a brief prayer service specifically for commemorating the deceased, referred to as the *Trisagion*, which means ‘thrice-holy’—in reference to the prayer it begins with. This service is read by a priest while standing before the *iconostasis* or when visiting a grave. Usually, it is read in the presence of family members and friends, rather than the full congregation. It is traditionally recited at the time of passing, and subsequently on the third and ninth days following death. Please speak directly to a priest to enquire about having a *Trisagion* read for a loved one.

You may read the full text of the *Trisagion* service here:

<https://www.goarch.org/-/the-trisagion-service>

### THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service (*mnimosyno*) is a more elaborate prayer service for commemoration of the dead and involves an offering of plain boiled wheatberries, known as *kollyva*. This dish is usually sweetened with sugar, raisins, and garnished with various other ingredients. Wheat is a symbol of resurrection according to Christ’s words in the Gospel (John 12:24). This service is always read during the Divine Liturgy, just before the final dismissal.

You may read the full text of the memorial service here:

<https://www.goarch.org/-/the-memorial-service>

You may find an example recipe for *kollyva* here:

<https://www.kalofagas.ca/2021/03/26/koliva-greek-memorial-wheatberries/>

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*I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen.*

THE NICENE CREED