



*We welcome you in the name of Christ
to Saint Nilus Skete and the land of Saint Herman of Alaska.
We hope you will find spiritual rest here from the cares of the world.*

*Because life on our island is unique,
we offer this practical advice for your pilgrimage.*

Update for 2021:

We are asking all visitors and pilgrims to have a Covid test between 24 and 72 hours before coming to our skete.

When to come:

We welcome women pilgrims from May until mid-September. We are unable to receive guests between late September and April due to the stormy seas which prevent safe travel. Our guesthouse is a one-room log cabin with three beds, heated by a wood stove. We have no indoor plumbing. We are not able to accommodate men overnight in our skete, but they are welcome for day visits.

What to bring:

Pack warm clothing. Kodiak's weather is variable; while it might be warm and sunny during your stay, it may also be windy, cool and rainy. Open skiffs (boats) are our primary mode of transportation, so come prepared to be "out in the elements." You must be agile enough to climb in and out of the skiff.

- You will want a hat, a warm jacket, leggings and perhaps a pair of gloves. We recommend bringing clothes for layering.
- Bring a sturdy rain jacket (not just a poncho). You may also want rain pants.
- Umbrellas are not recommended because the strong winds usually make them unwieldy.

- Standard-height rubber boots (not ankle height) are a must for boarding the skiff from the beach to prevent your socks filling with cold seawater. Such boots are also useful on hikes (trails on Spruce Island can be boggy), so be sure your pair is comfortable for walking. A popular brand that can be purchased in Kodiak or online is “Xtratuf.”
- You may want to bring a comfortable pair of shoes for outdoor work.
- “Outdoor” shoes are not worn in our house or chapel in order to avoid tracking dirt inside. You may want to bring a pair of slippers, slip-on shoes, or heavy socks for wearing indoors.
- We also suggest bringing a headlamp or flashlight.
- Despite encouraging you to bring all these items, we urge you to travel as light as possible and not to bring large suitcases that you cannot easily carry. The wheels on most suitcases do not work well on our island’s uneven and often muddy terrain.

We follow the traditional customary “dress code” of Orthodox monasteries, asking that women wear modest, long-sleeved shirts, skirts that fall below the knee, and head coverings. We ask that men wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

Travel Arrangements:

- Before making your travel reservations, please contact us at: P.O. Box 18, Ouzinkie, AK 99644. The space in our guesthouse is very limited this year.
- After receiving your letter with your phone number, we will call you in order to discuss your options for transportation to our island. There is no regular, scheduled boat service.
- As you plan your itinerary, keep in mind that inclement weather can make it necessary for you to stay in Kodiak for a night or two at the beginning or end of your pilgrimage.

In the Monastery:

Building project: This summer, we will – God willing – continue the construction of a large building. We hope you will enjoy being a part of our growth, and that you will forgive us if, in the midst of construction, the silence and solitude of our island – one of the “treasures” we delight in sharing with you – seem in short supply!

Cell Phones: So that you and others can fully benefit from the atmosphere of the monastery, we ask all guests to limit cell phone use. Cell phone coverage on the island is spotty. Please be aware that we are “off the grid” and have limited electricity; always check with one of the sisters before charging or plugging in electronic devices. In order to keep silence as much as possible on the island, calls can be made only in designated areas and not after Compline unless it is blessed by the abbess. Phones are not allowed in the church; please leave them in the basket outside the church.

Photographs: Please enjoy taking photos of the island and wildlife; we request, however, that you ask the blessing of the abbess before taking pictures of the monastics or other guests.

Special Diets: If you have any dietary restrictions or allergies to pets or foods, please let us know prior to your visit. Our remote and rustic conditions might prevent us from accommodating your health needs.

Confession: If you would like to have confession with our priest, please ask the abbess to arrange a time for this.

Schedule:

Pilgrims join the sisters for all services in the chapel, as well as for common meals. Food for breakfast is provided in the guesthouse.

Weekdays:

The nuns pray alone in their cells in the morning, so there are no morning weekday services in the church, except when we have the Divine Liturgy.

2:00 p.m. Lunch
6:00 p.m. Ninth Hour, Vespers, and Compline
7:30 p.m. Dinner

Sunday:

9:00 a.m. Matins and Divine Liturgy
12:00 a.m. Lunch
6:00 p.m. Ninth Hour, Vespers, and Compline
7:30 p.m. Dinner

May God bless you! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

— The sisterhood of St. Nilus Skete