

# WEEK 22: THE CHURCH BUILDING / ARCHITECTURE

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

## GOALS

What are the three main parts of an Orthodox Church?  
(Horizontally: narthex, nave, & altar)  
(Vertically: the Heavens, the Church Triumphant, and the Church Militant)

## LESSON

*Visual aides provided with this lesson for the parts of an Orthodox church*

### HORIZONTAL PARTS OF THE CHURCH:

(Show diagram) When we walk into an Orthodox church, we can see in front of us three different areas of the church. The first part we see is called the **narthex**. This is where we light a candle and venerate the icons.

Then we walk into the main and largest part of the church, which is called the **nave**. This is where most of us stand during the Divine Liturgy.

The third part of the church is called the **altar**. This area is for the altar boys, deacon, priest, and bishop.

### ICONOSTASIS OR ICON SCREEN:

We have a special wall in front of the altar. We call this special wall the iconostasis or icon screen. There are many icons of the saints, the Theotokos, and Christ on there.

There are three sets of doors on our icon screen. The two doors in the very middle are called the Royal Doors. Only Father Vasile and Deacon George can go through those doors (and our bishop when he's here). There are two other doors - one on the left and one on the right - and the altar boys can use those doors in addition to Father Vasile and Deacon George. Let's learn about the icons on our church's icon screen. (Show picture)

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### ORTHODOX CHURCH BUILDINGS:

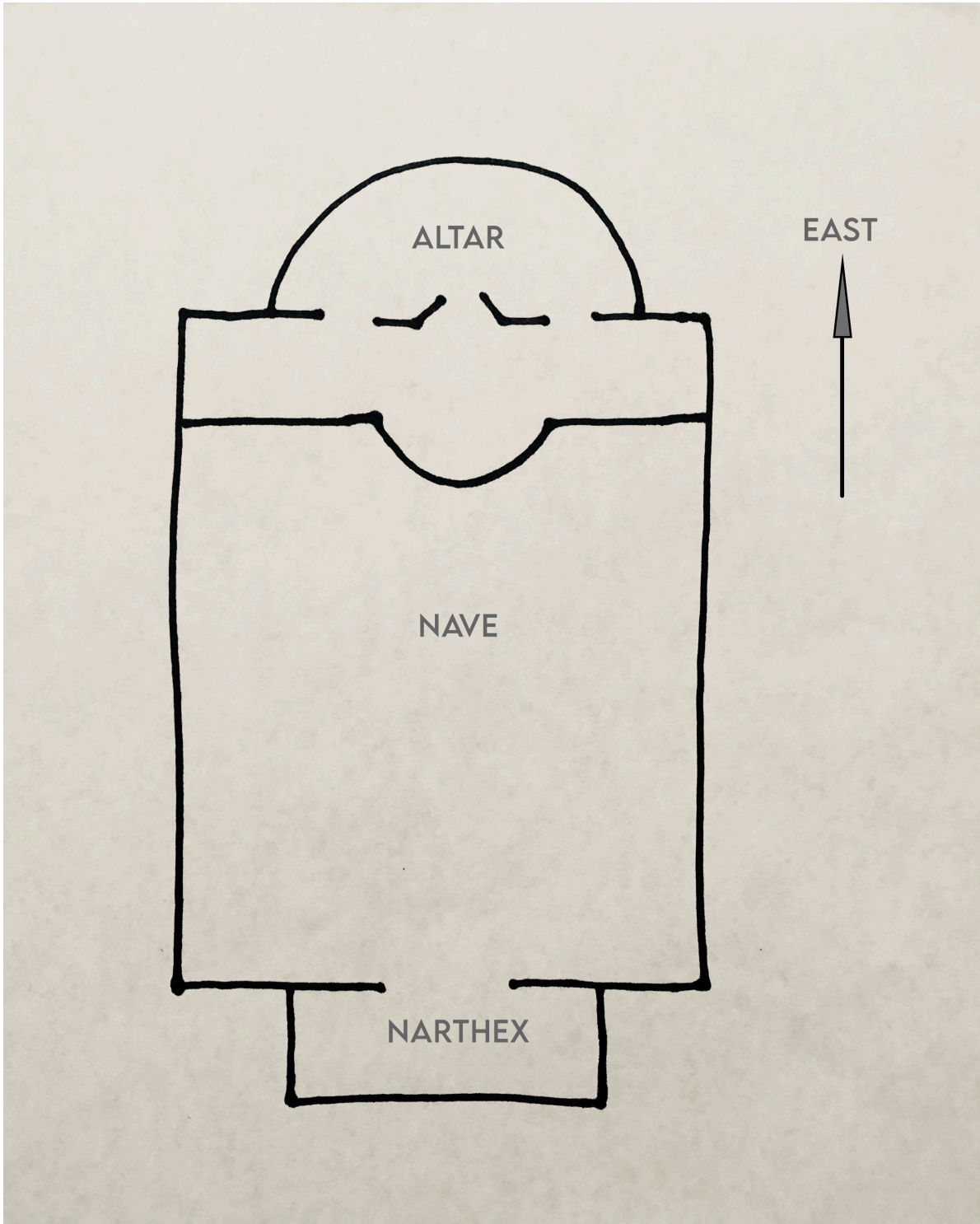
Orthodox church buildings look different from other buildings because they have a special purpose: to hold holy services.

When you look at Orthodox churches all around the world, they don't look exactly the same. Their general structure will be the same but there will be variations based on regional materials and cultural styles.

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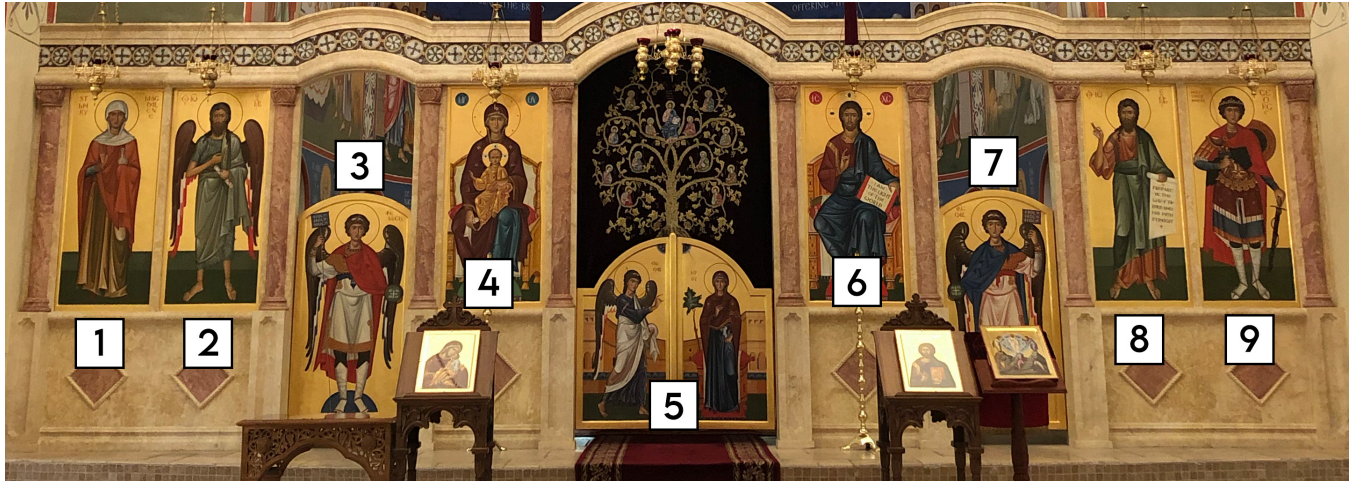
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- What is the first room we walk into when we enter our church? (The narthex)
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HORIZONTAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH

## OUR ICON SCREEN



1. St. Mary Magdalene
2. St. John the Baptist - This spot is reserved for the saint or feast that the church is named after.
3. Archangel Michael on the door
4. The Theotokos and Christ
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6. Jesus Christ
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9. St. George

# WEEK 22: THE CHURCH BUILDING / ARCHITECTURE

1ST - 2ND GRADE

## GOALS

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## LESSON

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Then we walk into the main and largest part of the church, which is called the **nave**. This is where most of us stand during the Divine Liturgy.

The third part of the church is called the **altar**. This area is for the altar boys, deacon, priest, and bishop.

### VERTICAL PARTS OF THE CHURCH:

We learned about the different parts of an Orthodox church as we look forward from the front door. Now we're going to learn about the different parts from the ground level to the ceiling.

When we are standing in the main part of the church, or the nave, we see all the people surrounding us and praying just like us. Each of us is called the **church militant**. Does the word militant sound like the word military? It sure does! Does the military have to fight the bad guys? Yes, it does. All of us are trying our best to fight the good fight - that means

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we are all trying to fight against the evil one. Additionally, we are all made in the image and likeness of Christ. Just like all the icons of the saints on the walls, we are the living icons standing on the ground level! That is why we are called the church militant.

When we look at the walls of the church, we see lots and lots of icons of saints. They are called the **church triumphant**. Triumphant means successful. The saints are successful because they conquered all the evil that battled them!

As we look farther up the walls of the church, we reach the dome of the church. Our dome doesn't have an icon in it yet, but when it does, it will be an icon of Jesus. The dome in our church represents **the heavens** and Christ came down from the heavens to save us.

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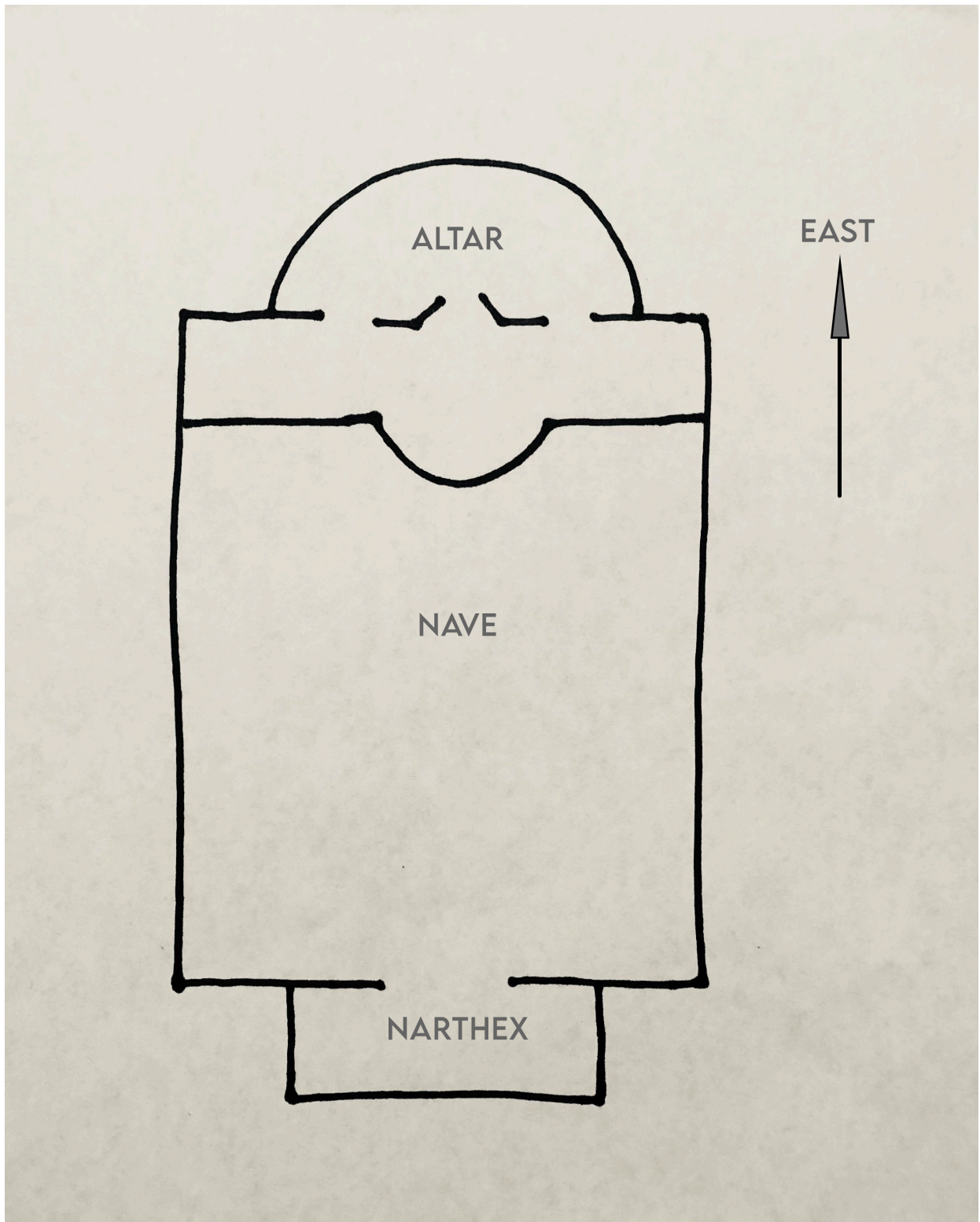
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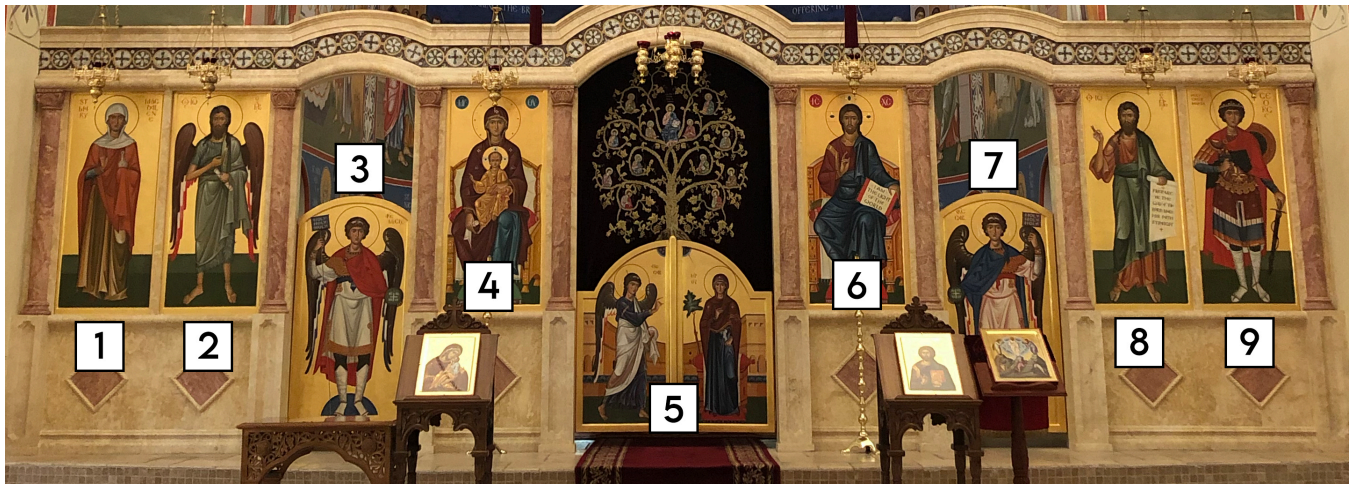
HORIZONTAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH



## VERTICAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH



## OUR ICON SCREEN



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# WEEK 22: THE CHURCH BUILDING / ARCHITECTURE

3RD - 5TH GRADES

## GOALS

What are the three main parts of an Orthodox Church?  
(Horizontally: narthex, nave, & altar)  
(Vertically: the Heavens, the Church Triumphant, and the Church Militant)

## LESSON

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### VERTICAL PARTS OF THE CHURCH:

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We all stand on the ground level of the church during the Divine Liturgy. We are known as the **church militant**. Militant means, "a person who is engaged in combat, especially in support of a cause." We are here fighting the good fight. This means we are fighting

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against the temptations in this world and trying to work to grow closer to God. What are some temptations we have in our lives? (Spending the whole day on video games, spending more time on our electronics than with our family or friends, etc.)

As we look on the walls of an Orthodox church, we see icons of the saints. We call the saints the **church triumphant**. Triumphant means, “having achieved victory or success.” The saints have already fought the good fight here on earth against the evil one and were successful!

Finally, we look up at the ceiling of an Orthodox church. Oftentimes, there is a dome at the very top. Our dome doesn't have an icon in it yet, but when it does, it will be an icon of Christ. The dome symbolizes **the heavens** and Christ came down from the heavens to save us.

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#### ICONOSTASIS OR ICON SCREEN:

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In the early Church they worshipped in homes and did not have an altar or icon screen like we do today. Later, they worshipped in hiding spots such as the catacombs. Then finally, Christians were able to build many, many churches. In the churches, you start to see what we recognize today as far as the structure of the church building. It wasn't until the 1300's though that the icon screen existed as we know it today.

Let's learn about the icons on our church's icon screen. (Show picture)

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#### ORTHODOX CHURCH BUILDINGS:

Orthodox church buildings look different from other buildings because they have a special purpose: to hold holy services. Their shape and form are adapted to the needs of the service.

(Show pictures of different churches) When you look at Orthodox churches all around the world, they don't look exactly the same. Their general structure will be the same but there will be variations based on regional materials and cultural styles.

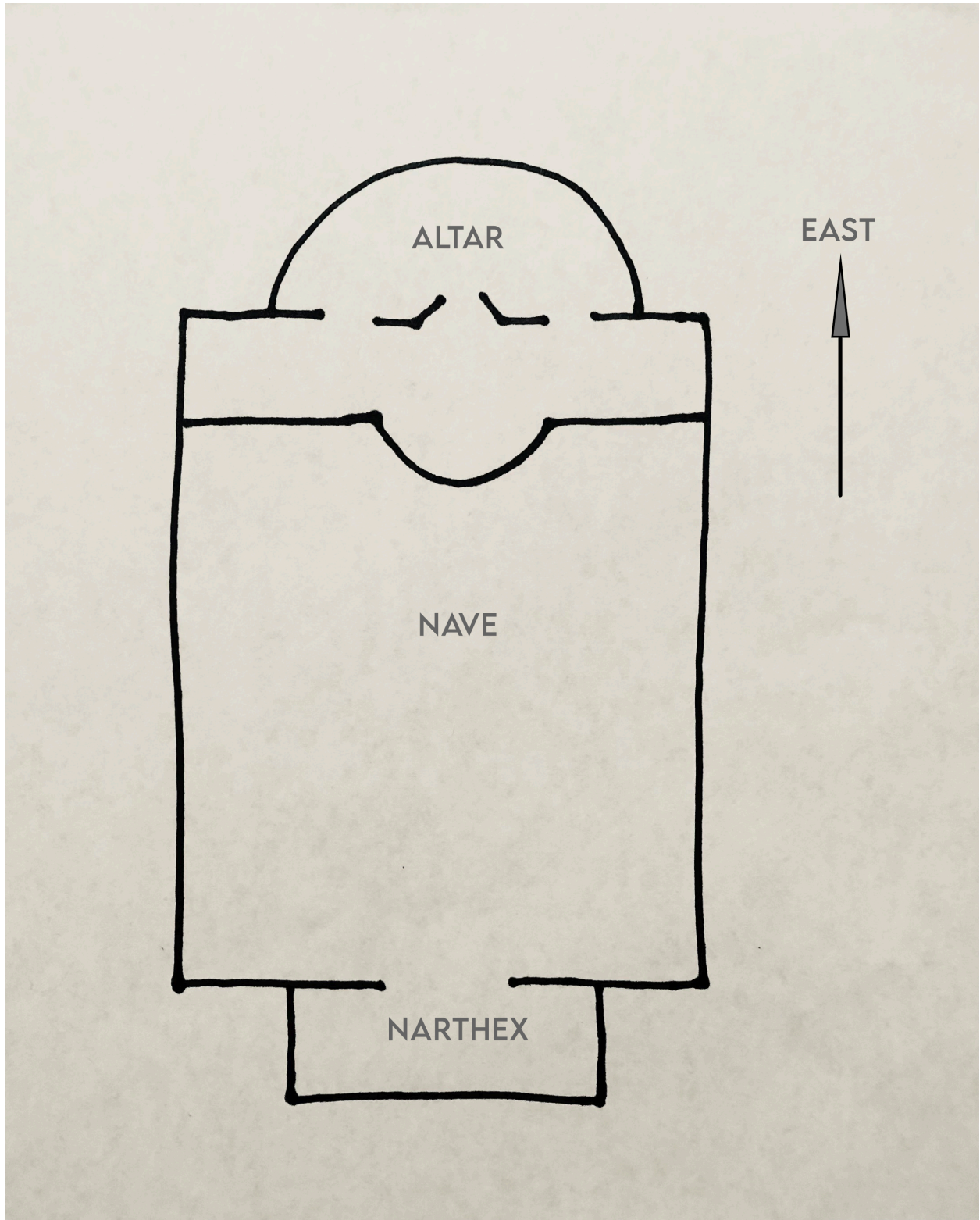
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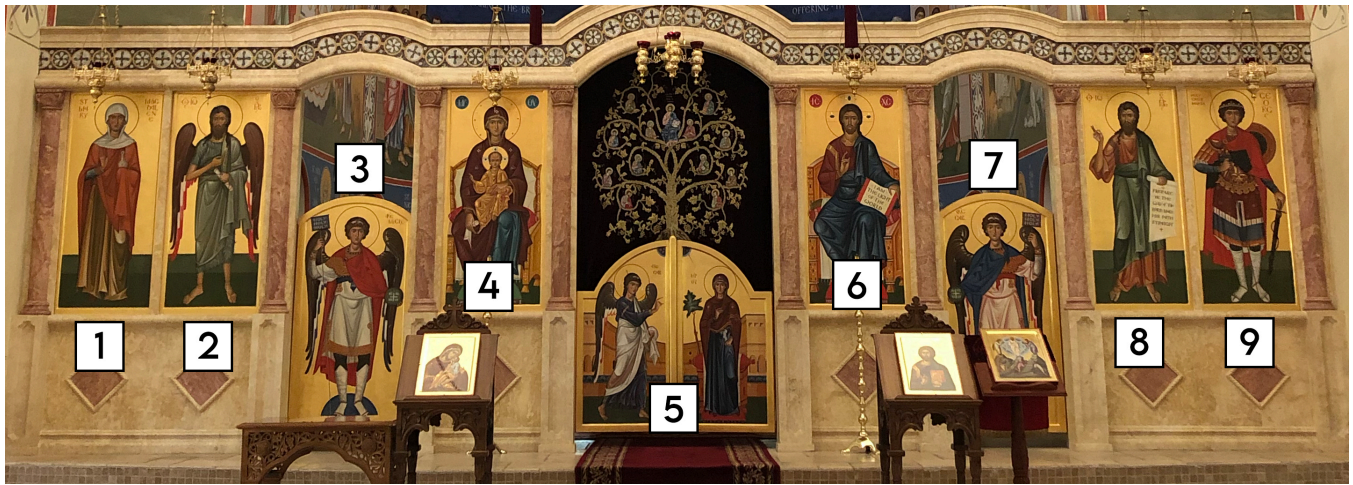


## VERTICAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH

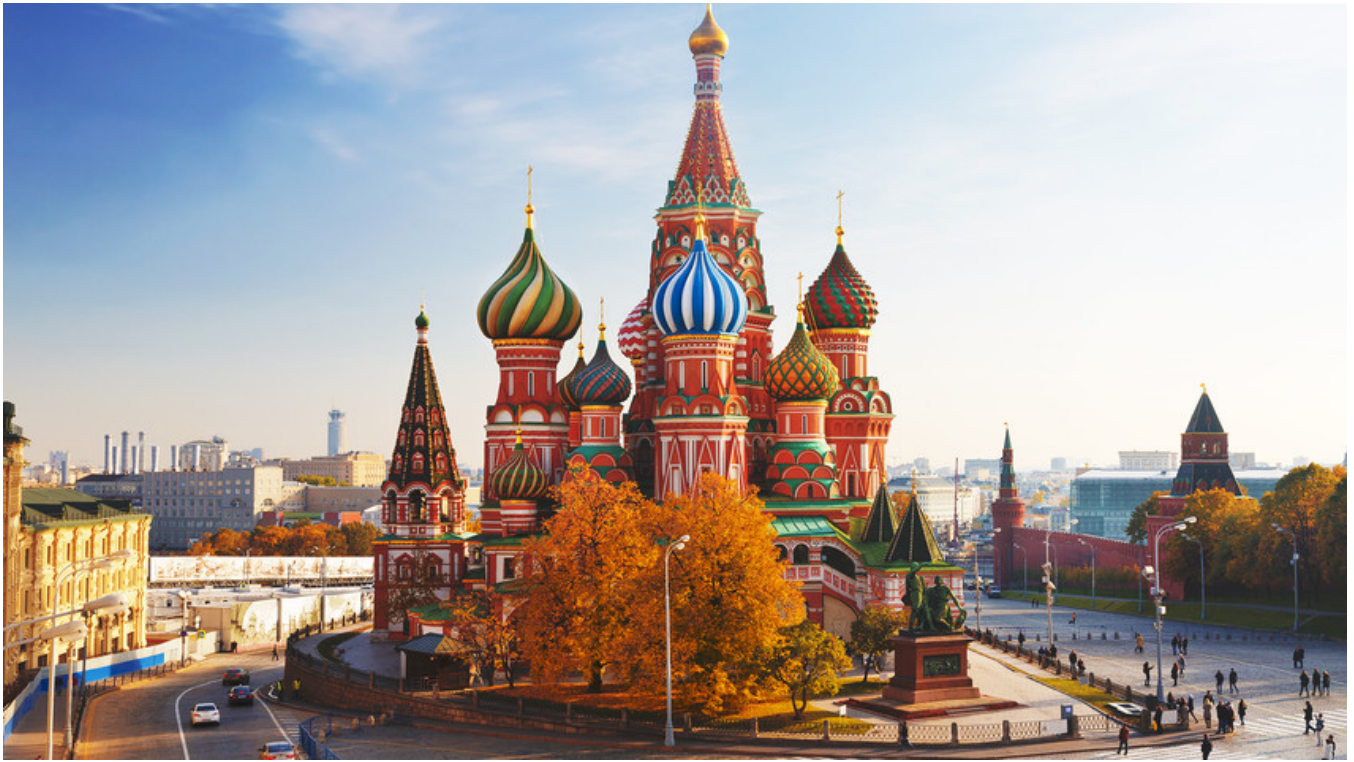


HORIZONTAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH

## OUR ICON SCREEN



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# WEEK 22: THE CHURCH BUILDING / ARCHITECTURE

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### GOALS

What are the three main parts of an Orthodox Church?  
(Horizontally: narthex, nave, & altar)  
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### LESSON

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The third part of the church is called the **altar**. This area is for the altar boys, deacon, priest, and bishop.

There is an effort to always have Orthodox churches facing east. We walk in through the door in the narthex, moving away from the fallen world (the west). We move forward towards the age to come (the east) as we ultimately receive Holy Communion. Then we carry Christ out into the world with us. Sometimes, Orthodox churches do not face east. Most commonly, this is because a community purchased an existing building and are renovating it into a church.

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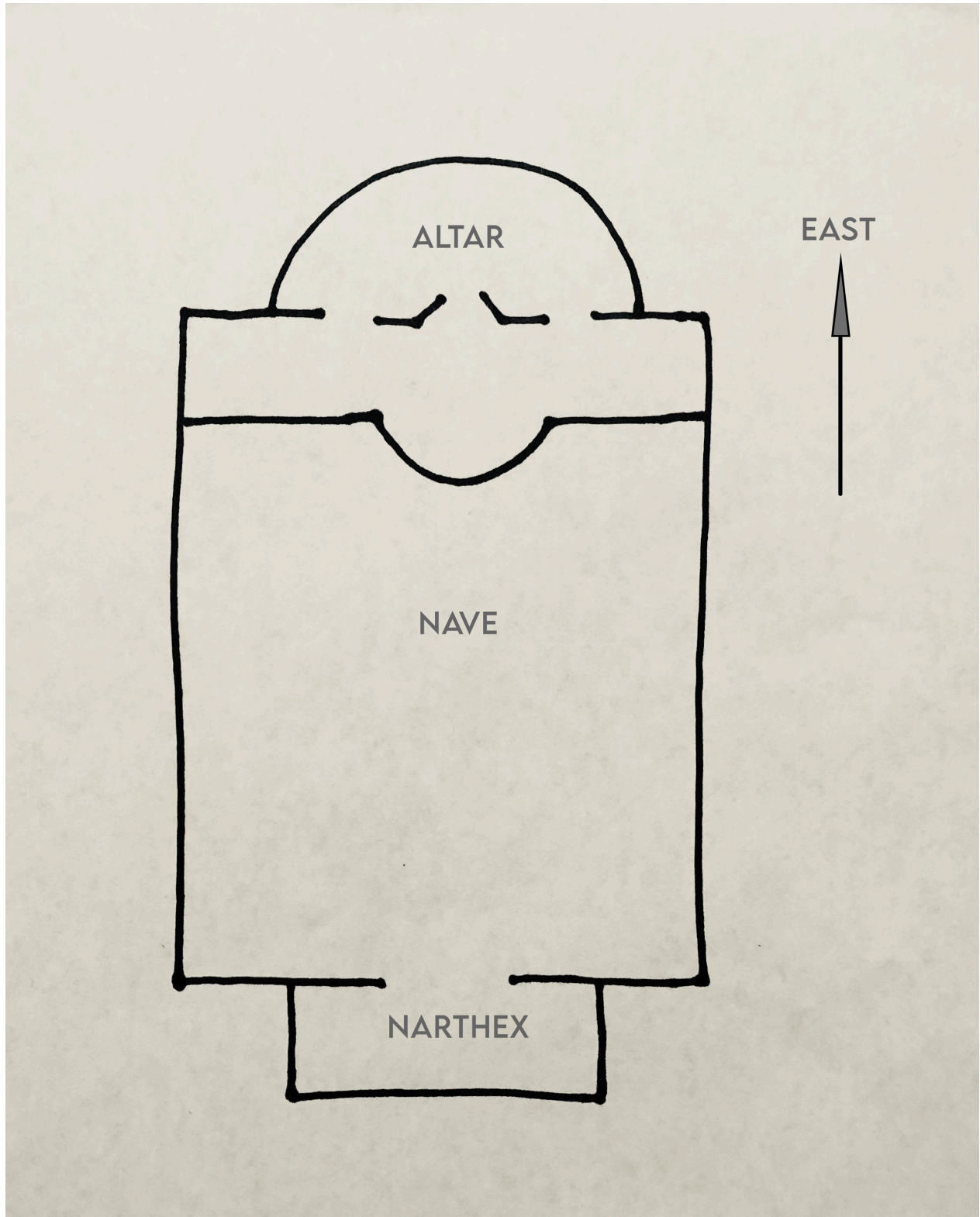
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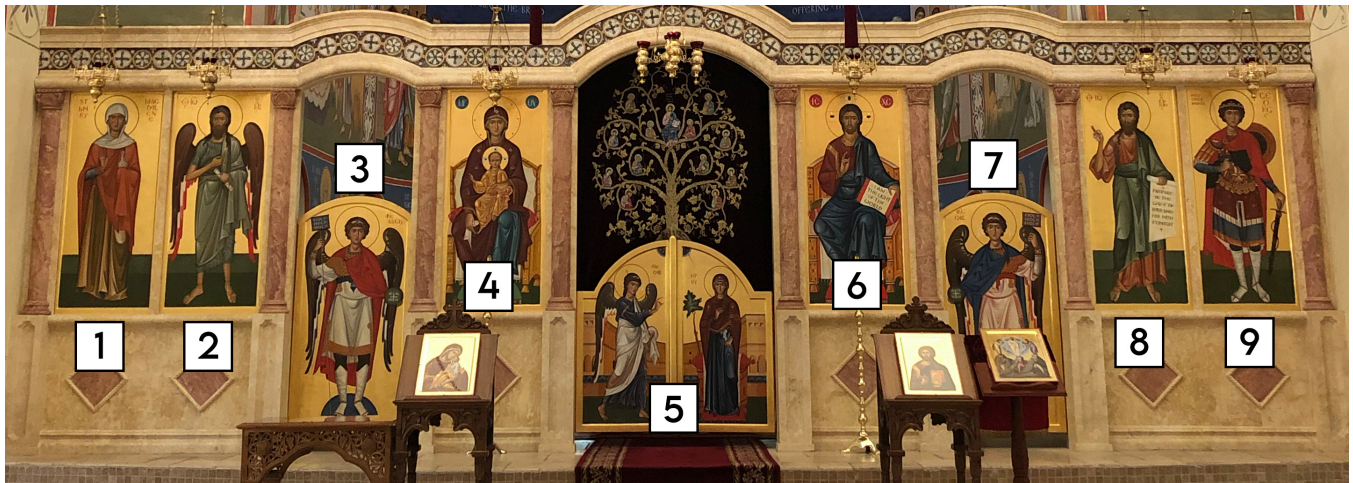


## VERTICAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH



HORIZONTAL PARTS OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## HIGH SCHOOL

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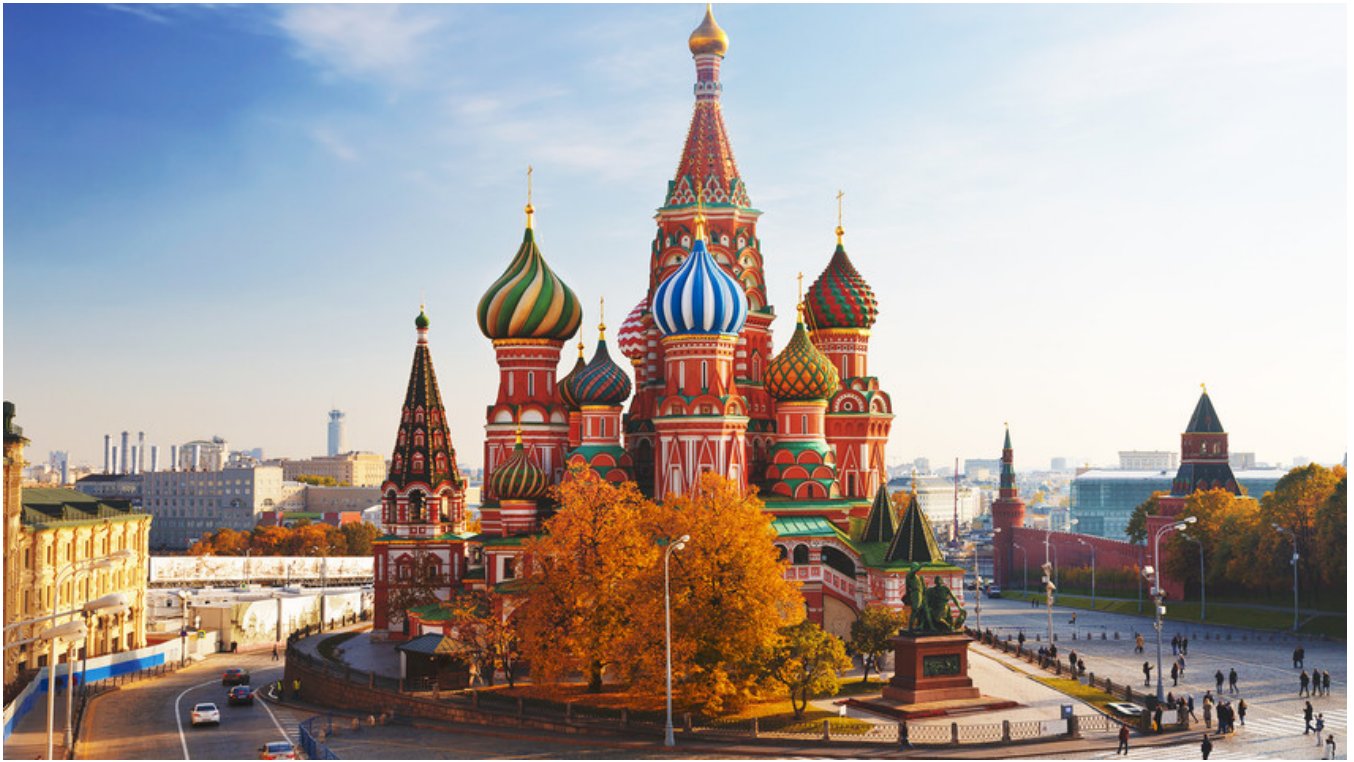
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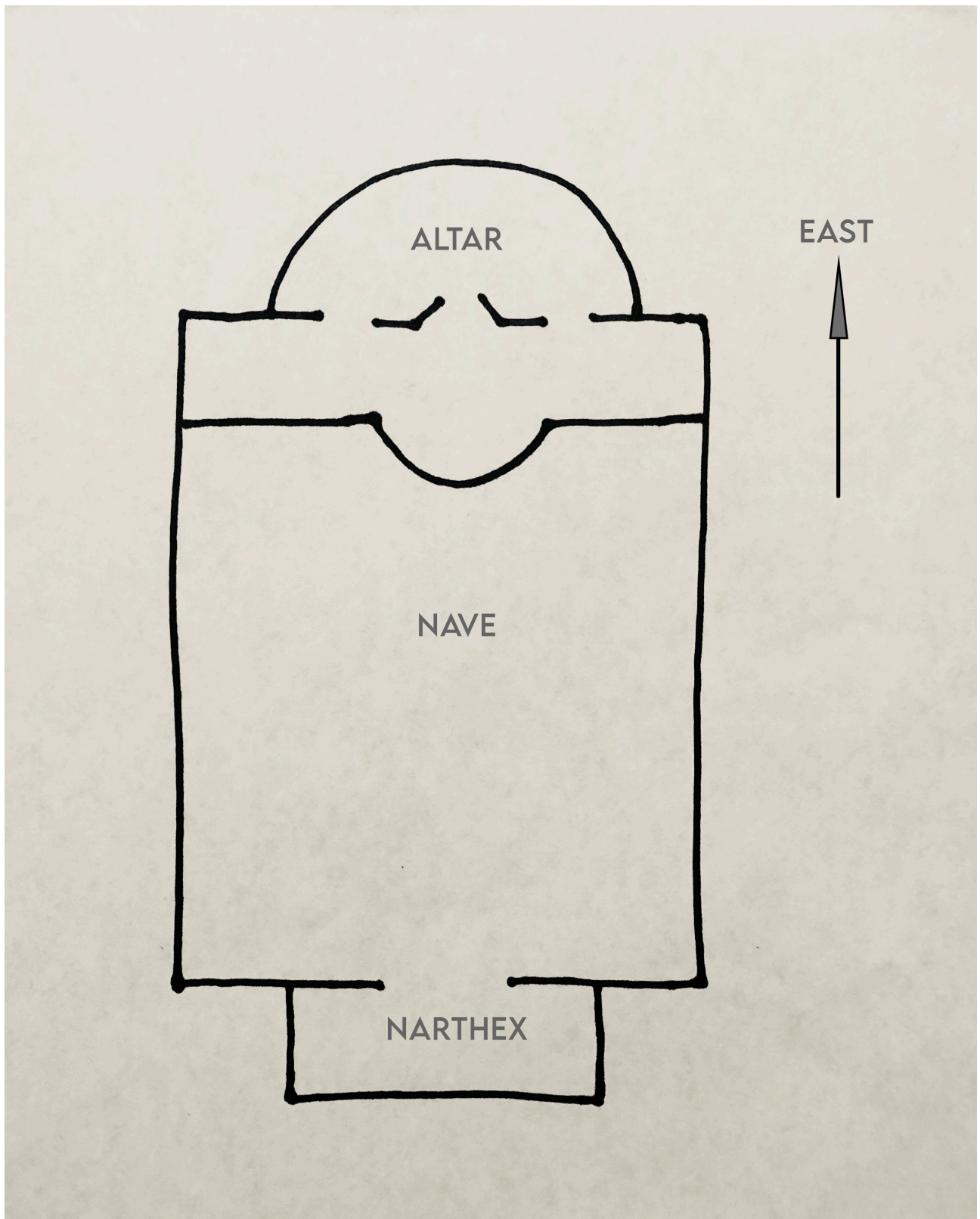
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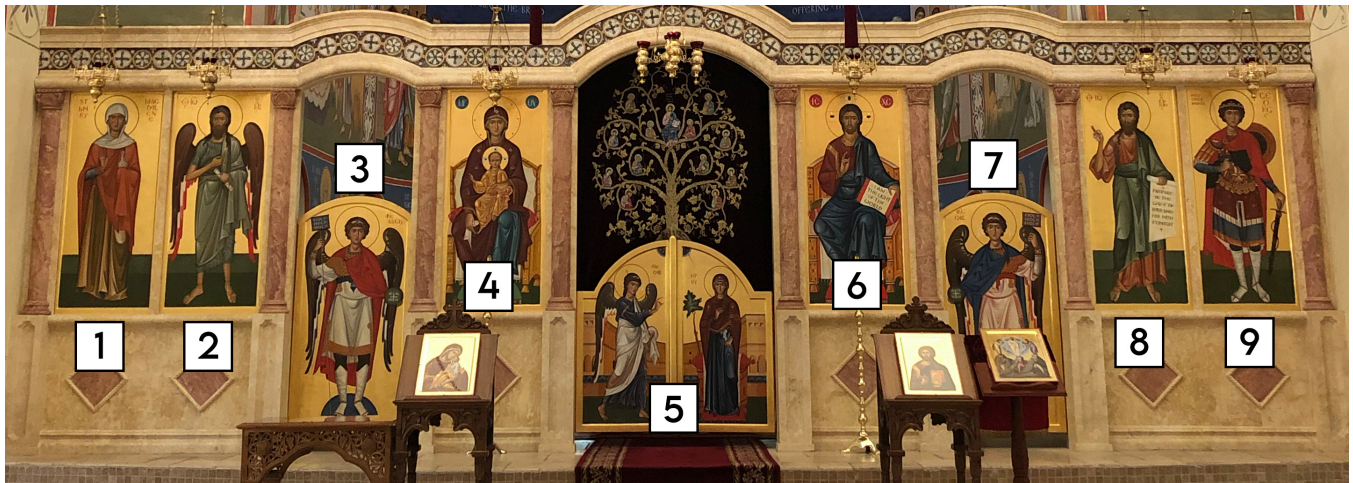


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