



The Nave

(Resource Slides 63)

What is a nave

- The nave is the second and largest part of the church.
- The nave is the main body of the church where the people stand during the services.
- In most traditional Orthodox churches there are no seats or pews as in the West, but rather *stacidia* (A high-armed chair with arm rests high enough to be used for support while standing); these are usually found along the walls.

- In the centre of the nave there may be a stand with the icon of the day on it. To the left or the right of the nave can be found a memorial table where memorial services are sung.
- Behind it stands a tall crucifix. At the front of the nave, and sometimes in the middle, there are icon stands where icons can be venerated.
- Beside them are candle stands, where the faithful can light candles in prayer. At the front of the nave, to left or right, there is another stand for confessions.

- The choir stands in the 'choir', that is, to the left or right of the front of the nave, usually behind small screens with large icons and church banners (gonfalons), or else in a choir-loft or gallery, high up at the back of the church.

- A raised platform, usually two or more steps above the nave, runs across the eastern end of the church. This is called the solea. It generally juts out in the centre in a semicircular area. This is called the ambon. The priest and deacon come out to read the Gospel and the litanies on the ambon.

- Above the nave in the dome of the church is the icon of Christ the Almighty. Directly hanging below the dome (In more traditional churches) is usually a kind of circular chandelier with depictions of the saints and apostles, called the *horos*.
- The walls are normally covered from floor to ceiling with icons or wall paintings of saints, their lives, and stories from the Bible.

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