Your First Divine Liturgy

Before you go.

Dress as if meeting someone important who also loves you. Men: no hats inside.
Women: skirts or trousers both fine. Head coverings vary by parish tradition.

In the narthex.

Light a candle and kiss or bow to the icon by the door if you'd like.
It's optional for visitors. Then go in, find a spot toward the back, and stand.

During the service.

Crossing yourself is optional for visitors. Standing when they stand is enough.

1. **Walk in any time** – even mid-service. Matins is already happening.
2. "Blessed is the Kingdom" – the Liturgy begins.
3. Hymns and litanies – "Lord, have mercy" is the people's part.
4. **Small Entrance** – the Gospel book processes.
5. Epistle, Gospel, homily – sit for readings and sermon, stand for the Gospel.
6. **Great Entrance** – bread and wine carried in; not yet consecrated.
7. The Creed – "I believe..." said or sung by everyone.
8. **Communion** – prepared Orthodox come forward, arms crossed; visitors stay or come for a blessing.
9. Blessing and dismissal – "We have beheld the true Light."
10. Kiss the cross, take the blessed bread, coffee hour.

Communion.

For Orthodox Christians who have prepared. Visitors are welcome at everything else.
Where the parish offers one, come forward with arms at your sides for a blessing.

After.

The blessed bread (antidoron) isn't Communion. Most parishes offer it to visitors too.
Then coffee hour. Go. Someone will ask, "Are you visiting?" and mean it kindly.

Nobody expects you to know any of this.

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