

## The Iconostas

*(Icon Screen)*

In many non-orthodox churches, the raised area in the front is where one finds a pulpit, and often both the pulpit and altar combined. In Orthodox churches, one finds a large screen inset or wall with many Icons — the **иконостас** (*iconostas*), as we call it.

The word stems from Greek, where it means simply *Icon stand*, a large and wide wooden or metal framework, into which rows of icons are set. In a small church, like ours, it is simpler in style; but in a large church the Iconostasis can be very wide and high. In western terms, the Iconostas separates the congregation in the nave from the *Thronos* (altar table), being placed in the sanctuary (behind the Iconostas). Outside Services, the Thronos is hidden from the congregation by the closed *Royal Doors*.

In the very center, we see the Icon of the Last Supper. The number of ranks and types of Icons present on an Iconostas will vary depending on the size and nature of the Icon wall. A very large Iconostas may follow a certain traditional order of rows, holy days and local saints, but many churches, again depending on size and local tradition, may have a far less elaborate Iconostas.