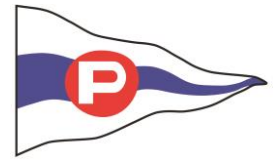


PALATKA YACHT CLUB



BLESSING OF THE FLEET

Ecumenical in nature; The Palatka Yacht Club is sponsoring a Blessing of the Fleet, Palm Sunday, March 24th, 2024 Time: 2:00 pm at the Palatka City Municipal Docks. All boaters are welcome to participate.

The blessing of the fleet is a time-honored tradition that goes back many centuries into the murky sea of legend and tradition. Some legends have the origins going back to early Greek fishermen. One story has it that the tradition of asking clergy to bless boats and their crews began in Sicily after some fishermen were saved from certain death in a storm. According to the legend, they had lost their way in a thick fog when they suddenly saw a glimmering light in the distance. Following the light, they were able to make their way back to shore. There, they discovered that the light came from a medallion of the Madonna del Lume (Mother of Light) set in a grotto high on a cliff.

Today fisherman as well as pleasure boaters around the world have their vessels blessed. A Fisherman's blessing is for protection and prosperity of their fleet. Pleasure boaters for fine boating weather and safe boating for all aboard. *Individual creativity in banners and decorating of the vessels is encouraged!*

No reservations or entry forms or fees are required. Vessels participate at their own risk and no liability is assumed by any sponsoring organization, city, or governmental agency.

The Blessing will be offered this year by local clergy and officiated by the Rev. George E. Pence, Interim Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Federal Point, and the Reverend John Shaffer of St. James Independent Methodist Church in Palatka. After the last vessel is blessed a wreath will be placed in the water out of respect for those who've lost their lives on the river, or at sea.

Rules of Procedure

- All vessels are welcome and are *not* required to be under power. *Inland Rules of the Road* and *common courtesy* while upon the water *will apply*
- Vessels will assemble no later than 1:00pm in the mooring field to the south of the City Docks downtown Palatka and anchor or nest up in the open waters to the south.
- Vessels equipped with a marine VHF radio will monitor Channel 68 and wait for instructions. There must be no transmissions on this channel except in the case of an emergency. Vessels without radios will stand by vessels so equipped to receive verbal information from those skippers.
- The Blessing of the Fleet will be led by an official vessel followed by (a) trawlers and commercial fishing craft, (b) craft over 30 feet and (c) all other motorized craft (d) all others.
- Speeds should be set to maintain a close but safe maneuvering distance from other boats.
- From anchorage, vessels will proceed in-line northwest toward the docks and then make a wide turn to port to pass directly abreast the end of the main municipal dock. No wake rules must be observed during the pass by the docks.
- After passing the officiating station, vessels will continue southeast then turn easterly so as not to obstruct follow-on vessels. No vessel will be permitted to return to the docks until the completion of the entire ceremony.

Decorum:

Participants are reminded that this is a solemn occasion and are asked to:

- Avoid loud engine noise, music, raised voices or unseemly conduct;
- Keep beverage containers out of sight and do not discard any trash into the water; and
- While passing the officiating party and receiving the blessing, all aboard should remove hats, and should wear suitable attire commensurate with this reverent occasion.
- Welcome Boaters; Enjoy, and be safe.

For more information contact the Palatka Yacht Club Past Commodore, Ernest Driscoll, @ [\(904\)-501-9531](tel:904-501-9531)