



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

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Beloved Clergy of the Metropolis of Detroit

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Included in this letter are procedures to help the faithful clergy and laity of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit as we begin to reopen our churches from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guiding principles behind these procedures are the Faith and Tradition of our Holy Greek Orthodox Church and the love and care for the people we are called to serve. Both are in inexorably intertwined.

At the same time, I have taken into consideration, and have followed, the guidelines presented to us by state and local governments and measures recommended by the CDC. As well, we have consulted Dr. Marcus J. Zervos, an infectious disease specialist who is the division head of infectious disease at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and a member of the COVID-19 task force assembled by Mayor Mike Duggan of Detroit to help deal with the city's response to the pandemic.

Follow these procedures.

If there are any questions, please call Fr. Teodor Petrutiu or Fr. Nick Kotsis. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ protect us from disease and pestilence, heal those who are sick, and give us courage to overcome all fears as we slowly reopen our Churches.

With Paternal Prayers and Love in the Risen Christ,

**+NICHOLAS
METROPOLITAN OF DETROIT**

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

PHASED REOPENING PLAN AS OUTLINED IN STATE-BY-STATE CLERGY MEETINGS

- Phase 1

- Churches to open at 50% of allowed capacity.
 - Allowed capacity is either state determined maximum or number of people who can be in the building while maintaining 6 feet distance between individuals/family groups, **whichever is less**.
 - Each church will have to appoint or otherwise determine the people to come in the church for any scheduled service without exceeding the appointed number.
- Anyone who is currently experiencing **any** symptoms of illness **must** stay at home.
- All at risk persons are strongly encouraged to stay at home.
 - At risk persons are those with pre-existing health conditions, and those over the age of 65.
- The churches **may** have health checks at the entrance to the church. This may consist of a series a questions about general symptoms and/or a temperature check with a touchless thermometer.
- Everyone **required** to wear masks. The churches may offer masks at the entrance in the church to everyone who does not have one
- There will be no bulletins distributed to parishioners. The priest will read the announcements as normal, following the end of the Liturgy.
- There will be no liturgical books in the pews.
- Antidoron to be cut and put in plastic bags by one person wearing gloves and mask. Priest wearing mask or face screen will distribute bags with antidoron at the end of service.
- There will be no choir until further notice. The choral duties will continue to be performed by chanters singing on opposite sides of the Church.



- Centralized baskets, trays or boxes for receiving stewardship should be placed and pointed out during announcements. As well, online giving options should be referenced where available. Traditional trays/baskets should not be passed.
 - Churches to be fully cleaned/sanitized after every service. If possible, wait 2-3 days before cleaning and follow the CDC guidelines for disinfecting the surfaces.
 - There will be no Coffee Hour following any of the services of the Church until further notice. There will also be no meetings or other gatherings permitted on the premises.
- **Phase 2**
 - Churches to open at 100% of allowed capacity.
 - Allowed capacity is either state determined maximum or number of people who can be in the building while maintaining 6 feet distance between individuals/family groups, whichever is **less**.
 - All directives from Phase 1 to be followed in Phase 2 as well

Directives for Clergy (both in Phase 1 and Phase 2)

1. Concelebrations of multiple clergy are allowed, provided that the sanctuary provides sufficient space to maintain appropriate distances. As well, **only adult altar servers** are to be allowed, and in a limited number to likewise maintain appropriate distances.
2. Clergy and altar servers must take their temperature before coming to church. They also must thoroughly wash their hands prior to services and again immediately prior to distributing Holy Communion. The priest may choose to not wear a mask while in the altar but must wear a mask or a face screen during distribution of Holy Communion and antidoron.
3. Priests are not to offer their hands or blessing crosses for veneration by the faithful.
4. The Holy Communion will be distributed to those wishing to partake. Parishioners are reminded not to judge others based on their individual decision in this regard.



5. It is clearly understood that the Holy Communion is the very Body and Blood of Christ which cannot be tainted by any harmful thing, and that those who receive it with proper intent of mind and heart cannot be harmed by it. **However, for the pastoral reason that we do not want people to allow their fear of the coronavirus to separate them from the chalice, clergy are to drop the sacrament into the opened mouths of the faithful, being careful that the spoon not come into contact with the person.** If accidental contact with the individual is made, the spoon should be immediately replaced or sanitized by dipping it in grain alcohol (140 proof or more) for at least 30 seconds and dipping it in a rinse of water and wiping it dry prior to the next use.
6. In lieu of a Communion Cloth, the parish will have disposable napkins available to the faithful, and upon approaching the chalice, the parishioner would take a napkin, hold it under their own chin, wipe or dab their mouth, and then dispose of the napkin in a container, the contents of which will be burned after the service.
7. In locations where individual pastoral services are allowed, the priest may offer pastoral counsel and provide the sacraments of Communion, Unction, and Confession on an appointment basis. Proper precautions for limiting contact and proximity must be observed.
8. Weddings, Baptisms, and Funerals may also be conducted according to the capacity limitations and rules for each phase.

State Guidelines

- **Arkansas**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:**
 - **Phase 1 opening:** May 24
 - **Phase 2 opening:** June 7
 - **State capacity limitation:** distancing guidelines

- **Indiana**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** May 8
 - **Phase 1 opening:** May 31
 - **Phase 2 opening:** June 28
 - **State capacity limitations:** distancing guidelines



- **Kentucky**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** May 20
 - **Phase 1 opening:** June 21
 - **Phase 2 opening:** July 19
 - **State capacity limitations:** 33% capacity

- **Michigan**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** June 12
 - **Phase 1 opening:** June 21
 - **Phase 2 opening:** July 5
 - **State capacity limitations:** distancing guidelines

- **New York**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** different dates, according to state regulations, following a very comprehensive reopening program
 - **Phase 1 opening:** when state and local administrations allow it
 - **Phase 2 opening:** 1-2 weeks later
 - **State capacity limitations:** distancing guidelines

- **Ohio**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** Churches were never required to close
 - **Phase 1 opening:** June 14
 - **Phase 2 opening:** July 5
 - **State capacity limitations:** distancing guidelines

- **Tennessee**
 - **Churches allowed to open by government:** May 10
 - **Phase 1 opening:** May 31
 - **Phase 2 opening:** June 14
 - **State capacity limitations:** distancing guidelines

Phase 2 dates are tentative; the churches in each state will go to phase 2 after reevaluating the COVID 19 situation in that particular state at that time with the Metropolis office.

