



# St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

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June 4, 2020

Dear Family and Friends of St. Nicholas,

With the blessings of Metropolitan Methodios, and abiding by all State and local governmental directives regarding the reopening of Churches and all Houses of Worship, we have been diligently planning for the day our parish will once again be open to our stewards! **That day will be this Sunday, June 7.** In these challenging times, there will be certain directives that must be implemented and followed to assure the safest possible environment for the faithful to worship, partake of the Holy Sacraments and reconnect with fellow parishioners from a safe distance.

Christ's Church and our Parish have existed through persecution, plagues, infectious diseases, world wars, terrorist attacks, and other periods of challenge and concern. The Church and this community stand as a symbol of faith. The Church is the place where we come together as a community to pray, receive the sacraments and be in fellowship with one another. However, in this time, and because of the unpredictable nature of this insidious virus, there are directives, rules, and limitations, which we must accept in order to re-open and resume our liturgical practices in the safest possible way. These are rules—not suggestions—that we must enforce. We ask that each person understand and follow the directives listed below.

## PREPARATIONS

- According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), any building unoccupied for 7 days or longer need only receive "normal routine cleaning." Based on these guidelines, the Church will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to reopening. From this baseline, the building will be disinfected and sanitized between each service, including high traffic, high touch areas like bathrooms, doorknobs, and handles, etc.
- The congregation size for any service will be limited to the current regulations of the state and local authorities, and pre-marked seating must abide by the social distancing regulations of 6 feet in all directions. In Massachusetts, the Governor has set a limit of 40% of the building's official capacity.
- If you are 65 years of age or older and if you have underlying health conditions, especially asthma, diabetes, hypertension, undergoing chemotherapy, or any age with known underlying conditions, you should stay home and continue to participate in the services via our Live Stream [here](http://www.shorturl.at/qrtEQ) (www.shorturl.at/qrtEQ)
- If you are 65 years of age or older without known underlying health issues, we recommend that you consider staying home, participating in the services via our Live Stream [here](http://www.shorturl.at/qrtEQ) (www.shorturl.at/qrtEQ)

- If you have any respiratory symptoms, fever or malaise at all, whether attributed to COVID-19 or not, you must stay home.
- Parishioners who have a temperature greater than 100.4 F should stay home.
- If you or anyone in your household have been exposed to anyone with a confirmed COVID test you should not attend for at least 14 days.
- **The doors of St. Nicholas will OPEN with Sunday Matins beginning at 8:15 AM and will CLOSE when we reach our capacity of 30 PEOPLE, this includes Father Demetri, chanters and PC staff.**
- **This means that the FIRST 30 to be at church will be allowed in only.**
- Due to the regulated 30 attendees, we will also limit the entrance **ONLY TO STEWARDS OF ST. NICHOLAS.**
- **NO RESERVATIONS WILL BE TAKEN PRIOR. NO PLACES WILL BE HELD.**

#### **ARRIVING AT CHURCH:**

- If you are attending services at the Church, you must wear a protective mask at all times except for the moment when you may be receiving Holy Communion.
- If you are under medical instruction not to wear a mask, you must clearly indicate this to the Parish Council member upon entering.
- If you are attending services with a child/children between the ages of two and five, a protective mask is at the discretion of the parent. Children under the age of 2 should not wear a protective mask.
- Only the main entrance and handicap accessible entrance of the Church will be open. All other entrances will be locked.
- The doors that are designated for entrance/exiting the church will be propped open until we have reached our capacity of 30 attendees, and we will then lock the doors.
- Restrooms will be available in the foyer of St. Irene's hall only.
- You should venerate the icons by bowing, but you should not kiss any icon.
- Parish Council members will guide arriving parishioners to ensure appropriate distancing between arriving parishioners. Household family unit members may approach together.
- Offerings for candles and trays can be made [online](#) or a check sent in the mail.

#### **SEATING IN THE CHURCH:**

- Seating inside the Church will be restricted to a 6-foot distance between parishioners (again defined as an "immediate household unit") to the left and right and front and back. It is imperative that we maintain distancing at all times.
- Parish Council members will be present to seat you at an appropriate distance from other parishioners inside the Church.
- Family members who are not part of the same household must sit 6 feet apart without exception.
- There will be markers throughout the Church to help assure appropriate distancing.

### **RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION:**

- Father Demetri will administer Holy Communion in our traditional manner.
- The line will form for Holy Communion in the side aisles with proper social distancing measures in place. Following Holy Communion, the faithful will return to the pews by the proper one-way aisles only.
- The faithful will be encouraged/instructed to tilt their heads back and open their mouth widely so that the priest can place the Holy Communion in without the person closing his/her mouth on the spoon.
- In lieu of the Communion cloth, a table with a cloth will be set in front of Father Demetri for this purpose.
- No andithoron will be available.

### **EXITING THE CHURCH:**

- At the conclusion of the Liturgy you will exit row by row as directed by a Parish Council member and will stand at the 6-foot distance. The andithoron will be placed in your hands with tongs by Father Demetri.
- There will be no fellowship hour following services.

The foregoing rules for attending Liturgy and other services at our Church were taken from State directives, local guidelines, and the direction and guidance of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios. Our collective intent is to assure all our Stewards a safe and comforting experience in the Household of God. We want to see you, we want to pray with you, but above all, we want you all to be safe, healthy and able to worship in a manner that is best for our entire Parish.

May God continue to bless you and your families and keep you safe.



Fr. Demetri Costarakis  
Presiding Priest



Maria A. Decoulos  
Parish Council President