

THE ROAD AHEAD



MOVING FORWARD
MOVING SAFELY

YELLOW PHASE - CLERGY EDITION

Clergy Directions for the Re-opening of
Churches in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh during
the “Yellow” Intermediate Phase of
the Coronavirus Restrictions.

Effective Sunday, May 24, 2020



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SAVAS

PITTSBURGH.GOARCH.ORG

WE ALL HAVE NEED OF ENDURANCE BROTHERS!

We have been on this road together as the Body of Christ, His Holy Church. Let's keep our faith and find our victory together in Him!

These are not permanent changes to our church practices, but temporary measures of safety and mutual respect "for a time."



“Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of **endurance**, so that by doing the will of God you will receive what is promised.”

Hebrews 10:35-36

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR CLERGY

Our faithful parishioners have been deprived of the ability to attend worship service in person for over two months. To help their return be as welcoming and organized as possible please:

1. Read and fully familiarize yourself with these guidelines immediately. You will be expected to be the parish expert authority on these matters.
2. Work with your Parish Council leadership to form a team of volunteers to implement these guidelines and prepare your parish facility so that everything is in place and training is complete by Friday, May 22.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What clergy and community leaders need to know about who may return to public worship services, where they may attend and what they need to agree to before entering.

Where the Faithful May Attend

- The faithful will attend their local parish and not seek other church communities in places where restrictions differ from their own.

Who May Not Attend

- Those with any signs or symptoms of any acute illness (whether it is COVID or not) **MUST** stay home.
- Those who have come into contact with COVID-positive persons within the last 2 weeks.
- Those who are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (65 years or older, live in a long-term facility, underlying medical conditions).
- Questions should be directed to your healthcare provider.

The Disclaimer Required for Attendance

- All those who wish to come into the Church building (sanctuary, hall, offices, etc.) agree by virtue of entering to a standard disclaimer (see Appendix A) which must be posted at every entrance point acknowledging that there is an inherent risk to gathering, that the Church cannot eliminate all risk, and that the person is knowingly engaging that risk by entering and indemnifies the parish and its staff, volunteers, and parishioners for any health conditions resulting from their presence on the premises.



PREPARING YOUR PARISH

What clergy and community leaders need to know about preparing your parish facilities and training volunteers to assist in the return to worship.

Parish Leadership and Volunteer Training

- The parish priest, council executive committee and staff are to fully train those volunteers and other council members who will assist in implementing these guidelines.
- You will need to provide for the following personnel/volunteers (these people are included in the 25 maximum person count in each space):
 1. Clergy: Only one priest may serve. A deacon is permitted to assist. Clergy who are in a higher risk category due to age, health or other situation must seek the blessing of the Metropolitan to be able to resume offering services. Serving clergy and deacon are exempted from wearing mask except when distributing Holy Communion, at which time a mask or face shield must be worn.
 2. Chanters/Singers: Maximum of two, properly distanced. Exempted from masks while singing.
 3. Acolytes/Altar Assistants: High school age or adult preferred. Minimize number to maintain social distance in altar. Must wear masks.
 4. Parish Council Members/Ushers/Greeters. Must wear masks.
 1. For smaller parishes: three at most (1 stationed at entrance, 1 stationed in Narthex, 1 assisting with seating and directions in church).
 2. For larger parishes with multiple spaces: the above three plus an additional usher in each separate space to maintain order.

Your Parish Liturgical/Sacramental Schedule

- Public worship may resume Sunday, May 24, which is the Sunday before the Leavetaking of Pascha, provided that the parish leadership team has documented its application of these policies and received the written blessing of His Eminence to proceed.
- Multiple services (Divine Liturgy, Paraclesis, Vespers) may be offered throughout the week to accommodate more attendance.
- His Eminence has given the blessing to offer the Divine Liturgy during weekdays without a preceding Orthros to facilitate additional services.
- Services will be celebrated by one priest, who may be assisted by one deacon.
- Additional clergy may sit within the Holy Altar provided that adequate spacing is maintained between them, the celebrants and any altar servers. They may assist with the distribution of Holy Communion in multiple-space facilities.
- These guidelines apply to all worship services and sacraments. Funerals for COVID victims are further restricted to immediate family only.



Preparing Your Parish Facilities

- 25 person spaces must be prepared ahead of time:
 - For counties/regions where the restrictions have been loosened, worship services may resume with up to 25 persons (including the priest) in any single gathering space.
 - Larger parishes with additional separate and distinct rooms, where simulcast capabilities exist, may have up to 25 people in each room as long as each space operates within these guidelines.
- Seating areas will need to be mapped to accommodate up to 25 (less clergy/volunteers), but remember, members of the same household do not need to be socially distanced from each other. Therefore, your seating plan should provide both individual and family seating sections.
- For each area, the following signage must be prepared:
 - Entrance signage with disclaimer and guidelines (See Appendix A).
 - Seating areas signage.
 - Well-marked aisles or pathways for social distancing while entering and exiting.

Preparing Your Parishioners for This Phase

- Clergy should develop a parish-specific method of rotating attendance among parishioners to provide fair access to all. (See Appendix B)
- Begin notifying your parishioners as early as possible after details of your parish-specific arrangements have been made. People will need time to absorb and adjust to these temporary changes.
- Provide all parish members with the public version of the publication: "The Road Ahead - Metropolis of Pittsburgh Yellow Phase" in PDF format. This will help set their expectations and answer many questions in advance. It will also help your parishioners understand that these are uniform Metropolis policies by which all parishes are expected to abide.
- To avoid disruptions and to keep order, parishioners should be instructed to arrive before the start time of the service.

OFFERING THE HOLY SERVICES

What clergy and community leaders need to know about how services are to be conducted during this phase.

What Your Parish Leadership Team Must Be Prepared for at Each Service

- Hand sanitizer will be available for all to use upon entry.
- Masks will be provided for those who are not wearing one upon entry. Masks must be worn by all those in attendance with the following exceptions:
 - The priest is exempted from wearing a mask while celebrating the services but will wear either a mask or a face shield when communing the faithful. Chanters/singers are exempt while singing.
 - Those medically exempt or with special needs.
 - Children age 2 and under. (Children over 2 and under 10 encouraged but not required.)



- Interior doors should be propped open to minimize contact with doorknobs or handles. Parishes may consider having an usher at the front door to open it for those arriving.
- An usher/Council member will take a written attendance of those parishioners and helpers present for each service. This attendance will be kept on file at the parish for at least one month (in order to facilitate contact tracing if someone tests positive).
- Donations may be made online or brought to church in envelopes to avoid the handling of cash at the pangari. The passing of trays is prohibited.
 - Note: If your parish does not currently offer online giving, many options are available: VancoPayments.com, PayPal.com, Square.com, just to mention a few. Vanco (800-675-7430) offers four methods of e-giving at favorable rates: By Web, By App, By Text and By Kiosk. It is a preferred vendor for the Archdiocese parish software program but can be used without the program.

Guidelines for Parishioners During Services

- "Social Distancing" guidelines must be followed while on the church premises.
- Gathering in the Narthex by more than three people is to be avoided.
- Each attendee must abide by the designated seating plan with distinct, properly distanced and clearly designated seating sections and properly spaced aisles.
- Members of the same household, including young children, should be directed to the same seating section, with only one household per section. They are not required to maintain social distance from one another within their own seating area but must do so in relation to others.
- Individuals and all household members should remain in their designated section for the duration of the service except for Holy Communion and the use of restrooms.
- No books will be kept in the pews. Parishioners will be instructed to bring their own books from home if they choose.
- Where possible, altar servers must be of high school age or older, and attendance at the altar must be limited to permit social distancing with those celebrating the Divine Liturgy. Altar servers must wear masks.
- Singing during the services should be led by a maximum of two people, who are exempted from wearing masks while singing. If there are two, they should be properly distanced as the facility accommodates.

Procedures for Holy Communion

- Prior to the distribution of Holy Communion:
 - A tray with antidoron properly laid out (see Appendix C) should be placed where communicants are able to take a piece after receiving Holy Communion.
 - The faithful will be instructed by the priest to receive in the fully acceptable customary Orthodox style with their arms crossed at their shoulders, their mouth fully open and their head tilted back, so the priest can deposit Holy Communion without touching their mouths.



- At the time of Holy Communion:
 - Those receiving Holy Communion will remove their mask prior to approaching the Chalice.
 - The faithful should not touch the Communion cloth, nor is it necessary to wipe their lips, since the Holy Gifts are being imparted without touching the mouth. It should be held by the altar attendants or Council members in a manner that spans the distance between the Holy Chalice and under the chin of the communicant without making physical contact to protect the Holy Gifts from being spilled.
 - Antidoron should be immediately consumed by the communicants to ensure the Holy Gifts are fully swallowed and to protect against Holy Communion being deposited on the person's mask, as masks will be later disposed of in the trash.
- After receiving Holy Communion:
 - Following the receiving of Holy Communion and consuming of antidoron, the mask must be put back on for the remainder of the service.


Dismissal from Services

- Antidoron should not be distributed by the priest at the end of the service. The faithful may take a piece of antidoron from a tray properly arranged (see Appendix C) and placed at the exit from the service.
- Kollyva for distribution must be pre-bagged and arranged on a tray in the same manner as the Antidoron.
- At the end of the service during his pastoral/personal comments, the priest from the solea will instruct the faithful to depart in an orderly manner, section by section, consistent with social distancing principles.
- There should be no congregating within the Church. All attendees should proceed to their vehicle and depart the property.
- There are to be no social gatherings (coffee hour, luncheons, etc.) during this phase.



APPENDIX A: ENTRANCE SIGNAGE & DISCLAIMER

See the attached files:




**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THIS
NOTICE BEFORE ENTERING THE
CHURCH FACILITIES**

By voluntarily entering this church facility:

- I affirm that I am not currently ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- I acknowledge that while safety measures are being taken by the church, it cannot guarantee the safety of every person present.
- I agree to abide by the social distancing and safety guidelines being practiced in this church.
- I consent to hold the church harmless against any damages or claims regarding my voluntary presence here.

If I am not able to agree to and affirm the above statements, I will not participate in this worship service in person and may choose to join online.

**IMPORTANT: DURING THIS
RE-OPENING PHASE, ALL ATTENDEES MUST
ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:**



1. Prior registration is required to attend services. Signup information can be found at:
2. Masks must be worn at all times except when receiving Holy Communion. Those with valid medical exceptions, special needs and children 10 and under do not need to wear masks. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided.
3. Hands must be sanitized upon entry.
4. You will be directed to your seating area by an usher and are asked to remain in that area for the duration of the service.
5. Honor the icons and other sacred objects by a reverent bow and making the sign of the Cross instead of kissing.
6. Refrain from shaking hands or kissing others during the service.
7. Instructions for receiving Holy Communion and antidoron will be explained by the priest.
8. At the conclusion of the service please exit and return to your vehicle without congregating.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!

1: "Yellow Phase Entry Disclaimer Sign"

- PDF format for printing and posting

2: "Yellow Phase Entry Guidelines Sign"

(Note: fill in box with registration method info)

- PDF format for printing and posting
- Word format for customizing, printing and posting

APPENDIX B:

ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION IDEAS

These are merely a few of the options available.
If you know of other effective options, please share them
with sister parishes and the Metropolis.

1: Possible Selection Strategies

How to create groups of up to 25 to provide fair access to all

- Alphabetical: For example, A-M first then N-Z, or smaller sections for larger parishes.
- By Household: For smaller parishes this may facilitate greater comfort level with family groups together.
- By Ministry: This might group familiar people together, but this presents a lot of overlap among groups.
- First-come, first-served: Just open it up to everyone at once.

2: Rotation Factor

- You will need to calculate based on your parish demographics how often an individual is able to attend while still allowing all others the same option.
- This should be clearly communicated to parishioners to help set their expectations.
- For example, if you are a smaller parish of 75 people with a properly-spaced seating capacity of 25, it will take 3 weeks for everyone to attend ($75 \text{ people} / 25 \text{ per week} = 3 \text{ weeks}$). If you are a larger parish of 200 with 4 properly spaced rooms simulcasting, it will take 4 weeks for everyone to attend ($200 \text{ people} / 100 \text{ per week} = 2 \text{ weeks}$). Increasing the amount of services offered will decrease the time between services for everyone.
- Someone from your parish leadership team or volunteer base besides the priest should manage this process so the priest can focus on his liturgical, spiritual and pastoral responsibilities.

3: General Notes

- Check-in lists: Since sign-up is done ahead of time using your preferred system, a list of everyone expected to attend can be easily produced and made available at the pangari for an usher to check people in as they enter.
- Avoid sign-in by attendees: Having people physically sign in is to be avoided due to the many touchpoints involved in passing papers and pens back and forth. Have the usher/volunteer check them in.



- Posting a list of people with reservations for that service at the entry point(s) may help eliminate people trying to enter without reserving.

3: Manual Registration Solutions

Parishes without websites or with limited technical capabilities may consider these options:

- Phone: Have parishioners call the church office to request attendance dates.
- Email: Have parishioners email requests for attendance dates.

4: Web-based Registration Solutions

These are just a few of the web-based solutions that can be set up easily and quickly. Some are free, others charge for the service. All have Android and iOS apps and web portals.

Signup Genius (signupgenius.com)

- Simple creation and sign-up procedures
- Large library of pre-existing templates
- Easy to use
- Many people already know it since it is widely used.
- Ability to limit sizes of events (i.e., 25 max then says event full)
- Can send invitations to sub-groups or to the entire parish email list
- Automatically sends reminder emails to those who signed up
- Pricing:
 - Small/medium parishes: Free account – 1,000 emails/month
 - Medium/large parishes: \$8.99/mo – 5,000 emails/month

Eventbrite (eventbrite.com)

- Simple creation and sign-up procedures
- Ability to limit sizes of events (i.e., 25 max then says event full)
- Always free for free events
- Waitlists
- Pricing:
 - Small/medium parishes: Free account – 1,000 emails/month
 - Medium/large parishes: \$8.99/mo – 5,000 emails/month

SignUp (signup.com)

- Unlimited signups
- Ability to limit sizes of events (i.e., 25 max then says event full)
- Always free for free events
- Pricing:
 - Small/medium parishes: Free account – 1,000 emails/month
 - Medium/large parishes: \$8.99/mo – 5,000 emails/month



APPENDIX C: ANTIDORON TRAY LAYOUT

These photos demonstrate how antidoron should be laid out with enough space in between so people are able to pick up a piece without touching other pieces. You may choose to place it directly on a tray or with a paper underliner.



APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following websites contain valuable information concerning resources, regulations and guidance during the COVID-19 crisis.

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: Coronavirus Resource Center

<https://www.goarch.org/covid19>

Assembly of Bishops: Coronavirus Resource Center

<http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/covid19>

Metropolis of Pittsburgh News and Encyclicals

<https://pittsburgh.goarch.org>

IOCC: COVID-19 Response

<https://iocc.org/how-we-serve/ioccs-covid-19-response>

