



# HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

155 HOGAN ROAD · LEWISTON, MAINE 04240

## COVID-19 PARISH REOPENING GUIDELINES

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Dear Spiritual family,

### **Xronia Polla!**

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, your clergy and Parish Council have been diligently planning for the day our parish will once again be open to our stewards, families, and friends. ***That day will be Sunday, June 14, 2020.*** 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 this 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. ***To this end, we need your help! If we have a handful of volunteers after Liturgy, in 10 minutes we will be done! We will be sending out an email with a short survey. Please respond immediately. This will help limit our expenses.***
- The congregation size for any service will be limited ***50 people as provided in the Governor's Executive Orders and checklist affecting inside church services. Please observe social distancing requirements by sitting 3 to a pew in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> rows. The only exception to this rule is if***

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***all the people in one pew are from the same household. Thank you for your help and cooperation.***

- 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 on the Holy Trinity Facebook Live and UTube after the services.***
- 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.
- If you have any respiratory symptoms, fever or malaise at all, whether attributed to COVID-19 or not, ***you must stay home.***
- ***Initially, Holy Trinity will reopen on a first come basis. We will limit the capacity to 50 people in the building. We may work to have a sign-up list; however, we adjust as needed.***
- We will maintain a list of all attendees and visitors to its services and activities. If an attendee has tested positive for COVID-19, they should promptly notify myself or Jaye, Maine DHHS, CDC, or a local public health official and assist all such officials as reasonably requested to trace likely contacts and advise contacts to isolate and self-quarantine.
  - For purposes of this guidance and based on current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. They should stay home, maintain social distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure.

## ***Advice from our Medical Team Advisors:***

- A recommendation from our Medical Team Advisors is for parishes to consider if possible, to have a “Greeter” take the temperature of those entering with an infrared thermometer pointed to the forehead. If a person’s temperature is higher than 100.4 F, he/she will be asked not to enter the Church.
- 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.

## ***Arriving at Church:***

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***Upon arrival, you will find the following notice which you will be required to read prior to entering the Church:***

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 the recommended CDC precautionary 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 at: [Holy Trinity Facebook Live](#).

- **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 “Greeter” 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 central air system of the church will be off and the windows open during services.***
- The downstairs hall will be off limits except as access to restrooms ***Please endeavor to keep the restrooms very clean and neat. This will save time and effort after the services.***
- When arriving to Church, you should **venerate the icons by bowing and making the sign of the Cross**, but you should not kiss any icon. **There will be signs posted for this purpose.**
- The Pangari/Narthex will be staffed by one Parish Council member to assist you, as much as possible, without contact. **If you wish to purchase devotional candles, they will be handed to you with tongs by a Parish Council member.**
- A Parish Council member will guide arriving parishioners to the Pangari/Narthex to ensure appropriate distancing between arriving parishioners and proper seating. Household family unit members may approach the Pangari together.
- Please bring a check or exact amount of cash for donations as cash cannot be exchanged. ***You can donate upon arrival or when departing at the candle***

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***stand. The tray WILL NOT BE PASSED. All are encouraged to donate online through our website on ANEDOT.***

## ***Seating in the Church:***

- Seating inside the Church will be restricted to a 6 feet 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. ***An usher will be present to seat you in an appropriate pew to keep distance from other parishioners inside the Church. (We need volunteers for this purpose. Please respond to the survey sent out on email.)***
- 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:***

- The priest will administer Holy Communion in our traditional manner.
- **The line should form for Holy Communion in the center aisle with proper social distancing. Father Jon will wear a mask and shield and stand on the solea. Each person is asked to wait at the bottom step until the parishioner in front of them has received Holy Communion and departed off the solea down the side aisle.** Following Holy Communion, the faithful will return to the pews by the proper side aisles only.
- The faithful are asked to tilt their heads back and open their mouth widely so that the priest can drop the Holy Communion in without the person closing his/her mouth on the spoon. ***In order to make sure the Holy Communion is not spilt, we ask each person to hold the cloth below their chin. There will be no Altar servers assisting due to social distancing.***
- The faithful should not wipe their lips/mouth on the communion cloth.
- ***There will be no distribution of Antidoron after receiving Holy Communion. This will occur at the end of Divine Liturgy. (See note below.)***

## ***Exiting the Church:***

- At the conclusion of the Liturgy you will exit as usual to receive antidoron row by row, standing at a distance. **The antidoron will be placed in your hands with tongs. Everyone will refrain from kissing the right hand of the priest.**

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METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

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- The final hands-free collection offering will be set up in the Narthex as you are about to exit. Please be ready to make your offering into the collection basket at the candle stand.
- 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, their families and our many friends, 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. Jon C. Emanuelson*

*Rev. Fr. Jon C. Emanuelson*  
*Parish Priest*

*John Carson, M.D.*

*John Carson, M.D.*  
*Parish Council President*