

# THE ROAD AHEAD



**MOVING FORWARD**  
**MOVING SAFELY**

## YELLOW PHASE

Interim 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

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### ENDURANCE

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



## WHAT TO EXPECT

How your church experience will be temporarily modified in this phase.



### LIMITED ATTENDANCE

State and local regulations on gatherings will affect how many people can attend a service. Parishes will seek to maximize worship opportunities for everyone through advance reservations, additional services and other parish-specific solutions.



### SOCIAL DISTANCING

Your parish will designate seating areas that abide by current social distancing guidelines, which require at least six feet between households. You may not be able to sit in your regular area. Everyone will be asked to depart immediately following worship.



### WORSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

Your experience during services will feel different than before the start of the pandemic. There will be smaller crowds. Attendees will be required to wear face masks. You are asked to reverence sacred objects and greet one another by bowing instead of kissing. These temporary measures help ensure the safety and comfort of all.



### HOLY COMMUNION

Our Orthodox Christian faith and worship remain unchanged at their core, including our belief that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ do not transmit disease. However, with pastoral sensitivity toward all parishioners during this unique time we will distribute Holy Communion by asking you to receive with an open mouth and head tilted back, as is common practice in many Orthodox traditions. The Communion cloth will be held by the altar attendants. Please do not touch or dab your lips on it.



### COMMUNITY EFFORT/MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas has been praying for and working with his clergy and communities for the salvation of the souls and well-being of the bodies of all our faithful. These temporary adjustments will be modified as things progress. In the meantime they require extra dedication and labor from our clergy and community leaders. Thank you for supporting them and moving forward together in a spirit of love.



## WORSHIP GUIDELINES: BEFORE SERVICES

What you are asked to do and understand before and as you arrive.



### WHERE YOU SHOULD ATTEND

The faithful will attend their local parish and not seek other church communities in places where restrictions differ from their own. This will allow each parish to fully accommodate the needs of its flock.

### WHO MAY NOT ATTEND

Those with any signs or symptoms of any acute illness (whether it is COVID or not) MUST stay home, as should 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 care facility, underlying medical conditions) should not enter the church building and should participate in services online. Questions should be directed to your healthcare provider.

### ADVANCE REQUEST TO ATTEND MAY BE REQUIRED

For regions where the previous restrictions have been loosened, worship services may resume with up to 25 persons (including the priest) in any single gathering space. Larger parishes may be able to offer a simulcast in multiple rooms with up to 25 people in each. In order to facilitate all this, your parish will establish procedures to ensure all parishioners have opportunities to attend. That may mean advance reservations are required. It will most likely mean you will not be able to attend every service during this phase. After being absent from church for so long, you may desire in your heart to attend every one, so your understanding and support of your parish leadership and your respect for the needs of your brothers and sisters in Christ will be greatly appreciated in this difficult task.

### WHAT YOU AGREE TO BY ATTENDING

By voluntarily entering this church facility, you affirm that you are not currently ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; you acknowledge that while safety measures are being taken by the church, it cannot guarantee the safety of every person present; you agree to abide by the social distancing and safety guidelines being practiced in this church; you consent to hold the church harmless against any damages or claims regarding your voluntary presence. If you are not able to agree to and affirm the above statements, you may not participate in this worship service in person and may choose to join online.

### PREPARE FOR OFFERINGS IN ADVANCE

To minimize the handling and exchanging of currency in the church, please consider either making your offerings to your church through electronic giving or by preparing your offering in an envelope to be brought to church and deposited in the Narthex. Trays will not be passed during the service.



## WORSHIP GUIDELINES: DURING SERVICES

What you are asked to do as you enter and attend worship services.



### ON-TIME ARRIVAL

Because your parish leadership will need to provide for your arrival and guide you to a seating area, it will be most helpful and appreciated for you to arrive before the worship service begins.

### MASKS REQUIRED

All attendees will be required to wear protective face masks. Exceptions are allowed for those with valid medical exceptions, special needs and for children age 10 and under. (Children over 2 and under 10 encouraged but not required.) If you do not have a mask one will be provided.

### FOLLOW THE SIGNS

Please follow posted entry points, aisles and designated seating areas. These have been prepared in advance to provide safe social distancing and need to be respected for everyone's well-being.

### YOUR SEATING AREA

Designated seating areas will provide for spacing between individuals and family sections. Members of the same household may be seated in the same section without social distance between them. Everyone is required to remain in their seating area throughout the service except for receiving Holy Communion and for restroom needs.

### HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Our Orthodox Christian faith and worship remain unchanged at their core, including our belief that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ do not transmit disease. However, with pastoral sensitivity toward all parishioners during this unique time, we will distribute Holy Communion in the following manner:

- Please remove your face mask prior to arriving at the Holy Chalice.
- When receiving, open your mouth fully and tilt your head back so the priest may place the Communion spoon in your mouth and turn it over to allow the Holy Gifts to drop in your mouth. Please do not close your lips on the spoon.
- Please do not touch the Communion cloth or dab your lips on it. There is no need, since your lips have not touched the Holy Gifts. It will be held by the altar attendants to protect against spills.
- After receiving Holy Communion but before replacing your mask, proceed to the Antidoron tray to take a piece of bread and consume it before wearing your mask again. This keeps the Holy Gifts from being expelled on to the mask. Then, please wear the mask for the remainder of the service.



### WORSHIP GUIDELINES:

### AFTER SERVICES

What you are asked to do and understand after worship services.



### MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE ON EXITING

Please follow the directions provided by the priest and the guidance of any ushers regarding exiting with social distance.

### ANTIDORON IS AVAILABLE ON EXIT

Antidoron will be available for you to take from a tray located at the exit point from the service.

### MEMORIAL WHEAT SHOULD BE PRE-BAGGED

If you have offered a Memorial Service, rather than having the “Kollyva” Memorial Wheat as a large amount on a tray, please prepare it in individual bags and place all the bags on the tray for the priest to bless during the service. After the service, that tray will be made available at the exit point.

### PLEASE DEPART IMMEDIATELY

Much as this goes against our common practice following services, please do not congregate in the Narthex or other areas of the church building. All attendees are asked to directly depart following the service.

### COFFEE HOURS—NOT YET!

Coffee hours, lunches and other social gatherings are not to be held during this phase. Please understand they will return as soon as possible when restrictions are loosened.

## THANK YOU!

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas, your clergy and the leadership of our Holy Metropolis and your Church thank you for your understanding, support and cooperation during these temporary measures.

Watch for more announcements from the Metropolis and your parish soon!

