

## Feb. 1st special updates...Please read carefully.

Dear friends, family, beautiful community,

The pandemic continues to rage throughout the world and within our communities. Especially in light of the **new virus variants**, public health guidance dictates continued conscientious mask-wearing and social distancing, and vaccination as soon as possible. These mitigation efforts are a clear church responsibility, fulfilling the value of our orthodox faith concerning ourselves with doing all we can to preserve and protect our lives and the lives of those around us. Let us trust that the Lord accompanies us through all difficulties, including this pandemic.

### Here are some things we have done in preparation of you while you are in church.

\*We have tried to **minimize potential touch points** throughout the church by removal of service books from the back of the pews, as well as removal of all promotional paper items such as Sunday Bulletin typically displayed at the entrance of the church.

\* We will be **limiting access** to the Bride's Room, Crying room, offices and classrooms, and Hall (other than the restrooms) to help isolate areas of the church that would require extra cleaning.

\* With regard to **accessing the church**, we determined that the best way to prevent a bottleneck at the Narthex is to direct parishioners to one open church entrance door. There, parishioners will have the opportunity to check in, sanitize their hands, and have their temperature taken prior to being escorted by ushers to their seats.

\*We will be **closing the doors at 10:15 am** sharp to avoid parishioners needing to touch the door, as well as to give time to the ushers to follow the check in procedures before the read of Epistles and Gospel. If you had registered to attend and are unable to be there on time, please let us know.

\*In the sanctuary, we have **taped off pews** to comply with CDC for social distancing guidelines and have posted signage throughout the church to remind parishioners about these guidelines.

\* Please remember that this is all a work in progress and we may need to **pivot** as we learn more.

### **Who and How Many Can Attend?**

At present we are gathering for all scheduled services, but are limited to **25%** of our building capacity - visitors are welcome, and are encouraged to call us when planning a visit! Only **80 people** may attend the Divine Liturgy in a rotating manner using first letter of church family last names **(A-J or K-Z)** using appropriate precautions and while physically distancing from each other.

For any other spiritual need during this time, whether for confession or receiving Communion during the week, please coordinate with Fr. Kamal for a mutually agreeable time.

### **How do I register to attend?**

\*To attend the Divine Liturgy, you need to register your name when it is your turn to attend.

\* **Under no circumstances is any parishioner to appear on Sunday unless he/she has register to attend.** The ushers will have a list of those signed up for each Sunday.

\* If you have signed up to attend but **you or anyone in your household becomes ill, please do not come to the Liturgy.** This applies to the entire unit/family, even if only one person feels sick. Please let Fr. Kamal know if this is the case.

### **What should I do when I get to church?**

\* You must arrive no later than **10:00** am on Sunday. **After 10:15 am, no one will be available to give you access to church** and door will be locked. (Times are adjusted for evening services).

\* Please enter through the **designated door to the church.** Only that door will be open.

\* Your temperature will be checked at the door. **Anyone with a temperature over 100 F will not be admitted.**

\* **You must have a mask or face covering** as you enter the church. If you do not have a mask, please let us know. \* If they are able to, **Children** should also cover their nose and mouth.

\* **Collection trays** are displayed on a stand in the foyer. No collection tray will be passed during Liturgy.

\* **Candles** are offered in a way that will minimize touching of more than the candle you are taking.

\* Upon entering the Nave, please follow the directions of the ushers. The pews will be filled from **front to back** to keep reasonable distances between people coming in and going out. For **families with children**, who may need to use the rest rooms during the liturgy, we recommend that they sit in the back four lines of pews.

\* Please **only sit in open pews**. Those taped off pews are **NOT** to be used to minimize sanitation after the service and to keep recommended distances.

\* There will be **no access** to the church hall (except the bathrooms), choir loft, kitchen, church offices and Sunday school classes.

\* **Children under 12 years of age** are to stay with parents at all times and must be escorted to the bathroom by an adult.

\* We recommend bringing **your own hand sanitizer** to avoid congregating at the entrance of the church (where we will have hand sanitizer as well).

\* Please **follow all professional advice** related to social distancing while in the church building and after leaving the building: keep a 6-foot distance, no hugging, handshakes, or kissing of each other. (Please read the recommendations from the CDC on how to protect yourself and others from the virus).

Church Hall remain closed. Social coffee hour is discontinued until further notice however as we approach more pleasant weather, outdoor social coffee is a good option.

### **Any Instructions during the Divine Liturgy?**

\* Always keep your mask on. be sure to wear them in a way that covers your nose and mouth fully. Not wearing masks or wearing them incorrectly makes other people feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

\* Please venerate the icons or the Gospel book by bowing your head. Please do not touch or kiss.

\* While standing in line to receive Communion, please keep a distance from the person ahead of you. Please follow the directions of the usher.

\* **There are No changes in the way the Holy Communion is offered to the faithful.** However, Fr. Kamal asks that you stand sideways (**right shoulder toward Fr. Kamal**) and tilt your head up as much as possible and open your mouth as wide as possible so he may pour the Body and Blood into your mouth without physical contact.

\* Do **not wipe** your mouth with the communion cloth after receiving communion. Altar boys will have the red cloth under your chin to prevent any spilling.

\* Holy bread will be handed to you at dismissal in the foyer.

### **A Final Word from Fr. Kamal**

Thank you very much for your patience with this process. Please note that for your safety, we may need to make necessary modifications to these procedures on the spot or in the future.

Our compliance with these directives is rooted in our Christian love for each other and for those most vulnerable in our community. They are necessary to protect you and every other parishioner who is in attendance. These steps are also necessary to protect the clergy and prevent them from becoming vectors of the virus and communicating it to others who attend on following Sundays or to whom they meet during the week.

All the services in the church will continue to be live-streamed through the church's Facebook. Please like our church page on Facebook to receive notifications when we go live.

If you have any questions or concerns, **please feel free to contact Fr. Kamal**