

THE ROAD AHEAD



GOING FURTHER.
STILL SAFELY.

GREEN PHASE

Directions for the Further Opening of the Churches in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh during the “Green” Intermediate Phase of the Coronavirus Restrictions.
Effective Sunday, June 14, 2020



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SAVAS

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CHANGES IN THIS PHASE

How your church experience will be adjusted in the “Green Phase.”

1

GREATER ATTENDANCE LEVELS

State and local regulations on gatherings continue to affect how many people can attend a service, but in the “Green Phase” many areas are allowing larger gatherings. In most cases, this may allow churches to expand attendance up to 50% capacity.

2

WELCOME BACK, BELOVED SENIORS

The “Yellow Phase” restriction of seniors 65 or older is lifted, so faithful of all ages may attend again. However all groups of risk concern (age, health, etc.) should consult with their health care professional to address any questions about attending. And, as before, anyone with existing COVID illness, symptoms or contact must refrain from attending.

3

CONTINUED PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MASKS

Your parish will designate seating areas that abide by physical distancing guidelines, which may include blocking off certain rows of seats. Families and groups who travel together to services may sit together, but physical distance will need to be maintained between groups within rows. Face masks are still required when attending services.

4

HOLY COMMUNION

As stated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, “The Mother Church of Constantinople knows empirically from its two-thousand-year existence that Holy Communion is ‘the antidote to mortality’ and remains firm in its Orthodox teaching regarding the Holy Eucharist.” As such, parishes are free to return to their customary parish practice of customary method of distributing and receiving the Holy Gifts.

5

COFFEE HOUR AND MEETINGS MAY RESUME WITH SPACING

Parishes are free to choose to resume coffee hours as long as physical distance requirements are observed. Local guidelines regarding foodservice must be respected. Meetings are encouraged to be held online, but they may be held in person as long as they maintain physical distance guidelines.

6

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AS A FOUNDATION

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas continues to pray for and work with his clergy and communities for the salvation of the souls and well-being of the bodies of all our faithful. As we resume our community worship within the modified guidelines, all are asked to respect the choices of others as we “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galations 6.2).



WORSHIP GUIDELINES

Important adjustments to worship services as we move from “Yellow” to “Green” phase



PLEASE CONTINUE TO ATTEND YOUR HOME PARISH

The faithful should continue to attend their own home parish for regular services. Visits to other parishes should be limited to those necessary for memorials and sacraments for the time being.

WHO MAY NOT ATTEND

As before, 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. The age restriction for seniors has been removed, so people of all ages are able to attend. All groups of risk concern (age, health, etc.) should consult with their health care professional before attending.

INCREASED CAPACITY WITH CONTINUED PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Worship services may resume with up to 50 percent of capacity in any single gathering space as long as physical distancing is still observed. Each parish is asked to develop a system of rotating attendance if needed to accommodate all those who wish to participate.

DONATIONS TO BE OFFERED ON ENTRY, EXIT OR ONLINE ONLY. NO TRAYS.

To minimize the handling and exchanging of currency in the church, please consider either making your offerings to your church upon entry or exit from services, or through electronic giving.

MASKS REQUIRED

All attendees are 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.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

Our Orthodox Christian faith and worship remain unchanged at their core, including our teaching on the sanctity of the the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ “for the remission of sins and life eternal.” Parishes may, therefore, return to their customary method of receiving the Holy Gifts. Those who are prepared to receive must remove their mask prior to approaching the chalice. After receiving Holy Communion but before replacing the mask they should proceed to the Antidoron tray to consume a piece of bread to ensure the Holy Gifts are not expelled on to the mask.

VENERATION OF ICONS AND SACRED OBJECTS

The faithful may return to their customary practice of venerating icons and sacred objects, or may continue to reverence them by bowing, depending on their comfort level. We are all asked to respect one another’s choices and refrain from judging the practices of others in a spirit of love.

