

Archdiocese Protocols for Reopening

May 20, 2020

*Note: these were distributed to all members of our parish;
updates or additional information are in italics*

1. Each parish must understand and comply with the strict attendance limitations applicable to in-person services, which has been set by Executive Order of Governor Lamont that permits religious, spiritual or worship gatherings of up to *100 indoors (or 25% of seating capacity) and 150 outdoors. Our sanctuary, at a minimum, holds at least 300 people, so that we would allow no less than 75 indoors.*
2. Each parish must place markings on seats and on the ground to ensure social distancing and establish a clear flow of traffic.
3. Each parish must record the names and phone numbers of each attendee at every service in the event that an infection requires notice. *Our ushers take care of this and our parish data contains all contact information. We have encountered no issue at all since reopening on May 24.*
4. Each parish must be in contact with local authorities. *Before reopening on May 24, we notified Ted Jankowski, Director of Public Safety, City of Stamford, who simply asked us to follow CDC guidelines for sanitizing and disinfecting, as well as to comply with all directives from Governor Lamont.*
5. If necessary, require members to ‘reserve their spot’ which will:
 - a. Assist us in keeping a record of who is in attendance
 - b. Assure that all parishioners who desire to attend services have an opportunity to attend.
 - c. Prohibit arguments that may arise if parishioners ‘show up’ at the church but are not allowed access because the maximum number of participants has been reached.

It turns out that there is no great rush for members to return, so we have no problem with this even though we continue to ask for everyone to contact us in advance.

6. Each parish must alert its parishioners to become familiar with the symptoms of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell), and direct parishioners that if any of these symptoms present themselves, they must not attend church, and immediately seek medical attention.
7. In terms of preventing the spread of this virus, alert all parishioners to follow CDC directives, which currently include: wash hands thoroughly and frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, avoid sharing personal items, wear a mask, and maintain a social distance of six feet.

8. Churches must have hand sanitizer readily available at entrances, outside elevators, and other points of ingress. They should be sure that restrooms are properly stocked with soap, and sanitized frequently, recorded with an accompanying log sheet.
9. Doors should be propped open so that doorknobs or handles do not need to be used. It might, in fact, be more practical to have a designated person, an usher or greeter with gloves minding the door.
10. No choir or altar boys. Anyone helping in the altar must be an adult. Attendance at the altar must be limited to permit social distancing with those celebrating the Divine Liturgy. *The Archbishop only permits one priest, one or two chanters, and one sexton to serve during any worship service.*
11. *For indoor worship:* no community gatherings, fellowship hour, coffee service etc. Following Divine Liturgy, parishioners will be asked to go home immediately. *Since the Archbishop now allows outdoor worship, which we successfully premiered on June 14, we did offer coffee & tea safely by a single couple following all protocols.*
12. Everyone in attendance must wear facemasks. *For outdoor worship, we are allowing people not to wear a mask during the service as long as families remain at least 6 feet apart; after the dismissal, everyone must wear a mask as they approach to receive antidoron and for fellowship before leaving.*
13. For distribution of Eucharist (Holy Communion): explicit directives are given only verbally by the clergy with utmost care and attention for a manner that is safe and secure for everyone.
14. Churches must be cleaned routinely between each service in accordance with CDC guidelines, especially objects that are routinely touched, like door handles, or furniture. *In addition to our own staff doing this routinely every Monday, we hire a professional cleaning company to come every 3 weeks.*
15. Signs should be posted on the front door of the church explaining the directives and stating the assumed risk of those entering by age and preconditions.
16. Icons, the blessing cross, and other sacred vessels should be venerated without physical contact.
17. No service books should be distributed or left out for common use.