



St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church

The Journey Home

Re-opening St. Paul's for Worship

"Make Love Your Aim" - 1 Corinthians 14:1





”You have need of **patience**,
so that by doing the will of God you
will receive what is promised.”

Hebrews 10:36

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, members of our St. Paul's family,

Thank you all for your words of support for one another, your generosity, acts of kindness and the love you've shared with one another over these past several months. Most of all, thank you for your patience as we pass through these uncertain times as the Body of Christ, His Church, the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

The question on everyone's mind is - when we will open St. Paul's for worship once again? With the blessing of our bishop, Metropolitan Gerasimos, and in consultation with the local health authorities, **we will open our Church for the public celebration of the Liturgy on Sunday, June 28th.**

Metropolitan Gerasimos has provided guidelines and directives as to how best to proceed. Our Parish Staff and Parish Council have already begun readying the Church for communal worship once again. We are preparing what is needed to open our Church with all the necessary safety precautions in place.

The opening of St. Paul's for communal worship will be done in phases. Initially, for example, we will need to register online (or by calling the parish office) to attend services. Attendance is limited to no more than 100 people within the sanctuary because of the need to follow social distancing guidelines. The Parish Event Center will also be open to accommodate another 100 people, with Liturgy live-streamed into the Center (clergy will come to the Center to offer Holy Communion to the faithful gathered there). Seating will also be available in the plaza and if necessary, we will also use the Parish Hall. Please note that the wearing of masks is required. Certain liturgical practices like the kissing of icons and the Gospel Book must be temporarily modified. **These are not permanent changes to the ancient practices of our Church, but are temporary measures put in place to better ensure our safety at this time.**

For those unable to attend Liturgy, the live-streaming of our services will continue.

Let me ask for your continued patience as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters together. Please read this booklet carefully. It is meant to provide a guide for you as we gather for worship under these new, but temporary, circumstances.



With love in Christ,



WORSHIP GUIDELINES

What to Expect

1

LIMITED ATTENDANCE

At the present time, seating in our sanctuary is limited to 100 people by the State of California and local health department regulations on social gatherings. St. Paul's will seek to maximize worship opportunities for everyone through:

- advance reservations
- additional seating areas in the Event Center and the Parish Hall
- extra services (during the week)
- live-stream services can be found at www.stpaulsirvine.org

2

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Designated seating areas will be clearly marked to abide by current social distancing guidelines requiring at least six feet between families. Ushers will guide you to your seats. You may not be able to sit where you normally have in the past.

3

HEALTH SAFETY MEASURES

Please follow the signs and floor markings that provide specific directions in maintaining social distancing. Stations will be available to sanitize your hands. Face masks are required. There will be no Liturgy books, Sunday bulletins or other printed materials available.

4

PURCHASING CANDLES

In an effort to minimize the handling and exchanging of currency in the Narthex, please consider either purchasing your candles online from our website or by preparing your candle offering in an envelope to be brought to church and deposited in the candle tray in the Narthex.

5

HOLY COMMUNION

Orthodox Christians believe that in receiving Holy Communion we are receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is not a vehicle for the transmission of disease. We will distribute Holy Communion by asking you to receive with an open mouth, head tilted back.

6

WORSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

Instead of kissing, you are asked to reverence icons and other sacred objects by bowing. Please greet one another by bowing instead of embracing or shaking hands. Father Steve will not be able to bless the children. Please do not kiss the priest's hand.



WORSHIP GUIDELINES

Before Attending

What you are asked to do and understand before you arrive

ATTENDANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Those with any signs or symptoms of any acute illness (whether it is COVID-19 or not) **MUST** stay home, as should those who have come into contact with COVID-19. It is **strongly recommended** that parishioners who are 65 or older, especially those living in long-term care facilities and who suffer from serious medical conditions such as cardiac and/or pulmonary disease, diabetes, a compromised immune system, or other underlying health issues, participate in live-streamed services from home at this time. Questions should be directed to your healthcare provider.



RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

At the present time, seating in our sanctuary is limited to 100 people by the State of California and local health department regulations on social gatherings. Additional seating in the Event Center and Parish Hall will also be made available. Reservations are necessary to accommodate the limited number of worshipers we are allowed in a fair manner. Online and phone-in reservations will be required of those desiring to attend. Those arriving at church without a reservation may be turned away if there are no available seats.

PREPARE FOR OFFERINGS IN ADVANCE

To minimize the handling and exchanging of currency in the church, please consider either making your stewardship, other donations, and candle purchases through electronic giving or by preparing your offering in an envelope to be brought to church and deposited in one of the trays in the Narthex or as you exit the church after Liturgy. You may also mail your offering to the Church Office. Trays will not be passed during the service.



WHAT YOU AGREE TO BY ATTENDING

By voluntarily entering St. Paul's campus, you affirm that you are not currently ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; you agree to abide by the safety guidelines being practiced at St. Paul's including wearing a face mask and observing social distancing; you acknowledge that while safety measures are being taken by the church, it cannot guarantee the safety of every person present. You further acknowledge, that while the recommended CDC, State and Local County safety measures are being taken by the Church, the parish cannot guarantee that there is no risk of infection for attendees. If you are not able to agree to and affirm the above statements, we ask that you remain at home to participate in the live-streaming services.



WORSHIP GUIDELINES

During Services

What you are asked to do as you attend worship services

ON-TIME ARRIVAL



You will need to check in upon arrival at St. Paul's and you'll need to be guided to a seating area, it is most helpful and appreciated for you to arrive no later than 9:30 am -- 30 minutes **before** the Liturgy begins at 10 am.

FACE MASKS REQUIRED

For the health and safety of our community, all attendees will be **required** to wear protective face masks. Only children under the age of 2 should not wear masks. If you do not have a face mask, one will be provided.



FOLLOW THE SIGNS



Please follow posted signs at 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. Additional signage will indicate other safety guidelines and expectations.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN SEATING AREAS

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



WORSHIP ADJUSTMENTS



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WORSHIP GUIDELINES

During Services

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HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Orthodox Christians believe that in receiving Holy Communion we are receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is not a vehicle for the transmission of disease. However, with pastoral sensitivity and love 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 blessed bread and consume it before putting on your mask again. Then, please wear your face mask for the remainder of the service.



WORSHIP GUIDELINES

After Services

What you are to do and understand after worship services



MAINTAIN SOCIAL PHYSICAL 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 (or blessed bread) will be available for you to take from a tray located at the exit point from the service.



PLEASE DEPART IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

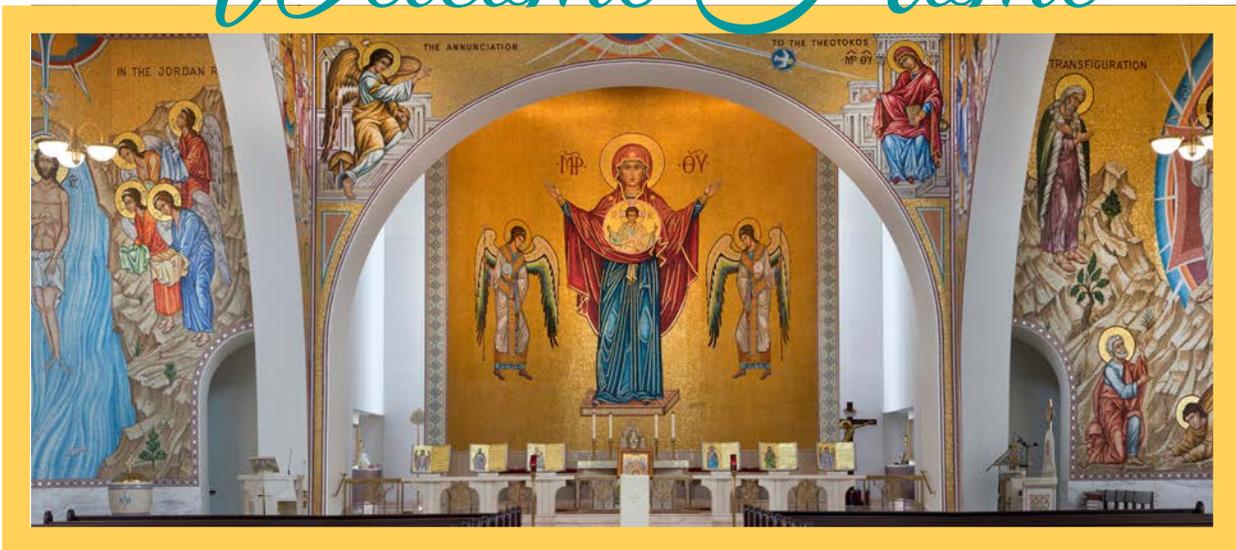
Much as this goes against our common practice following services, please do not congregate anywhere on the church property. All in attendance are asked to leave the premises immediately following the conclusion of the Liturgy.



NO COFFEE HOURS

Coffee hours, lunches, and other social gatherings will not be held at the parish during this initial phase of re-opening. Please understand we will return as soon as possible when restrictions are loosened.

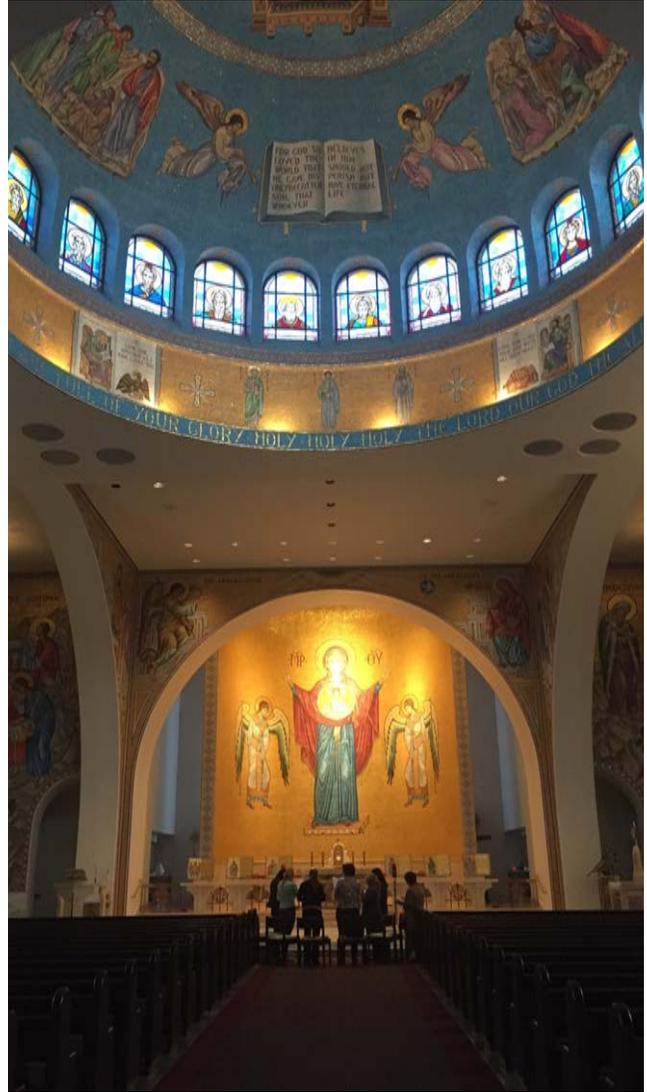
Welcome Home





“Blessed are those who persevere under trial because, having stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

JAMES 1:12



Thank you for your patience and perseverance during these uncertain times.