



HOLY TRANSFIGURATION ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE NEW ENGLAND DIOCESE ✦ ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

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Christ is Risen!

With the news of our state partially re-opening on May 20, we want to update you on where things stand regarding the re-opening of our church. We view the health and well-being of our parishioners and clergy as our most important consideration, and therefore we will continue to prioritize our health over our desire to re-open the church. As unsettling as the situation continues to be, we, unfortunately, do not expect to re-open our building in the near future. We believe it is most prudent to continue celebrating our services online. We recognize that not all of us are able to participate in these services and regret that we do not have other options at this time.

In order for us to determine a safe path forward, we will balance the direction we receive from our local government and health authorities, with our guidance from the Holy Synod. Additionally, to help us fully understand the situation we face, we have commissioned a task force to help us evaluate the risks and benefits of re-opening. This task force is comprised of parishioners who have a high level of expertise on the subjects related to the coronavirus. Our parish is truly blessed to have such capable members volunteer their time to assist us with this difficult task. Their work is ongoing and will help us to determine our next steps. They made an initial presentation on their considerations at our council meeting on May 12th.

Like all of you, we have started to think about what the future will look like. Of course, no one knows what the "new normal" will be, but we are open to exploring new ways to hold services. In order to be ready for the day we can celebrate in person (even if it looks different), we have started to purchase personal protective equipment as we recognize that social distancing guidelines will need to be followed with regard to entering the church, where we stand and the ways we may sing responses, just to name a few. Of course, deep cleaning the building before services will be a necessity. As hard as it will be, we do not expect to gather for fellowship in our church hall for the foreseeable future. There are many challenges which must be thoroughly considered before we move forward. Out of an abundance of caution, we will likely wait for other businesses and churches to re-open on May 20th and track their progress before finalizing our next course of action.

In light of our Holy Synod guidance, "finalizing" means: the task force presents recommendations to the Parish Council, the Parish Council formulates a plan, this plan is forwarded to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, for his blessing. Once the plan is blessed, we will both immediately share with the parish, and develop an action plan corresponding to the blessed plan.

We are committed to staying in touch with all of you as we chart our course forward. Please feel free to reach out with any suggestions and or concerns.

In the Risen Lord,

Fr. Steven and Parish Council Members