



HOLY TRANSFIGURATION ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

285 ALDEN AVENUE, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06515 203-387-3882

The Very Reverend Steven Voytovich, D.Min., Rector

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Greetings in the Lord,

As you know, the Parish Council appointed a task force, led by Xenios Papademetris, to develop recommendations for our gradual return to our church building. We are pleased to report that we submitted a plan which was drafted by the task force, approved by the Parish Council, and ultimately will be approved by Metropolitan Tikhon, our Locum Tenens. We will outline the plan here.

As we move forward, it is important to note that we are using these principles to guide us:

- ❖ The health and safety of our parishioners is our priority.
- ❖ Online services will remain the new normal until we are fully open.
- ❖ Because church services and choirs, specifically, have been found to be particularly risky, a conservative approach will be taken to re-entry.
- ❖ We are listening to your feedback but realize that each person has different views and health requirements. We are unlikely to fully satisfy everyone.
- ❖ We must continue to adhere to both government and OCA guidelines.

Step One of RE-Entry:

Who

- We will start with small groups of people in attendance.
- Attendance at services will be on a first come, first serve basis, and then will rotate. You will need to sign up in advance and receive a confirmation before you attend. You will receive an email when this becomes available. Here are three ways to communicate:
 - A link generated weekly in the bulletin and on the church website
 - By e-mail: e-mail our church address: holytransfigurationnh@gmail.com
 - By phone: call 203.387.3882, and press "0" to leave a message.
- Your age and the health concerns of your family must be considered before you attend services.
- We urge you to use your best judgement and not rush back to church. There is absolutely no obligation to do so.

When

- Week One Trial (date TBD): Tuesday evening vespers and Saturday morning Divine Liturgy for church leadership only.
- Post-Trial: Tuesday evening vespers and Saturday morning Divine Liturgy by R.S.V.P.
- At any point, we may need to revert to the trial phase to tweak our processes.
- Online services will continue. Fr. Steven will publish the schedule weekly.

How

- Upon arrival/entering the church:
 - ✓ Your temperature will be checked by a parishioner designated to manage attendance at the church on that occasion.
 - ✓ You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire/sign-in sheet attesting that you understand the serious health risks from the virus, especially to those in high risk categories.
 - ✓ By signing in you will also be committing to notify the parish if you test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of attending church; this will allow the parish notify all other attendees at that service.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be required to be worn in church. PPE will be available but due to cost constraints you are encouraged to bring your own.
- Social distancing will be required. An usher will escort you (and your family) to your seat. This seat will probably not be your “usual” seat.
- Families will need to sit together, and children will be required to stay with their families and not wander.
- We will follow a one-way traffic pattern in and out of church and for communion.
- The candle desk will be self-serve.
- There will only be one restroom available.
- We will not have an in-person coffee hour.
- The building will be thoroughly cleaned after each service.

The Service

- Prayer books will not be available.
- The choir will be limited and possibly just composed of small groups of family members.
- There will be no physical veneration of icons or the cross.
- Icons may be moved to facilitate the one-way traffic pattern.
- Individual napkins will be used for communion, special preparation of spoons, and the napkins will be burned after.
- Wine and prosfora after communion, antidoron (prosfora) at end of Liturgy, and personal commemorative loaves will be deferred for this initial step.

As you can see, there are many changes to our normal routine that must be followed for our re-entry to be successful. This is new for all of us and we will need your cooperation to make this happen. We will all need to be incredibly patient and follow the procedures as instructed while also recognizing that even these new procedures will likely need modifications. We can only move to the Step Two of re-entry, which will include additional services, once we have shown success at this step.

In Christ,

Parish Council