



Dear St. Nicholas Parishioners,

The St. Nicholas Parish Reactivation Plan developed by the Parish Council has been accepted and approved by His Eminence, Archbishop Mark and reentry to the church is ready to be implemented. As we prepare to reopen the church for worship and liturgical services, we will return to a different environment that emphasizes the safety and well-being of our laity and clergy.

Reentry guiding principles, recommendations and protocols were derived from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Pennsylvania state government and the Holy Synod of Orthodox Bishops. Without a vaccine, we must prepare to take decisive action in the case of COVID-19 flare-ups and implement continuous best practice recommendations by state/local governments and health authorities. Therefore, we must maintain resiliency and flexibility in our plans and mindset. Ultimately, we are all accountable for doing the right thing at an individual level with regards to following protocols and policies and established church attendance norms.

While we will follow these temporary guidelines for as long as necessary, our hope and prayers are to eventually return to our normal participation in liturgical worship and parish life.

Please carefully read the St. Nicholas reopening protocols that are being used in the state of Pennsylvania's "Yellow Phase".

CHURCH ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL AND GUIDANCE PLAN – "Yellow Phase"

- Parishioners should be in good health if planning to attend church services. The elderly and those with pre-existing or underlying health conditions (i.e. heart disease, cancer, asthma, diabetes, impaired kidney function) are recommended, but not mandated, to refrain from attending services in the church, and should continue to view services online.
- Parishioners will bring their own mask or face covering. ALL parishioners MUST wear a mask or face covering before entering the church, throughout the service and when exiting the church.
- Parishioners are required to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of Divine Liturgy. Late arrivals will not be allowed to enter the church. Temperature screening and a health questionnaire will be done upon entering. If you have a temperature or fail the health questionnaire you must go home. Please do not come to church if you are sick.
- Front doors to the church will be the only ENTRANCE and EXIT. For parishioners with special needs, the attending Parish Council member will direct them to an alternate entry doors.



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- Hand sanitizer will be used upon entering the church.
- All parishioners attending services MUST follow 6-foot social distancing protocols.
- Parishioners will be ushered to a pew by a Parish Council member.
- Parishioners will follow the designated traffic pattern for ENTERING and EXITING the church and when receiving Holy Communion.
- A collection basket for donation envelopes will be placed in the Narthex. All donations are to be in an envelope and properly marked. NO cash change will be available for candles or otherwise.
- Candles will be pre-placed in candle stands for parishioners to light. Parishioners are to maintain appropriate social distance during candle lighting.
- Church bulletins, notebooks, sign-up sheets, liturgical books, pamphlets, and children's books will be removed from the Narthex, candle desk and pews, to prevent handling.
- Children who are realistically able to stay with their parent and wear a mask or face covering throughout the length of the service are permitted to attend. There will be no common areas (including the vestibule, Narthex, hallway) for children if they feel the need to leave the pew.
- The CDC recommends that children under 2 should not have their face covered by a mask or other covering, therefore, children under 2 will not attend services.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

- The Pastor will stand on the first step of the altar to deliver Holy Communion.
- Upon reaching the chalice, the communicant will breathe in, remove mask, tilt head back with a wide-open mouth and receive the Gifts.
- The Pastor will "Drop" the Holy Communion into their open mouth without touching their lips.
- The communicant will use a disposable paper towel to wipe their own lips. The towel will be placed in a basket. The pastor will reverently burn all paper towels after the liturgy has ended.



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- There will be no blessed bread and small cups of wine distributed after Holy Communion at this time.
- Children, not attending the Divine Liturgy, can receive Holy Communion after the Liturgy has concluded and participants have left the church. A Parish Council member will open the doors and the Pastor will provide Holy Communion on the front steps of the church. (If inclement weather, communion will be provided in the Narthex.)

PARISHIONER HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Parish Council members will be in the Narthex before, during, and after Liturgy to assist with all protocols, guidance, and questions.
- Due to seasonal changes the air conditioner will be on. Dress appropriately as social distancing may require that you sit near the air conditioning vents. Personal items such as sweaters and coats will be kept with you in the pew.
- Restrooms are to be used for emergencies only.
- Restricted areas will NOT be accessible: Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, Hallways, Church Offices, Basement, Choir Loft, Elevator, and Stairwell.
- The church and areas used/touched by parishioners (i.e. handrails, pews, and restrooms) will be cleaned after each service by designated parish personnel.

YOU MUST SIGN-UP TO ATTEND SERVICES

- The "YELLOW PHASE" protocol allows for a total of 25 people to attend services.
- Divine Liturgy will be served on Sundays. Parishioners will be divided into 2 groups by their last name: **GROUP 1 = A through K**, and **GROUP 2 = L through Z**
- **GROUP 1** will attend on the first Sunday Divine Liturgy is served. **GROUP 2** will attend the next Sunday Divine Liturgy. The alternating pattern will be continued until a full congregation is allowed.
- The church Administrative Assistant will send an email to **GROUP 1** or **GROUP 2** the Monday before liturgy. You must **RSVP** and provide your name and the names of all of family members attending, by **noon on Thursday** of that week. "Maybe attending" is not an option.
- All **RSVP's** will receive a Confirmation to attend services by Saturday. If you do not receive a confirmation, do not attend services.



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CHURCH AVAILABILITY FOR PRAYER AND CANDLE LIGHTING

- The church will open for designated times for prayer and candle lighting during the pastor's office hours.
 - Wednesday 12:00 am – 6:00 pm
 - Friday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Parishioners can schedule appointments at 30-minute increments (15 min prayer, 15 min to sanitize). To schedule, contact Fr. Matthew by phone or text.
- Upon arriving at the church for you scheduled time, call Fr. Matthew and he will open the Main Fellowship Hall Doors for you to enter.

SCHEDULING CONFESSION AND SPECIAL SERVICES

- Contact Fr. Matthew to schedule a time for Confession. Confessions may be done by phone or in-person.
- All special requests for services (Baptism, Panikhida, etc.) must be approved by Fr. Matthew. The Parish Council President must be informed.

Please keep the YELLOW PHASE protocols handy for quick reference as we all learn to navigate the new guidelines. You will receive updated communications as protocols change. Please direct questions to the Administrative Assistant at Assistant4StNicholas@outlook.com.

Yours in Christ,

St. Nicholas Parish Council

Reactivation Committee