

St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church ~ McKeesport and Duquesne, PA
Re-Opening Procedures/Guidance for Church Attendance Related to COVID-19
GREEN PHASE – ALLEGHENY COUNTY
June/July 2020

These guidelines for **re-opening our parish** are subject to change without notice as circumstances dictate. These guidelines comply with local and regional rules; with guidelines published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and with directives previously published by His Grace Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America.

Under the GREEN PHASE, we lovingly welcome all faithful members of our parish to come back to Church.

At this time, we are excited to welcome back as many of you as possible in prayer and worship! We hope that you will take the time to look over these new guidelines and to do your utmost to adhere to them, for the safety of all of our St. Sava Community!

These REVISED guidelines are effective beginning on **Sunday June 21, 2020** as prescribed below.

Summer Hours are in effect, Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 AM. (Please be in Church by 9:15AM!)

WEEKDAY LITURGY

A special weekday Liturgy will be offered on either Special Feast Days, or Wednesdays, but check the Monthly Online Calendar for updated schedules. (For those who are elderly/at-risk or who are otherwise uncomfortable attending on Sunday).

Beginning in July, weekday Liturgy will be offered *every other week* and is subject to change based on attendance.

Please check the monthly calendar or contact Fr. Stevo for dates.

LIVESTREAMING

Services will continue to be livestreamed on the St. Sava Facebook page. You can link to the site from our parish website (www.stsavapa.org.) To respect the privacy of in-person attendees, the pews will not be visible and Communion will be presented off-camera.

WHO CAN ATTEND

Parishioners are welcome on a first-come basis, and will be asked **to call ahead and “make a reservation”** as described below.

The names of those attending each service will be kept on file for contact tracing. If someone would happen to contract COVID-19, we will be able to advise others to self-quarantine and also will be able to assist public health officials with contact information.

MAKE A RESERVATION

Parishioners are asked to **call the rectory at (412) 672-1872 Monday – Saturday** on the week prior to the Sunday they wish to attend. They should leave a message with their name, phone number and number of people attending to confirm. **To protect the health and well being of our entire parish community – no one will be permitted to attend without a confirmed reservation.** Furthermore, BEFORE attending Church, please review the following questions to insure you are free from any of these symptoms, and of course, **if you are not feeling well, please stay home!**

1. Are you currently or have you had in the past 14 days any of the following:
 - a) Persistent cough
 - b) Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - c) Any fever, chills, headache, body aches, sore throat, loss of taste or smell
2. Have you been diagnosed with COVID? If so, when?
3. Have you ever been told by a medical professional to self-isolate or quarantine? If so, when?
4. Have you at any time been tested for COVID? If so, when? What was the result?
5. Have you, to the best of your knowledge, been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID? If so, when?
6. Have you, in the past 14 days, travelled outside of the United States or to a known “hot spot” in the United States? If so, when and where?
7. Are you a health care worker or first responder?
8. Do you have an underlying medical condition? (Refer to CDC guidelines)
9. Would you object to wearing a mask in church?
10. Would you object to having your temperature taken prior to entering church?

WHAT YOU AGREE TO BY ATTENDING

Thank you for your patience and understanding in these unprecedented times; also, for supporting Fr. Stevo and your parish leaders and moving forward together in a mutual spirit of love and cooperation.

No one, at any time, should be ashamed or feel coerced to return to Church before they can comfortably attend. Your reasonable concerns have been taken into consideration in the development of these guidelines.

Everyone understands that attendance at Church is strictly voluntary.

By *voluntarily* entering St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church (“the Church”), you affirm that you are not currently ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; you acknowledge that while safety measures are being taken by the Church, it cannot guarantee the safety of every person present; you agree to abide by the social distancing and safety guidelines being practiced in the Church; you consent to hold harmless the Church, its leadership, the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America and its leadership against any damages or claims regarding your voluntary presence. If you are not able to agree to and affirm the above statements, you may not participate in worship in person and may choose to join online.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing – defined as a minimum of 6 feet between people – will be maintained at all times inside and outside the Church, including the parking lot. Family members who live within the same household are exempt and may sit together.

FACE COVERING

Parishioners over the age of 2 years will wear a face covering, with the exception of the priest and choir members. A face covering is defined as a mask that covers BOTH the mouth and nose. Masks are to be worn upon entering the Church and kept on throughout the service.

Those unwilling or unable to wear a mask are asked to remain at home and to follow the service via livestream.

A mask will be provided (limited supply) to you if you do not have one on arriving at Church.

ENTRY/EXIT FROM CHURCH

Only one door will be used to enter and exit the Church in order to limit movement and exposure within the building. This will be the double glass door next to the parking lot. The Church Hall doors will remain locked.

Doors will be opened at 9:00 AM and will be locked promptly at 9:30 AM. Please arrive on time for services.

Please go directly to your car at the end of the service, do not gather either in Church or in the parking lot outside.

CLEANING/SANITATION/HAND-SANITIZER

The Church will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before each service. Hand sanitizer will be available. (Please use the Cleaning products in your pew to sanitize your area after Church)

We are accepting donations of cleaning supplies, disinfectants and hand sanitizer at this time. This is because we have had difficulty in finding a reliable supplier of these items.

ICON VENERATION

To properly venerate icons at this time, please stand back from the icon and bow at the waist. Do not kiss or touch the icon.

SEATING

Those attending Church will be seated in **every other pew** at a distance of 6 feet apart. Family members who live within the same household may sit together. Families who sit together need to remain together, with children staying close to parents; young children are not permitted to wander throughout the open spaces.

Choir members will be seated in the choir loft.

Once seated, please remain in your seat and limit movement except if you plan to receive Communion.

CANDLES

We are suspending the sale of candles at this time to minimize the need for anyone to handle money which is a potential source of spreading the coronavirus.

Candles will be placed in the candle stands and at the cathedras by an attendant before you arrive at Church. If you wish to light a candle, please inform the attendant and they will light it for you.

If you wish to make a candle donation, then any free will offering will be gladly accepted. Please include an amount of your choosing in your Sunday offering envelope.

If you are taking Communion:

Please continue to observe social distancing. The center aisle will be marked to help you understand where you are to stand. Only one pew at a time should get in line. When it is your turn, Fr. Stevo will say the prayer for you ("the servant of God receives the precious body and blood ... ") from a comfortable distance. Once he has said the prayer – remove your mask, approach the chalice, tilt your head back and open your mouth WIDE so there is no contact with the spoon. Do NOT close your lips on the spoon. Replace your mask and return to your seat.

COLLECTION

A stationary collection plate will be placed at the rear of the Church at the Tutor's desk. Please drop your envelope in the plate either when entering or leaving the Church. For your convenience, on line giving is now available either at our parish website (www.stsavapa.org) or from your member access page within Breeze.

DISMISSAL AT END OF LITURGY

As with Communion, parishioners are asked to pay attention to the markings on the center aisle floor and to maintain social distancing as they approach Fr. Stevo for his blessing. Maintain a safe distance and bow your head as he blesses you. Do NOT kiss the cross or the priest's hand. Proceed to your car as previously prescribed.

RESTROOMS

Downstairs restrooms will be open and available. Handwashing is strongly encouraged.

CHURCH HALL/KITCHEN

The Church Hall and Kitchen are closed at this time. No one is permitted in these areas.

COFFEE HOUR/SOCIALS/MEETINGS

As previously prescribed all coffee hours, social gatherings and meetings are not permitted.

If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Stevo or any parish council member.

Thank you for your continued patience, your kindness and loving support of your St. Sava Community!

R E S O U R C E S

We gratefully acknowledge all of the resources listed below that were consulted in the creation of our re-opening plan:

- ❖ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ❖ PA Governor Tom Wolf Public Health Press Releases (governor.pa.gov/newsroom)
- ❖ His Grace Irinej, Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Eastern America, for his loving guidance and directives
- ❖ Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America – Updates in Response to COVID-19/Coronavirus
- ❖ Proto-Stavrofor Stevo Rocknage for his continued strength and spiritual leadership
- ❖ Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America – Parish Reopening Toolkit
- ❖ Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America – Online COVID-19 Resource Center
- ❖ Orthodox Church in America – Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; ‘Continuing the Discussion – the Process to Open our Parishes’ – Archbishop Mark (May 16, 2020).
- ❖ Antiochian Orthodox Christian Diocese of North America; St. Michael’s Orthodox Church, Greensburg, PA COVID-19 Update (May 17, 2020).