

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Upon reviewing the directives of our Metropolitan and our local governor and after discussions with the Parish Council, we have set the date for a partial reopening of Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church in Pawtucket at June 7, 2020, the feast of Pentecost. This reopening will adhere to appropriate principles of social distancing and the governor's directive that only limited amounts of people gather in closed spaces.

At this stage we have estimated that 38 parishioners is an appropriate number to start with due to the size of our church building. Because families can be considered one unit this number may go as high as 48. In order to keep to this limit, participation in services will be by reservation only. Please send an email to secretary@assumptionri.org to reserve a place in church.

The weekly reservation sign-up period will be from Monday at 9 A.M. until Friday at 2 P.M. which is the deadline to send an email to the church office to make a reservation for the upcoming Sunday.

Groups of 38 unrelated parishioners or 48 including family members will be chosen on a first come first serve basis determined by the reception time of the email to the office for each liturgy.

Whoever does not make the cutoff point for a specific liturgy will not lose his/her place and will be included in the next scheduled liturgy – in this way as many people as possible will get a chance to participate.

Families should please indicate clearly how many family members will be coming.

Adult children of the elderly who do not use email are asked to inform their parents and send an email to the church office on their behalf if they wish to participate.

Fr. Philip will attempt to call certain elderly who do not have email or children to help them in order to incorporate them on the list if they so wish because they have no other way of making a reservation.

The office administrator Beth will send you an email verifying your reservation and indicating which liturgy you will be participating in.

If you are scheduled to attend liturgy but become ill in the meantime, please do not come to liturgy.

Please do not appear at the Church without a reservation.

Please respect the following directives:

- 1) All worshippers must wear a mask or face covering.
- 2) For children between ages 2 and 5, the wearing of a face covering or mask is at the discretion of the child's parent or guardian. Children under the age of 2 should not wear a face covering or mask.
- 3) Hand sanitizer will be provided in the narthex and will be used upon entering and exiting the church.
- 4) To appropriately venerate the icons, gospel, and cross, please limit yourselves to a reverent bow of your head.
- 5) When entering the Church a Parish Council Member serving as an usher will direct you to the designated pews to seat you.
- 6) Attendees who are not part of the same immediate household must be seated at least 6 feet apart – there will be markers on the pews and the designated Parish Council members will help you with this.
- 7) Families may sit together in the same pews with no social distancing between them.
- 8) The Church's main door will remain open during services to allow airflow.
- 7) Tape will be placed on the floor to provide for spacing for social distancing for the communion and antidoron lines.
- 8) Holy Communion and the Antidoron will be handed to you by Fr. Philip according to normal Orthodox Church practice during an epidemic as directed by our Metropolitan. The main difference in practice is that you are asked not to wipe your mouth on the communion cloth after receiving communion.
- 9) Fr. Philip or any priest communing the people will be wearing a face mask during the distribution of communion and the distribution of the Antidoron for the protection of the parishioners.
- 10) Fr. Philip will distribute the antidoron at the end of the service, please do not kiss his hand or place your hand into the antidoron basket so we may comply with State directives.

- 11) To comply with the aforementioned State regulations please refrain from handshakes, hugging or kissing in general.
- 12) We will not have communal gathering pre or post service (e.g., coffee hours or other food services).
- 13) There will be no access for any reason to the hall area, church offices and/or the kitchen.
- 14) There will be no circulation of the tray at the end of the service. The tray will be in the narthex and parishioners are welcome to place their offering in the tray as they pass through the narthex or offer their donation online through the “virtual tray.”
- 15) Our services will continue to be available by live stream.
- 16) People over the age of 65 and people who have underlying health conditions – who are at high risk for COVID-19 – are advised by the state authorities to stay home.
- 17) The Church shall be cleaned and disinfected between each service, including disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, microphones, and shared instruments).
- 18) We ask for your patience and that you respect these directives and strictly comply. These directives and restrictions are necessary to protect the health and safety of all.

God bless you all.

Fr. Philip Zymaris, George Foussekis and the Parish Council.