

Basic Parish Guidelines for Navigating the Pandemic

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church: Revised October 2020

Key Principles For St. Athanasius Applied Throughout the Pandemic

For our entire parish community, two key principles undergird our entire reopening process:

1. We strive to obey our archbishop (and work with his appointed deputies)
2. We strive to attend to the directives of the civil authorities (federal, state, local)

Background

As we began our reopening our parish in early May for in-person worship, we were guided throughout by both national OCA directives, as well as diocesan directives, which continue to be updated. Our previous reopening plans (for earlier phases) reference many of these directives. You can read our previous [Phase I Plan](#), [Phase I \(Part 2\) Plan](#), [Phase II “Open Door” Plan](#), and our previous [Notes on Navigating Coronavirus](#) from August.

Going Forward into late 2020 with an Evolving “Open Door Plan”

As of fall 2020, our Sunday attendance is holding steady at 75-80% of our pre-COVID levels (using two floors to accommodate people on Sunday mornings.) Many of our elderly and those with conditions making them vulnerable to COVID-19 have relied on online streaming options (e.g. [our parish youtube channel](#).) home prayers, and occasional pastoral/sacramental visits. We are committed to continue our motion towards full resumption of normal church life.

Here are some details about how church life is proceeding forward as we head into fall 2020:

- Our worship schedule is essentially “normal” (see our [online calendar](#))
- All worship services (including Liturgy) are open to both parishioners and visitors
- For our Sunday Liturgy, we are asking regular parishioners to divide into three teams
 - Team Mary (last names A-J) and Team Martha (last names K-O) and Team Lazarus (last names P-Z.) While Team Mary is downstairs, (for instance,) the other two teams are upstairs. Two teams may worship together in the nave (upstairs) while one team worships in the hall--to allow more spreading out.
 - Visitors are invited to worship upstairs in the nave (90-100-person capacity)
 - Communion is offered both upstairs and downstairs each Sunday
- We ask all who enter the church to wash their hands/apply hand sanitizer
- We ask all adults to wear a mask (unless receiving Communion) while indoors
- Unless you are in transit to and from a spot in the church, try to maintain 6 ft of distance between households.
- We are offering an “Outdoor Coffee Hour” each Sunday in fall and winter 2020. Coffee will be brewed downstairs and served in to-go cups. Participants are invited to spread out on the grounds but may use the church hall in inclement weather.
- In-person Church School (“Super Saturdays”) for children is being offered on certain Saturdays throughout fall 2020.
- In-person Wednesday night adult Christian Education is being offered 720-820pm and visitors are welcome. (visit www.athanasiusoca.org for more info)