

## **Reopening Plan for St. George Ukrainian Orthodox Church, St. Catharines, Ontario from the Coronavirus Pandemic**

The following reopening plan has been prepared and approved by St. George Ukrainian Orthodox Church, St. Catharines, Ontario for the reopening of the church in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. All Parishioners and visitors to the church property must follow these principles:

### **ENTRANCE INTO CHURCH**

- Parishioners must screen themselves prior to coming to church, even if you have not experienced any symptoms of the Coronavirus/Covid-19. If you have any symptoms, you are not to attend church service.
- If you are at all ill, do not attend the church service.
- Parishioners shall not come to the church by a ride share (i.e. Uber, etc.), taxi, or by any other means of public transit. It is strongly recommended that parishioners arrive in their own vehicle or arrange for another Parishioner to transport them.
- Parishioners must sanitize their hands upon entering the church.
- Parishioners must wear protective masks throughout the service.
- Next to the sanitizing station, is a sign-in book. **Parishioners will be signed-in by an Usher with their phone number at every service they attend. This allows for quick notification to all parishioners who attended a service if someone becomes ill.** We are NOT taking "attendance" as a matter of who was here or who was not but as a SAFETY measure. God willing, it will be completely unnecessary but if someone in the Parish were to contract Covid-19 this would allow us to notify anyone else who may have been exposed in a timely manner to help prevent the spread to others.
- Parishioners should avoid using the washrooms, unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Please use the washroom to wash your hands with soap and water. Upon returning into the church from the washroom, Parishioners must sanitize their hands.
- An Usher will assist with candle purchasing, provision of donation envelopes, retrieval of Memorial Books (Hramatky) and purchase of prayer books.
- There will be no collection plate for Sunday offering. We encourage all Parishioners to make pre-authorized payments directly from your financial institution to the church. This eliminates unnecessary handling of envelopes and donations. For those who still prefer to physically make their donation, a donation tray/box will be set up in the entrance vestibule to deposit your donation. Please first place your donation in an envelope. Do not deposit your cheque or cash directly into the deposit boxes. Parishioners should take a supply of donation envelopes home and prepare their envelope at home.

- We understand that traditionally, some Parishioners have had their own area/seat that they occupy during services. Due to social distancing requirements this will change. To this end:
  - Every other pew will be closed off.
  - Only family members living in the same household may sit/stand together. All others must observe social distancing requirements and stand 2 metres (6 feet) apart.
  - An Usher will lead you to the pews and direct you to your seat so that we know which places have been utilized.

## **DURING THE CHURCH SERVICE**

- Veneration of icons are an expression of our faith. A cloth soaked in sanitizing solution is available to wipe the icon. As the veneration of holy and sacred objects is an expression of one's faith, if you feel uncomfortable doing so, you have not committed a sin, just bow before the icon in respect.
  - Large candlesticks for the Epistle/Gospel readings and Great Entrance will not be distributed.
  - Parishioners are not to wander in the church, in the Parish facilities, or outside on the Parish grounds.
  - Children shall not be allowed to roam the aisles. Sunday school is suspended.
  - All prayer books and other items have been removed from the pews. Please bring your own prayer books and take them home with you after service. Prayer books are available for purchase.
- Only one parishioner will be allowed in the restrooms at a time. Wash your hands thoroughly after using the restroom. Upon returning into the church from the washroom, Parishioners must sanitize their hands.

## **END OF THE LITURGY**

- At the conclusion of the service, parishioners will wait in their pews to safely proceed forward to venerate the cross remembering to keep socially distant. Parishioners may bow to the icons and the cross, avoiding direct contact with the surfaces.
- Prosfora will be handed out at the end of the service in separate containers to the faithful as they approach by the altar server.
- Parishioners must leave the church premises, including the parking lot and exterior grounds, upon conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, all while maintaining social distancing. Coffee hour is suspended.
- If after attending any service, a Parishioner experiences any symptoms of or tests positive for Coronavirus/Covid-19, in addition to immediately contacting their

medical provider, they must contact the Rectory to inform us of the date they last attended service.

## **CONFESSiON AND COMMUNiON**

Bearing in mind that the offering of the Bloodless Sacrifice should never be cancelled in any case, because where there is no Eucharist, there is no Church life, and also that the Holy Body and Blood of Christ are partaken for the health of both soul and body, taking into account, however the historical practice of the Orthodox Church in the conditions of epidemics.

**Confession:** will be conducted in the usual manner. Father will wear the appropriate PPE, and the penitent should wear a mask. After each confession Father will sanitize his hands, and the Gospel/Cross.

**Communion:** Father will commune the faithful in the usual manner with the spoon. Father will wear a face shield. Each parishioner will be communed with his/her own metal communion spoon, and red cloth (which will be sanitized for the next service). The person coming for communion will need to open their mouths wide and tilt their head back. Father will place the Eucharist into their mouths, once Father has removed the spoon the person can close their mouth and consume the Eucharist. The Chalice is not to be kissed. Always remembering social distancing when you are approaching.

**Zapivka:** Following communion the wine will be served in the usual manner, in individual plastic cups, and the prosphora will be portioned in small cup-cake paper liners. Remember social distancing as you take the zapivka.

We are deeply concerned not only for the health of our Faithful, but for their moral and their spiritual life. We know that re-opening the Church with attention to nuance of the facts on the ground is the best way to proceed. We are committed to reopening, and with an abiding sense of responsibility for the spiritual health of the Faithful.