

Saturday, June 27, 2020 (updated)

Dear Stewards and Friends of St. Demetrios,

Our parish is now entering Phase 3 of reopening, which means that we can have a total of 50 people in the building, including clergy, ushers, other personnel. This number is the maximum currently allowed in the City of Chicago for worship services.

This in accordance with the protocol of our Metropolis, which is also bound by the policies of the City of Chicago. For the time being, we will need to take reservations in advance for people to attend the divine services. We hope that these restrictions eventually will be alleviated even further, at which point we will inform you regarding any other changes or simplifications to our procedures for church attendance.

These limitations are unnatural for all of us, as the Divine Liturgy is the Lord's banquet, for which the Gospel says that He not only invites some people, but tells the servant "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled" (Lk 14:23). With pain we accept the fact of these temporary limitations, but we also hope in the Lord that in the weeks and months ahead these things may be at least somewhat alleviated.

Again, we thank you for your patience with us during this time. We ask you to continue to pray for our parish as we are always praying for you and your families!

Note: According to the CDC, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that spreads from person to person; therefore, it is advised for high risk individuals to continue to stay safe by staying at home and limiting exposure. High Risk Individuals include but are not limited to: People with chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease and immunocompromised conditions such as cancer treatment, smoking, immune deficiencies, prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.

Please read below the instructions regarding attending church services during this time. **Please know that no exceptions to these rules can be granted**, as they are stipulated by our civil and ecclesiastical authorities. We are deeply grateful for your cooperation. To God's glory through the intercessions of Saint Demetrios!

- ❖ All persons must comply with the guidelines of our Parish Council and Metropolis protocol.
- ❖ Now that we have reached the capacity of 50 people for church services, we will be using a slightly simpler and easier method of signing up for church. To sign up online, please click on the link, which is very easy to use: <https://tinyurl.com/StDsignup2>. Please be aware that on-line signups will not be available the day before the service; the list will be closed for administrative purposes.
- ❖ You still are welcome to call the church office (MWF 11am-1pm) if you prefer to sign up by phone. Our secretaries have limited hours, but they will make every effort to respond to you as quickly as they can. If no one answers, please leave a message.

- ❖ If our secretaries leave a message with you regarding an open date, please call us back to let us know whether or not you will attend. If we do not hear from you, we will offer the spot to someone else. All further reservations will be confirmed by Friday.
- ❖ Since space is still limited, **we ask you not to sign up for multiple Sundays in a row right away**; we want to make sure everyone has a chance to sign up who wants to.
- ❖ **On the day of the service, you must arrive between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. The doors will be locked at 10:00 a.m., and after that entrance will be denied.**
- ❖ Masks must be worn at all times, except when receiving Holy Communion. We ask that you please bring your own mask.
- ❖ Please always observe social distancing (with exception of immediate family), observing boundaries that have been set by our COVID Safety Team. Please observe and follow all floor markings and barriers.
- ❖ Each person must allow his/her temperature to be scanned by the usher(s) on duty. Those who are visibly ill or register a body temperature of 100 degrees or more will not be allowed to enter the church or its facilities; please stay home and get well!
- ❖ Please refrain from venerating icons.
- ❖ Use the provided hand sanitizers before entering the church proper and exiting the church or after touching any item.
- ❖ The Usher(s) will hand you your candles and/or 7-day vigil lamp(s) to light. 7-day vigil lamps are to be placed only in the narthex.
- ❖ If you are in ill health or have underlying health issues that may place you at risk, please remain at home and worship with us via YouTube live, or Facebook live. We want you to be healthy!
- ❖ While the restroom upstairs is available, other areas of the church building (e.g., downstairs restrooms, both halls, classrooms, all rooms used by the ministries and auxiliaries of the Church, gymnasium, office and kitchen) are **closed** until further notice. Wandering throughout the church building is not permitted.
- ❖ As usual, all persons using the restrooms should observe proper personal hygiene; wash your hands and please leave the restroom as clean as possible.
- ❖ All parishioners and worshippers will enter and exit through the front door, as directed by our usher(s).
- ❖ At the time of Holy Communion, if you wish to commune, please closely follow the instructions of our usher(s).

- ❖ When receiving Holy Communion, please do not touch the communion cloth or blot your lips with the cloth. As always, please be properly prepared spiritually through appropriate fasting, prayer, scripture reading and confession if needed.
- ❖ Antidoro will not be distributed.

Last but not least: thank you for your understanding, patience, cooperation, prayer and love during these trying and unusual times, as we do our best to continue ministering to you and your families. God bless and keep you healthy and safe!

In Christ's service,

Father Apostolos N. Georgiarentis, Father Panayiotis Hasiakos,

The St. Demetrios Parish Council, and our COVID Safety Team.