

SUMMARY CHECKLIST FOR CELEBRATING DIVINE LITURGY UNDER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS For the Province of Ontario

*Возлюбім один одного, щоб одностудно визнавати:
Отця, і Сина, і Святого Духа, Тройцю єдиносущну і нероздільну.
Let us love one another, so that we may be of one mind in confessing:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one in being and undivided.*

This checklist is based on the “Summary Sheet” found in the *Worshipsafe* document issued by Ontario Dioceses and Eparchies on June 1, 2020 (See attached Toronto Eparchy version, pp. 26-29) and adapted for use by the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada. As you proceed in the re-opening you may need to refer to the *Worshipsafe* document for more details on the individual points in this checklist. The guidelines are intended to be applied as “best practices” for our Church and for the safety of our parishioners. While implementing these directives provides no guarantee that viruses such as the Coronavirus COVID-19 will not be contracted, they are the best and most practical measures presently available to protect the safety of our faithful and clergy.

If as Pastor/Administrator you are unable to safely open the church following the enclosed Guidelines and Eparchial Summary/Checklist, please do not open your church.

Physical distancing in the sanctuary may require the pastor to significantly limit the number of persons allowed into the sanctuary. The distancing rule is 3 m. for anyone singing/chanting (i.e. clergy and cantor/s). In all matters it is imperative that the physical distancing of 2 m. be maintained by others attending divine services. Physical distancing requirements may limit the attendees to less than the allowable capacity by government regulation. For example, 30% of church capacity may mean 50 persons, however when bearing in mind the physical distancing requirement the church attendance may need to be limited to a lower number. NOTE: capacity calculations must include celebrants and ushers and screeners.

Any persons assisting in any capacity shall be supplied with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

1. PRIOR TO CELEBRATION:

- 1.1. The **church building** must be prepared appropriately. This includes: floor and seat markings indicating where and in which direction movement is allowed; roping/taping off pews in order to ensure physical distancing; ensuring that it is not possible for attendees to physically touch (including kiss) sacred objects in church, etc. Consideration should be given to removing the tetrapod and any icon stands which parishioners would customarily kiss. If there had been a prior service in the church then proper sanitization must have been done and recorded before a subsequent service (note the sanitization instructions in the Toronto Eparchy *Worshipsafe* document (pp.12-13).

- 1.2. There shall be **no materials (prayerbooks, song sheets, etc.) in the pews** and no bulletin shall be distributed in church. Pastors may advise parishioners to bring their own prayerbooks to church and take them with them when they are leaving.
- 1.3. **Cantors** are excluded from the above restriction.
- 1.4. **Hygiene stations** must be prepared with an adequate supply of hand sanitizer. These stations should be placed at the entrance, exit, and near the washrooms.
- 1.5. **Waste baskets** shall be placed at the exit in order for attendees to discard any disposable PPE used during the service.
- 1.6. It is recommended that **collection baskets** be placed close to the entrance and/or exit so that no collection takes place during the service.
- 1.7. **Washrooms** shall be accessible, however if they are in the church basement access to the rest of the basement area shall be blocked off. (Please note the specific cleaning requirements in the Toronto Eparchy *Worshipsafe* document, pp. 12-13).

2. ENTERING THE CHURCH:

- 2.1. The **limits on the number of persons** attending according to government regulation must be strictly adhered to (up to 30% capacity, if physical distancing can be maintained).
- 2.2. Parishioners should be advised to maintain **physical distancing requirements of 2 m.** in the process of entering the church. This means arriving at church early.
- 2.3. The pastor must **organize a SafeWorship team** and develop a mechanism for implementing the requirements outlined in this checklist (including the direction of movement within the church).
- 2.4. The pastor in consultation with his Pastoral Council must establish an **organized method** by which attendance limits are implemented. This could involve dividing the parish list accordingly and inviting parishioners to attend. It could involve simply counting the number of persons who enter, and then closing (locking the church door) once capacity has been reached. No one shall enter the church once the limit has been reached or the service begins (whichever occurs first).
- 2.5. It is highly recommended to have a separate **entrance and exit** to the church.
- 2.6. Parishioners must be informed that wearing a mask upon entering the church is highly recommended.
- 2.7. Parishioners should be provided the **COVID-19 questionnaire** to fill out at home, to be collected upon their entry for any services. One questionnaire per household will be required.
- 2.8. One or more ushers shall be at the entrance (supplied with both surgical mask and gloves) and welcome attendees. They will receive and initial the questionnaire. Anyone who has forgotten their questionnaire shall be provided one and they must exit the church, fill it out, and return with it.
- 2.9. Should someone not comply or be unable to assure that they are symptom free, they must be respectfully directed to not enter the church and return home.
- 2.10. Pastors may request that the ushers use a **non-contact thermometer** to check the temperature of those who enter.
- 2.11. All collected questionnaires shall be kept along with the list of all clergy and assisting personnel in attendance for a given service. These **will remain part of the parish records until such time as the Eparchial chancery indicates that they can be destroyed.**

- 2.12. When possible, it is advised that **during the period of admission** into the church, the **door be kept open** in order to minimize the need for people to touch the door. When such touching does take place the usher at the door must sanitize the door where it was touched. For more details refer to the Toronto Eparchy *Worshipsafe* document p.14).
- 2.13. If there is **an elevator** in the church it is to be disinfected by an usher (medical mask and gloves) after each use. For more details refer to the Toronto Eparchy *Worshipsafe* document p.14).
- 2.14. The best procedure for the **lighting of votive candles** shall be determined by the pastor. This may mean that an usher is designated to light the number of candles requested by attendees. It is recommended that donations for the lighting of candles be made by attendees in the collection basket placed near the exit. To limit movement during the service, no lighting of candles shall take place during the service.

3. DURING THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION:

- 3.1. Attendees shall limit their **movement**. Special attention must be given to limit the movement of children.
- 3.2. Pew seating should be organized to maintain adequate physical distancing from **individuals passing** in the aisles.
- 3.3. **Household members** can sit together, but they must maintain a **2 m. distance** from members of other households.
- 3.4. **Cantors** shall be located in an area which guarantees a **physical distance of 3 m.** from other persons, including fellow cantors.

4. CELEBRANT’S CHECKLIST:

- 4.1. All clergy must ensure that they are **symptom free**. Celebrating clergy shall take their **temperature** one hour prior to the service and record their temperature. Body temperature should not exceed 37.5⁰ C. If the celebrant priest exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms or his temperature exceeds the established limit he shall inform the Vicar General (both text message: 613-265-5047 AND email: aonuferko@yahoo.ca) as soon as possible and not celebrate the Divine Liturgy.
- 4.2. Prior to vesting the clergy shall thoroughly **wash their hands** with soap and water.
- 4.3. **Hand sanitizer** must be available in the sanctuary for use throughout the Divine Liturgy.
- 4.4. It is highly recommended that the number of persons allowed **access to the sanctuary** be kept to a minimum, bearing in mind the 3 m. distance rule for those singing or chanting.
- 4.5. Pastors may consider having the altar servers place the incense into the **censer** and then bring the censer stand to the deacon or celebrant without touching the censer.
- 4.6. Serious consideration should be given to limiting the **number of altar servers or sacristans** (palamars), or even excluding them altogether during this period.
- 4.7. Should altar servers be assisting in the sanctuary, if they are minors prior **written permission** is required from their parents or guardians.
- 4.8. It is recommended that the main celebrant be the **only person to handle the holy vessels**, even if a deacon is present.

- 4.9. Since the celebrant, deacon and perhaps others may be handling the Gospel and censer, anyone touching these objects must use **hand sanitizer before and after** they handle the object.
- 4.10. During the **Preparation of the Gifts** (Proskomydia) the celebrant and deacon shall wear a mask.
- 4.11. The **Gifts shall remain covered** throughout the service except during the Anaphora and Communion of clergy and laity. Any time the Gifts are uncovered the celebrant(s) shall don a surgical mask.
- 4.12. Any celebrants, including deacon, must maintain the requisite **physical distance of 3 m.** due to the fact that they will be singing.
- 4.13. The **clergy shall communicate** in the following manner: the celebrant will handle the Precious Gifts, wearing a mask, after the fraction rite using the Holy Spoon he may take a drop of the Precious Blood and place it on the particles of the Lamb (Ahnets) remaining on the diskos. The deacon can approach and (if the celebrant permits) take one of the three particles and prayerfully consume the Eucharist. The celebrant shall do likewise, removing his mask solely to consume the Precious Gifts. No clergy shall partake of the Holy Chalice used to communicate the faithful until it is time to consume the Gifts at the end of the Liturgy.
- 4.14. **Concelebration** is not recommended at this time and should only take place in special circumstances. When concelebrating, separate chalices can be prepared for each concelebrant.
- 4.15. **IMPORTANT ISSUE TO CONSIDER:** As the Covid-19 virus appears to be carried by particles expelled in a person's breath, it is important to **protect or shield the Holy Chalice** as Holy Communion is distributed. Although generally the virus is not transmitted through food, you may wish to exercise extra caution, particularly if you are in a high infection area or many of your faithful are seniors. A practical solution would be to have a table to the side and slightly behind or directly behind the priest distributing Holy Communion (possibly the tetrapod repurposed for this task). The two bowls with clean and used spoons would be placed on the table with the Holy Chalice in the centre. Each particle would be taken from the chalice with a clean spoon and then brought to the communicant. The diskos or a paten could be held in the left hand of the person distributing Communion to hold under the spoon as each particle is carried and distributed.
- 4.16. During the distribution of communion, the **celebrant shall continue to wear a mask.** It is imperative that physical distance of 2 m. be maintained by the faithful as they approach to receive the Holy Eucharist. If more than one person is distributing communion (larger parishes), due diligence must be given to movement and physical distancing.
- 4.17. **Distribution of Communion** can take place at the customary part of the Liturgy. However careful attention shall be given to ensure the safe flow of people approaching the Eucharist and returning to their pews. The suggestion would be for the faithful to remain patiently in their pews until instructed by an usher to join the line for Holy Communion. Should the pastor regard it as preferable, the Eucharist can be distributed after the Dismissal. In either case, care must be taken to guarantee physical distancing and allow for prayerful reception and reflection.

- 4.18. Communion shall be distributed using **individual stainless steel spoons** for each recipient. The spoons must be carefully purified after the service and then sanitized. The water from the purification must be disposed of with due reverence.
- 4.19. All celebrants shall **wash their hands** thoroughly in soap and water after removing their vestments.

5. AFTER THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION:

- 5.1. The church **premises shall be inspected** and all waste shall be collected and safely disposed of.
- 5.2. All **areas shall be disinfected**, including washrooms.
- 5.3. All cleaning personnel shall be supplied **masks and gloves**.
- 5.4. All **barriers/markings** shall be checked to ensure that they are in good condition for the next service.
- 5.5. All **questionnaires** and **list of clergy and ushers/volunteers** shall be placed into in a binder and kept in a location that safeguards the privacy of the information.

6. OTHER: In the case of the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** the following must be taken into consideration:

- 6.1. Given the need to limit movement during services, it is recommended that separate times be established for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 6.2. It is essential that physical distancing requirements be maintained and for this reason a larger space should be used rather than a confessional. Both priest and penitent shall wear a mask.
- 6.3. The Sacrament of Reconciliation may be celebrated outside the church building as long as confidentiality is guaranteed.

Instructions will be forthcoming regarding the celebration of the other Holy Mysteries. Guidelines regarding entry into the church (and record keeping), physical distancing and movement in the church shall be applied to services such as Matins, Vespers, etc. Special restrictions issued by the government of Ontario for weddings and funerals remain in place.

Thank you for your kind cooperation and understanding!

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