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April 15, 2021

*Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made fishermen all-wise,  
sending them the Holy Spirit and, through them, netting the world, O Loving One, glory to You.*  
- Apolytikion of Pentecost (Plagal Four)

Dear Stewards of Holy Cross,

It is with hope and anticipation that I reach out to you today. By God's grace through the Holy Spirit, we are blessed to be holding Holy Week services in Church this year. As such we'd like to familiarize you with some changes, we will all experience as we make our return. These protocols, outlined below (and on our Church [website](http://www.goholycross.org)), are necessary in order to comply with all relevant guidelines, including the Health Department of San Mateo County, and CDC guidelines, and our own Metropolis [protocols and directives](#).

Our faith and liturgical practice remain the same, however, to continue to minister to our parish some changes have been made in our Sunday routines. We ask you to carefully review the materials prior to returning to Church as we adapt. Your Parish leaders have prayerfully and thoughtfully discussed these preparations to open our church for worship services and welcome your prayers and support.

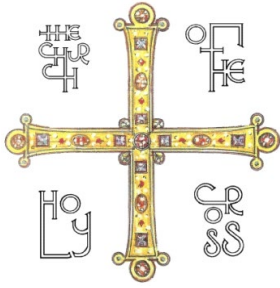
We look forward to welcoming you back to our church. Please keep in mind, we are opening with the limited capacity.

With peace and love draw near, we welcome you back with joy, anticipation, patience, compassion and understanding as we commemorate our Lord's Passion and celebrate His Resurrection.

In His Service,

Fr. Peter G. Salmas

❖ Church of the Holy Cross ❖  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America - Metropolis of San Francisco



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## *Welcome Back*

Having received permission from our Metropolitan and in accordance with the County of San Mateo Health authorities, the California Department of Public Health, and the Center for Disease Control, we will be resuming on-site liturgical services at Holy Cross, Belmont! The procedures outlined below have been put in place consistent with the above agencies to address the safety of our clergy, liturgical personnel, and parishioners. While there is no means to eliminate risk of potential infection, taking these precautions will meaningfully reduce the risk while allowing us to celebrate in the Divine Services together.

There are many resources available to you on-line and we encourage you to review them, both at our Holy Cross website, and at the Metropolis of San Francisco website, before you consider returning to Church. We are also here to answer any questions you may have at [frpeter@goholycross.org](mailto:frpeter@goholycross.org) and at 650.591.4447 (extension 11).

Please be aware that while we are re-opening our Church doors for services, things are not quite back to the way we left them. We will be adhering to strict social distancing protocols for all services. As such, our capacity will be limited during the period of re-opening, which requires us to plan in advance for church attendees. You will therefore see a “**Reservation System**” outlined below, that will be necessary for you to work through in order to attend the Divine Liturgy.

## *We have prepared for your return*

- The Clergy, Parish Council, Executive Council have met several times over the past few months to discuss and outline the necessary steps to safely reopen our church. I have formed a “Reopening Committee” with our President, Anastacia Stamates, as the head.
- This was done in coordination with the local health authorities and the Metropolis.
- We have established proper protocols and guidelines, including checklists, specific to our Church, and is in full compliance with the Metropolis Readiness Guide for reopening of our parish.
- We will continue to assess our guidelines and procedures to ensure they are being followed and adapt them as necessary to comply with guidelines.
- We will continue to accommodate those that are unable to attend the church through the continuation of our webcast.

## *Before returning to Holy Cross*

- You will need to carefully read and review these guidelines, which will be available at our Church [website](#), with additional information at the Metropolis [website](#).
- If you are high risk, please consider staying at home and attending through the webcast services.
  - If you are showing signs of illness, it is safer for you to remain at home and attend through webcast services.
  - Vulnerable congregants (those above age 50 or those with chronic health conditions) are strongly discouraged from participating in in-person services and strongly encouraged to participate virtually.
  - If you have any questions e-mail the Church at [frpeter@goholycross.org](mailto:frpeter@goholycross.org) or call 650.591.4447 (extension 11) to discuss alternative accommodations.
- **Please bring a mask, to church** – you will be required to wear one, as described further below (See “*What you should expect when you arrive at Holy Cross*”)
- Feel free to bring hand sanitizer, however, there will be hand sanitizer available in the Narthex upon your arrival.
- We will be conducting a screening which will be required for attendance.
  - Before attending services, you will be asked to answer a few questions aimed to help reduce the risk to you and those around you.
  - If you do not clear all of the questions in the screen, or do not answer the questions, you will not be able to attend the services in person.
  - The screening questions can be found on our website and will be presented to you at the time of making your reservation.
- **Reservation System** - **You will need to make a reservation prior to coming to church**
  - Due to social distancing (described further below in the “*What you should expect when you arrive at Holy Cross*” section)
  - Reservations are to be sent to [reservations@goholycross.org](mailto:reservations@goholycross.org) and must include the following:
    - Names and phone numbers of expected attendees, and
    - your acknowledgement of reading of the guidelines available to you
    - your attestation to answering “YES” to all of the screening questions
  - You will receive a confirmation from the church before the service
  - Due to social distancing, we will only be accepting a limited amount of reservations which will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Those who reserved later will be automatically rolled over into the next Sunday liturgy in the order they were received.

## *What you should expect when you arrive at Holy Cross*

- You will need a **mask**, that will be ensured by the ushers to be worn properly before entering the Narthex
  - Any child aged two years or less must not wear a Face Covering because of the risk of suffocation.
  - Children under the age of 12 are **strongly urged** to wear masks
- Social distancing will be in effect outside the church and in the Narthex, as well as within the church.
- On-line donations are encouraged; on-site donations will be made in the Narthex in an open basket. If possible, please place in an envelope.
- Upon arrival, please read the signs. Any questions, please ask an usher.

- Please check-in at the reservations table.
  - Your name and current phone number will be recorded, only to trace in the event a known infection is reported by one of the church attendees.
- Entry to church will only be through main doors.
- An usher will assist you in lighting candles.
- Veneration of icons should be done by bowing; it is not necessary to kiss the icons.
- Please avoid handshaking, hugging and adhere to social distancing.
- There will be hand sanitizers in the Narthex to be used prior to entering the church; extra masks and gloves will also be available; however, we encourage parishioners to bring their own

### *What should I expect during the liturgy?*

- Social distancing will be in effect and an usher will escort you to your seat
  - This will most likely not be where you usually sit
  - We will have every other pew roped off, and will mark off 6 ft distances
  - Families are not required to distance and can sit together.
- If you need to vacate your seat during the liturgy, please notify the nearest usher who will guide you through the pew and out via the appropriate path
- Only the outside restrooms will be open for use.
  - All restrooms will be disinfected on a regular and frequent basis
- The cry room will be closed and used for diaper change only; this will be done as expediently as possible and cleaned by the parent after every use. Disinfectants will be available.
- The Holy Eucharist will be distributed in the traditional manner and at the end of the Divine Liturgy.
  - Social distancing will be required as we approach for Holy Communion and Dismissal

### *What should I expect during dismissal and after the liturgy?*

- The Holy Eucharist will be distributed at the end of the services for those prepared to partake
- Ushers will escort you to Holy Communion or out of the church, exiting through the front doors
- **There will be antidoron; it will be available in the Narthex and distributed by an usher.**
- The Church will be disinfected before and following services
- Upon leaving the Church, you are asked to go immediately to your car to return home.

v. 06/12/2020, 4/15/2021

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