

- ◆ No service books will be provided. If you desire to use a service book, you must bring your own copy with you.
- ◆ One person will be assigned the responsibility to handle and light all candles, on behalf everyone else at a given service. No one else is to touch candles.
- ◆ Those inside the temple must maintain at least six (6) feet of separation between themselves and others at all times (members of the same household are excepted), including while in line to receive the Eucharist. Upon entering the temple, wait to be directed to a designated position for you and your household. Venerate the icons by bowing (not kissing) and then go to that indicated position within the temple.
- ◆ At the time of Communion, those waiting to receive are to remain six feet apart from other households. Each household is asked to come as one group. While in line, wait to approach the chalice until the person in front of you has moved away. An altar server will hold a length of paper towel in place of the communion cloth. After receiving the Eucharist, wipe your lips with the paper towel, which we will then reverently dispose. No antidoron (bread distributed after Communion) will be provided.

All who choose to enter assume all underlying risks of doing so. We know these requirements are demanding, and we ask your patience and understanding for a difficult season.

Rector's Letter, July, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters:

Our church was able to celebrate our parish feast with joy, even in these difficult circumstances. Last month, we started holding services in the temple with a small group, and the experience went so well that we asked for permission to do more in time for the feast of the Apostles Peter & Paul on June 29.

Our bishop, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, has blessed "Phase 2" of our reopening, permitting up to 40 to attend the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, but with the freedom to schedule additional services or meetings on the church premises each week, no more than once every 48 hours. In addition, we may organize gatherings outside, following the State of Connecticut's rules for up to 100 people. Pastoral visits are also permitted in outdoor settings. For all worship services whether in the temple or from home, we will continue with online streaming and encouraging greater personal prayer.

These new rules meant that many of us were able to gather in person on Sunday, June 28, the eve of our parish feast, to celebrate the liturgy. We were also able to organize an outdoor work party the day before, which whipped the parish

grounds into beautiful shape, and to host a very informal picnic after church—where some of those not yet able to participate indoors were still able to share some fellowship together.

Thanks be to God!

We recognize that many in our community are in the high-risk category for COVID-19, and are encouraged to stay home for now. We will continue sharing all our services online, whether they are celebrated in the temple or at home.

The Diocese of New England has recognized how online activity has become essential: live-streaming services, online meetings, and other communication. Our parish recently received a grant to improve our online outreach with better audio and video in church, better streaming of services, and new means of communication. In the next few weeks, you should notice a series of improvements.

Furthermore, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon now encourages those who cannot attend the entire liturgy instead live-stream the service and then come to church at its conclusion. One household at a time would enter to receive communion. If you would like to participate in this way, please let me know.

For those who do hope to attend services in person, we ask you carefully read the requirements (included in this newsletter) and then sign up. You can do so most easily at sspeterpaul.org but you can also call me at 203-237-4539 or email frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org. Thank you for your understanding in these trying times!

ing with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell).

- ◆ you may have been exposed to the coronavirus.
- ◆ If you are a vulnerable individual — that is, a senior citizen in frail health or have a serious underlying health condition such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, or compromised immune system – you are highly encouraged not to enter the temple.
- ◆ Each person entering must be checked with a non-contact thermometer.
- ◆ In the event that a person exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 after attending services, a record of attendance shall be kept in order to notify others present.
- ◆ Everyone over the age of two (2) is required to wear a face mask while inside the temple. You must provide your own mask. Face masks may only be removed for reception of the Eucharist. The Reader may remove his or her face mask only while reading. Choir members may remove their face masks only while singing.
- ◆ Everyone is required to disinfect their hands immediately upon entering the temple.
- ◆ Continue to refrain from kissing icons, the chalice, the priest's hand, etc.
- ◆ Only forty (40) people are allowed in the temple at a time. When the maximum capacity has been reached, all others will be turned away.

the Orthodox Christian Faith, inviting your own questions each session. We have sessions planned for Tuesdays, July 7 and 28, at 7:00. We continue to use GoToMeeting, with the “Praying Together” details shared above.

Current Expectations for Participating in Sunday Liturgy

In Phase 2 of reopening, we are permitted up to 40 participants in each Sunday Divine Liturgy. Each person must sign up at least 48 hours in advance. You can use the form on our website: sspeterpaul.org, or contact Fr. Joshua: 203-237-4539 or email frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org. Fr. Joshua will confirm in advance whether you are able to attend. Priority will be given in the following order: first to those whose absence from the services has been longest (at first, we will all be considered equal in this regard, but we will track participation each week); then to those who have been waitlisted longest; and finally to those who sign up first.

Before signing up, please carefully read the following requirements for participation:

- ◆ Each person seeking to enter must have—in advance—the explicit permission of Fr. Joshua.
- ◆ You are not permitted to enter the temple if, in the past fourteen (14) days:
 - ◆ you have exhibited any sign of sickness (fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shak-

Earlier this year, our family moved out of the parish rectory in Meriden, to live with aging parents. We are happily settled in Durham, but now the parish needs to decide the rectory’s future. A report included in the newsletter provides details.

Finally, thanks for your encouragement and support over these many weeks. I know that there have been times when I have fallen short. Nevertheless, you remain in my heart and I lift up each of you in prayer. May the Lord bless you and keep you, this day and forevermore.

Yours in Christ,



Around the Parish

While forty of us currently may come to worship in person each Sunday, **our parish community will continue to pray at home while gathering together online.** Our parish website has the latest information: sspeterpaul.org/praying. The response so far has been enthusiastic, and more are welcome! We are delighted that some of our shut-ins have been able to join us as well.

All our gatherings for prayer use the following details:

SS. Peter & Paul: Praying Together

Please join our meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/JoshuaMosher/ss-peter--paul-praying-together>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): **1 877 309 2073**

Access Code: **333-540-349**

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/333540349>

Please note: you do not need to sign up for a free trial or subscribe to GoToMeeting to participate. **The software is free for attendees.**

Please also note that you can call in!

Fr. Joshua can make outdoor pastoral visits.

Under the more flexible rules of Phase 2 of our reopening, we can arrange for such visits for Confession, Communion for the sick, and other spiritual needs. We have already arranged meetings in people's back yards, or even under a tree outside the church! The usual safety measures in Connecticut apply. If you would like arrange such a visit, please contact Fr. Joshua at 203-237-4539 or email frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org.

Special Parish Meeting to be held after the liturgy on Sunday, July 26. In this newsletter, you will find a report recommending the sale of the parish rectory. Please read the report and direct

questions to Dan Veronick, Donna Leonowich or any member of the parish council. On July 26, we plan to vote on the question, keeping our proceedings as efficient as possible. Since we want everyone to be able to participate, whether they can attend in person or not, we will also host the meeting via GoToMeeting, with the same connection details shared above for our services.

Sign Up for Parish News: Everyone in the parish is invited to sign up for our Parish News list. We established it at the beginning of the year as a fresh way to communicate. Now that we are confronting the necessity of quarantines and "social distancing," it's a valuable tool for our community to stay connected. **You can sign up for Parish News on our Contact page:** <https://sspeterpaul.org/contact>.

You can also follow our parish on Facebook.

We have shared a steady stream of news and other material on our page: facebook.com/saintspeterandpaulmeriden/.

We welcome your donations and pledges, which can be mailed to SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, PO Box 334, Meriden CT 06450. We are grateful for your continued support of the work of our parish, which has continued even during the lockdown, and even has expanded into new areas, like our online ministries. Thank you!

We have started an online Christian education series: "Exploring Our Faith." In coming weeks, we will explore important aspects of