

ST. ANDREW'S UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX SOBOR PARISH

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April 18, 2021

Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава навіки! Glory To Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Dear Parish Members,

As promised, I provide this communication (by email and mailed via Canada Post for those without email) to you detailing the Easter Holy week services' protocols for St. Andrew's Sobor Parish and the pandemic-caused modifications. Each of the services celebrated this year are described below considering current AHS restrictions, which may change if AHS alters its restrictions, and we will notify you as soon as we can.

Palm Sunday

The service commences at 5PM.

There will be two donation boxes as is usual practice at our Parish during Palm Sunday service. The first is for Parish general donations. The second will be specifically for flowers to be purchased and used to decorate the nave during Easter Sunday. Please give to both good causes!

The service will be celebrated very similarly as it usually has been celebrated pre-pandemic. The main modifications to this service due to the pandemic are:

- A limit on the attendance in church, specific entrances, exits and people routing, COVID related questions by the greeter as you enter, mask wearing required at all times, **ONLY** humming responses (including prayers and "Lord have mercy" etc.) as singing is discouraged by AHS, and venerating icons and crosses without kissing or touching are the same as those as currently practiced during the pandemic.
- Pussy willows obtained will be blessed by Fr. Yuriy and distributed to attendees.
- Upon exiting the nave following the conclusion of Divine Liturgy, **the Palamar only, wearing gloves, will distribute pussy willows.**
- **We specifically ask that you do not approach the Palamar and do not touch the pussy willows or the table on which they sit to minimize contact between attendees.**
- If you bring pussy willows for yourselves, please keep them at your pew and Fr. Yuriy will bless them specifically as you approach Fr. Yuriy after completion of Divine Liturgy.

Holy Thursday – Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels

The service commences at 7PM.

The service will be celebrated very similarly as it usually has been celebrated pre-pandemic. The main modifications to this service due to the pandemic are:

- A limit on the attendance in church, specific entrances, exits and people routing, COVID related questions by the greeter as you enter, mask wearing required at all times, **ONLY** humming responses (including prayers and “Lord have mercy” etc.) as singing is discouraged by AHS, and venerating icons and crosses without kissing or touching are the same as those as currently practiced during the pandemic.
- The Palamar, wearing gloves, will distribute beeswax memorial candles to hold during the service and they are to be taken home afterwards.
- Deep venerations are allowed; however, attendees are reminded to **maintain 2m distancing** during when they are being completed – **look out for and cooperate with those in proximity.**

Good Friday – Procession of the Holy Shroud

The service commences at 5PM.

The service will be celebrated very similarly at it usually has been celebrated pre-pandemic **up until the time of the procession of the Holy Shroud.** The main modifications to this service due to the pandemic:

- A limit on the attendance in church, specific entrances, exits and people routing, COVID related questions by the greeter as you enter, mask wearing required at all times, **ONLY** humming responses (including prayers and “Lord have mercy” etc.) as singing is discouraged by AHS, and venerating icons and crosses without kissing or touching are the same as those as currently practiced during the pandemic.
- During the procession, the procession will take place on the inside of the nave only and will only be made up of Fr. Yuriy, altar servers, and Palamar.
- During the procession, the Cantor and **all attendees are to remain at their pews.**
- At the end of the service, deep venerations are allowed before the Holy Shroud, but **please do not touch or kiss the Holy Shroud to minimize contact between attendees.**
- All attendees seated at any pew will approach and venerate the Holy Shroud before the next pew will be allowed to commence.
- **Maintain 2m spacing between all cohorts during the veneration.**

Holy Saturday Basket Blessing

The basket blessing commences at 7PM.

The basket blessing will occur entirely outdoors. You will not be entering the Parish complex whatsoever, to avoid having to re-sanitize and track who enters the facility. Fr. Yuriy situated outside in front of the Atrium will bless the baskets of each person or family as they, in queue, walk past.

Please maintain appropriate spacing and wear masks in the queue to be formed starting on the **City sidewalk close to the atrium and continuing toward the south parking lot.**

An usher will be present to assist in the queue.

Easter Sunday – Pascha and Basket Blessing

The service commences at 6AM. Outdoor basket blessing will commence at 10AM.

There will be two donation boxes at our Parish during Easter Sunday service. The first is for our Parish and the second will be specifically for donations to the UOCC and the Western Eparchy. Please donate according to your abilities.

The service will be celebrated somewhat similarly at it usually has been celebrated pre-pandemic, although there are major modifications due to the pandemic:

- A limit on the attendance in church, specific entrances, exits and people routing, COVID related questions by the greeter as you enter, mask wearing required at all times, **ONLY** humming responses (including “Христос восрес”, prayers and “Lord have mercy” etc.) as singing is discouraged by AHS, and venerating icons and crosses without kissing or touching are the same as those as currently practiced during the pandemic.
- Due to limited occupancy, we anticipate some members wishing will not be able to attend as there will simply be insufficient space for all. However, we are investigating whether or not the Tillie Kurysh Hall can be used to accommodate more attendees. You will know what the capacity is as you call to make reservations to attend Easter Sunday service.
- For those attending and seated in the nave, your Easter baskets will be placed in the atrium prior to entry into the nave.
- For those attending and seated in the Tillie Kurysh Hall (if applicable), you will take your Easter baskets into the Tillie Kurysh Hall.
- Paschal Midnight Service (also referred to as Litia) will be celebrated.
- Procession occurs - Ushers will assist attendees from the nave and from the Tillie Kurysh Hall exiting to complete the procession.
- All attendees, **wearing a mask and maintaining 2m spacing**, can follow the procession of cross, two banners, two altar servers, Cantor, and Fr. Yuriy.
- Those that do not participate in the procession remain in Atrium, the Tillie Kurysh Hall, or outside, **physically distanced**.
- Upon re-entering the church following the procession, you will return to your seats, **maintaining 2m spacing**.
- Remainder of Easter Sunday service and Divine Liturgy are celebrated.

- Upon completion of the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Yuriy will position in the atrium for basket blessing. Please remain in your seats until he is positioned, and an usher will indicate when it is an appropriate time to leave the nave or the Tillie Kurysh Hall to have your baskets blessed.
- For those in the nave, in turn you will leave the nave, retrieve your basket, and proceed to Fr. Yuriy for the blessing.
- Should the Tillie Kurysh Hall be used, an usher will indicate when you are to go, in turn and in queue, upstairs with your baskets for the blessing in the atrium **while maintaining physical distancing.**
- **Outdoor Basket Blessing At 10AM** – after blessing of the baskets is complete for the attendees, Fr. Yuriy will reposition outside and bless the baskets for those unable to attend the Easter service in church. The procedure for Easter Sunday outdoor basket blessing is similar to what occurred on Saturday evening:
 - o The basket blessing will occur entirely outdoors. You will not be entering the Parish complex whatsoever. Fr. Yuriy situated outside in front of the Atrium will bless the baskets of each person or family as they, in queue, walk past.
 - o **Please maintain appropriate spacing and wear masks in the queue** formed starting on the **City sidewalk from the south parking lot.**

Complicated pandemic times as these unfortunately require complicated protocols. We thank you in advance for cooperating with these protocols and for being extra patient at this time.

We pray that, despite the pandemic caused protocols, a heartfelt and uplifting Easter season is enjoyed.

If you have any questions regarding this update or otherwise, please call me on my cell (780) 660-0789.

Yours truly,

St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor Parish Board of Management President

Michael Zukiwsky