



COVID-19

Parish Plan

PREPARING TO RE-OPEN

April, 2020





Readying for Step 3 Transition



METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO PARISH SUPPORT TEAM

To help our parishes respond to the COVID-19 challenge, the 3-Step Planning Process has guided our planning and actions.

Today, our parishes are involved in various actions and activities related to Step 2 - Contingency Planning. Once a parish has “stabilized” its short-term plans, it is recommended to begin preparations for Step 3 – the Re-Opening of the Parish.



Considerations for Re-Opening the Parish

In a post COVID-19 world people will be looking for community and human interaction. And we all await with positive anticipation the time when we can return to our beloved parishes. Soon, the horizon will be in sight, and that will be our prompt for action. But there are things we can do now to help us prepare for the eventuality of a return.

1. **Pray.** For the continued healing and support to those suffering either spirituality, physically, emotionally or economically.
2. **Recognize the Regulations.** It is anticipated that our churches will open with limitations. It will be important to comply with all guidelines of Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and the Eparchial Synod. Also assume new federal, state and local guidelines will require additional compliance. Social distancing guidelines, and restricted attendance numbers, may linger well past re-opening of the church.
3. **Determine Liturgical Protocols.** Will social distancing impact church seating capacity? How will we determine who can enter the church if only a small number are allowed? Will multiple liturgies be celebrated? How will communion be offered with distancing in place? Can other buildings in the parish be used to view an “on-site” live stream of the Divine Liturgy? In addition to Clergy, what protection will in place for Acolytes, Chanters and Choir members?
4. **Prepare for Continuation of Live Streaming of Services.** Many of our parishes created temporary solutions to live stream their services. Now is the time to begin readying the parish for a more permanent solution.
5. **Create a Safe Space.** Expect that extra hand towels and hand sanitizers will be desired by parishioners. Some parishes may elect to offer masks. New signage may be necessary to support new regulations.
6. **Communicate “What to Expect” Messages.** Before the parish re-opens, send information to parishioners to help prepare them, and provide comfort to those with concerns or anxiety, by sharing what has been done to support a safe environment and will be offered in order to provide a respectfully organized worship experience.
7. **Greet with a Smile.** And, maybe that’s it for now. Ease into it. We can’t expect to return to the previous “normal” immediately. We want to touch, shake hands and hug one another, but remember, that may be awkward to some.
8. **Ready the Welcome Team.** People will return – and this will be a wonderful time to gear-up our Welcome Table/Team. There is a very strong possibility that visitors (and in-active Orthodox) who have watched on-line will attend services. If you were thinking about expanding your Welcome team – now is the time!
9. **Keep Stewardship Cards in the Drawer.** Support the reconnection to Christ and His Church, first and foremost. Donations and giving messages should follow in due time, but not lead, the re-entry of worshippers.
10. **Create Facility Guidelines.** Pre and post wipe down of the altar, narthex, pews, meeting rooms and classrooms will be the “new normal” for a period of time.



Leading in Uncertain Times

1

STAY CONNECTED

CHECK IN, LISTEN &
COMMUNICATE
FREQUENTLY

2

REMAIN CONFIDENT

IN PLAN, APPROACH,
DEMEANOR, ACTIONS
AND DECISION-MAKING

3

KEEP MENTAL SHARPNESS

UNDERSTAND THE
CONTEXT & FACTS; BE
FLUENT ON
EMERGING ISSUES &
CURRENT PLANS

4

REMAIN TRUE TO YOUR VALUES

CRISIS DOES NOT CREATE
LEADERSHIP STYLE, IT
REVEALS IT