

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY

Reverend Father Michael Sakran



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Toledo and
The Midwest

Pastor

March 17, 2020

Beloved in Christ,

With pain of heart, but with hope in the Lord, our Metropolitan has directed our parish, and all those of the Archdiocese, to immediately institute the following measures (see attached letter from the Metropolitan):

1. All non-liturgical activities are cancelled (church school, meetings, social functions, etc....)
2. Effective immediately, all of our services will be served with only the priest, the chanter, and altar servers. We are not allowed to have more than 10 persons in the church at any given time until the COVID-19 outbreak is contained. We are working on having the services available on the internet via livestream webcam on our church Facebook page (you do not need a Facebook account to access it.) The service schedule is also reduced to the following:

- Friday 6:30 pm Akathist/Medayah
- Sunday 9 am Matins/10:15 am Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday March 25: 6:30 pm Feast of the Annunciation

When you tune in on Sundays/other services for the video feed, please pray with us! Please don't simply have it on in the background while you go about normal housework. Make your home into a "little church." Light a candle in front of an icon, put the video service up on your computer/iPad, and make it a time of prayer.

3. The church will remain open during the week, with options of both daytime and evening hours for you to come and offer individual prayers and to light a candle. The hours will be:

- Monday & Wednesday: 12 pm - 2 pm
- Tuesday & Thursday: 5 - 7 pm

These hours will be effective starting Wednesday, March 18.

While I caution everyone to limit your travels during this virus outbreak, I will be available to offer Confession and/or Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament during the above-mentioned hours, or by appointment. If you are coming to pray, simply stop by during those hours. If you would like to receive communion, please call ahead (my cell phone is 260-515-2576), and please prepare yourself properly through prayer & fasting. Again, please keep in mind that we can have no more than 10 people in the church at any given time, so please avoid coming in large groups.

4. Weekly Video Sermons/Bible Studies will be available: Each Wednesday, I will post a brief Bible study video online. Each Sunday, my pre-recorded sermon video will also be posted. You will be able to access all video content from our church Facebook page (again, you do not need a Facebook account to access the content), simply click on the link that will be provided.

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

402 Badiac Road., Fort Wayne, IN 46845
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www.stjohnfortwayne.org

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5. Fr. Michael will be available via phone for pastoral counseling. My beloved, even though my physical presence with you will be limited, the Church has not abandoned you, and your priest has not abandoned you. I am available if you need to talk, vent, or have a prayer request.

6. If, God forbid, we have a funeral during this time, it will be limited only to the immediate family. Let us pray that this will not happen in our community!

7. While we know that these will be "lean times" for some, if you are able, I humbly ask that you continue to financially support St. John's during this time of trial. We still have expenses, and rely on your support. You can mail in your offerings/drop them off when you come in for prayer as well. Whatever is easiest for you. We are grateful for your support.

8. Fr. Michael will be available to visit the sick. That said, I must proceed with great caution to avoid spreading the virus. If you are hospitalized with severe illness/serious medical emergency, please call me any time of the day or night, and I will make every effort to visit, but I ask that we reserve this only for the most serious medical emergencies during this time.

9. Finally, our prayer is that by implementing these measures in accordance with the directive from our Metropolitan, and in coordination with our civil authorities, we can return more quickly to a full liturgical and social life of the parish.

Please share this information with those who do not utilize email/social media regularly.

My beloved in Christ, this is not the Lent that we wanted or expected. It is a time of trial for us, but as I mentioned before, this is not the first time the Church has had to endure such things. With God's help, we will get through this together. I love you, and I am here for you. Let us stay united in prayer together, for the grace of God is not limited to the physical walls of the church. Things will get back to normal. Until then, may God's grace flood into your homes during this time; may God comfort and bless you and keep you safe and close to Him.

"Completely have trust in God, leave everything in His hands, and believe that His love will act for your own benefit. Then God will take care of everything, because there is nothing He cannot do; everything is easy for Him. The difficult thing is for man to decide to humble himself and leave everything to God's providence and love." - St. Paisios of Mount Athos

In Christ,

Priest Michael Sakran, Pastor
St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church

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