

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Statement

My dear faithful, in times of uncertainty, when the world is faced with challenges such as disease, we always call upon the Church for guidance and her healing presence in our lives. We seek the Scriptures which say, *“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”* (James, 5:14). Thus we know the Church, since her inception, is here to provide comfort and refuge to all who seek it.

As an Orthodox Christian community of faith, we continue to have profound trust in the healing power of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who is at work during this pandemic in so many ways – church leaders, medical professionals, government officials, responsible media outlets, and all who alertly care and want to work sacrificially for the common good.

It is no surprise that the evil one is behind this attack on our physical and spiritual well being, since it is exactly how he operates. We know this because since the creation of man he attempts to isolate humanity from God through spirits of pride and fear. We saw this with Adam and Eve, as Satan worked diligently in fooling them to eat of the forbidden tree in order to separate them from God. We now see it manifesting in today’s crisis as churches close or limit attendance to just a priest/chantor throughout the entire Orthodox world.

Yet, in this current state, God will deliver us as He wills. Satan’s tactics are powerless against God’s love as nothing can separate us from the love of Christ as Saint Paul writes to the Romans: *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38-39)

The strength of God is unlimited and his great love for us is unmatched in these moments, we also see Saint Paul write to the Ephesians, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, with the strength of His power. Put on the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to resist the devil’s tactics.”* (Ephesians, 6: 10-11)

Thus, until further notice, the following measures are in effect across the Direct Archdiocesan District (D.A.D.):

“For all services, including the Divine Liturgy, only one priest and one chanter will conduct the services; meaning, the Faithful will not assemble, but participate virtually via the Internet and multimedia. There will be no exceptions to this condition without the express permission of the Archbishop.”

“This is a time when all of us, clergy and laity alike, are challenged to live our Faith

not only responsibly, but with more determination through our access to God in "*Spirit and in truth.*" We affirm that it is not the walls that contain our faith, but our hearts, and that our Lord Jesus Christ appears to us, "*even though the doors are shut*" and grants us His peace (John 20:19)."

"Please use these conditions to educate and inform your faithful, using email messages and bulletins to communicate to them that even though the Divine Services are being conducted in this restricted manner, we are united in prayer, in Spirit, and in truth."

As the situation develops, we will be sending out updates both by email and on Facebook. Our parish website will also have updates to the service schedule if that changes.

<http://www.holytrinitywaterbury.org>

Therefore, an updated schedule will be released to the parish on a weekly basis regarding live stream ONLY prayer services:

- We will gather on-line every evening after the appropriate services are conducted:
 - After Presanctified Liturgy on **Wednesdays**, Salutations on **Fridays**, Vespers on **Saturdays**
 - Tuesdays and Thursdays I will hold a prayer service at 7:00 pm
- The services will be broadcast via Facebook Live from our parish Facebook Page
- At the conclusion of each service we will offer the Prayer of Protection against the CoronaVirus

Being mindful of the fact that some of our parishioners do not have access to email, we ask that their family members please disseminate this information to those who might not have received it. Even if we cannot be present inside the church itself, we too can remain close to the Lord through prayer. Please let us look after one another. If I can be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact me by phone, text, or e-mail. All together we are the Church. We will continue to pray for the whole world and ask our good Lord to continue to have mercy on us, protect us and guide us all to His Heavenly Kingdom.

With Love in Christ,

Fr. Nikolaos Mataragas