



# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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May 25, 2021

To the Reverend Clergy of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey:

Dear Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

As we continue to make progress out of the more difficult health conditions of the pandemic, we will be taking further mitigating measures, as we review the updated COVID restrictions in the five states that comprise the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey. Below is a summary of the primary restrictions (mask requirements and capacity restrictions), with the caveat that many of the states have been slow to formally revise their written regulations and are presently in a state of flux. The below summary is based principally on recent public announcements, but it is advisable to continue to monitor the situation in your respective states, including major cities, which may have varying regulations.

In providing the below information, we note that the relaxed requirements for fully vaccinated individuals are a clear indication that a successful vaccination program has been – and will continue to be – the key to overcoming the pandemic and returning to a more normal life for all people. However, while those who are fully vaccinated have achieved a significant measure of protection, all faithful must be careful to protect those who are not vaccinated, including those with pre-existing conditions and children under the age of twelve. Therefore, notwithstanding the recent changes in the COVID restrictions in your area, your parish may decide to continue certain precautions for the protection of the unvaccinated members of your parish.

## **New Jersey**

- Face coverings are not mandatory indoors, but those who are not vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear them.
- There are no capacity restrictions for houses of worship.

## **Pennsylvania**

- No mask requirements indoors for fully vaccinated people.
- There are no capacity restrictions at houses of worship, and effective May 31, there will be no capacity restrictions on any indoor gatherings.

## Delaware

- No mask requirements indoors for fully vaccinated people. Those who are not fully vaccinated, including children not yet eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, *should* continue to wear masks when around others who are outside their immediate household.
- No capacity restrictions at houses of worship.

## Maryland

- No mask requirements.
- No capacity restrictions at houses of worship.

## Virginia

- There is no mask requirement for fully vaccinated people. Unvaccinated people are *encouraged* to continue wearing masks.
- No capacity restrictions at houses of worship and effective June 15, there will be no capacity restrictions on any indoor gathering.

In the interest of the collective health of our Faithful, and for the good order of the Church, I direct every Parish Clergyman to remain updated as to public health conditions that apply to your local situation. This is your responsibility, and should you require assistance, the Chancellor of the Metropolis will make himself available to you for consultation.

Beloved Fathers, we have come through so very much, and as we achieve degrees of progress in this process of normalization, we must all remain vigilant and cognizant of the environment within which we minister.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and convey to you my blessings and best wishes for the remaining days of the Holy Season of *Pentecostarion*.

With paternal love in our Risen Lord,



+ ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

Patriarchal Vicar of the Metropolis of New Jersey