

Українська
Православна Церква
св. Юрія



ST. GEORGE
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH

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If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 1 John 4:20

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Friday, April 16, 2021 we heard from Ontario Premier Doug Ford and other provincial ministers about the critical state the province finds itself in with the ever increasing surge of positive cases and death as a result of Coronavirus. With this information, further restrictions have been announced in an attempt to get control over this deadly virus. For our family at St. George's that means we are allowed a maximum of 10 persons at any one service and a maximum of 10 persons at any outdoor gatherings. This means that the Holy Week and Pascha we all were looking forward to will have to change to comply with current restrictions which come into effect Saturday, April 19, 2021.

No Christian worth their salt believes Christ went to His crucifixion subservient to the Jewish leaders and Roman state. Even though the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas, gave voice to the common plot to put Jesus to death when he said "it would be better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perishes" (John 11:50), it was Christ, the true High Priest, who said, "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." In fact, it was Jesus' filial obedience even unto death which most profoundly made manifest His divinity and union with His Father. Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you shall know that I AM, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father has taught Me." (John 8:28)

Today we are called to take up this same Cross, not in capitulation to the State as conspiracy theorists "theologize" but as imitation and participation in the self-sacrificing life of Christ. We are called to experience in some small way what Christ went through "suffering outside the camp", outside the Temple, outside the holy city of Jerusalem – in isolation. He entered an inconceivable quarantine. His "social distancing" was so complete that He even experienced divine "abandonment", crying out from the Cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?". The sinless One became sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:20) and the One who said, "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30) experienced "separation" from His Father..

Yet, in this time of pandemic, God who is always providing opportunities for us to more fully experience the life of Christ, who is always guiding His Church, allows us in this Great Lent, Passion Week, and Pascha to participate in a very deep way in the foolish wisdom and salvific power of the Cross. We are challenged to once again go “outside the camp”, to experience even for a short time “isolation” from God Himself, and to do so in obedience, even unto death, the death of our own will.

Starting Monday, April 19, 2021, our beloved temple will be closed to all in-person worship. We will however continue to live-stream all the services.

A revised Schedule of services for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha are as follows:

Sunday, April 25, 2021

Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) – Divine Liturgy Live Stream: 9:30 a.m.

Curbside pickup of Pussy Willows: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Sacrament of Holy Unction: CANCELED

Thursday, April 29, 2021

Matins with the Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels Live Stream: 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 30, 2021

Vespers with the Procession of the Holy Shroud Live Stream: 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 1, 2021

Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great: CANCELED

Paschal Blessing of Baskets (Paschal/Easter Foods): More details below.

Acts of the Apostles: CANCELED

Polunoshtsya (Midnight Office): No Live Stream.

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Paschal Services Live Stream: 7:00 a.m.

Monday, May 3, 2021

Bright Monday Divine Liturgy Live Stream: 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 3, 2021

Bright Tuesday Divine Liturgy Live Stream: 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Parish Feast Day – St. George the Great Martyr – Divine Liturgy Live Stream: 9:30 a.m.

Palm Sunday – Distribution of Pussywillows

We are still offering ‘curbside’ pickup for Pussywillows for any that wish to partake of this tradition. From 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. between the Church and the Parish Hall on Augusta Ave.

Holy Saturday Paschal Basket Blessing

With current restrictions we are allowed a **maximum of 10 persons outdoors**. With this said we will be holding Paschal Basket blessings in **groups of 8** persons in addition to the Priest and one cantor. You will **need to register** ahead of time as was originally indicated. To secure a spot to have your Paschal Basket blessed, please call the church office at (905) 937-3636 or email me at gregorymielnik@gmail.com , it will be a first come first serve basis. Basket blessings will begin at 10:00 a.m. and every consecutive half hour to accommodate everyone interested. Only **one person per household** may attend to have their basket blessed. No walk-ins will be entertained. **PLEASE BE ON TIME.**

For Orthodox Christians our greatest desire is to worship God in His Church and we would rather be martyred than give that up. Yet, we know that there is a world of difference not only between martyrdom and suicide, but also between martyrdom and murder.

What we go through now can feel very isolating for faithful Christians, yet we are resolutely encouraged remembering that the Cross of Christ reveals isolation as the door to communion. In obedience even unto death, we find the life that can never be put to death. Admist our distress and anguish, we find the "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3), Christ Himself who says to us what He promised His disciples in their own time of tribulation: "I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy!" (John 16:22).

I pray that all of you stay safe and healthy during these most trying times,

With hope in the Resurrection,

Fr. Gregory