

St. Anne Byzantine Catholic Church Coronavirus Policy

222 East Foothill Blvd.

San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Promulgated September 19, 2020 by the pastor

We are working to ensure the spiritual wellbeing of our parishioners and others who attend St. Anne's while also taking prudent steps to ensure their physical health.

This policy will remain in effect until the pastor modifies it again.

Summary of rules

- Follow instructions from the pastor, deacon, usher, or altar server(s)
- One clean/sanitized blessed metal spoon will be used per person. Each Communicant will open his or her mouth wide and receive the normal way. A cloth or a tray will be used to catch drips. If there is no altar server or deacon to hold the cloth, you will need to hold it under your chin. (Please read more details on how each spoon is sanitized, p. 3)
- Access to the bathrooms during liturgical services are through the downstairs so as not to disrupt the service. One-bathroom downstairs is reserved for seniors 65+ only. Seniors may use any of the four bathrooms, but this one is reserved specifically for them. If you have trouble with stairs, please ask an usher or someone else to assist you.
- Because our bishop says he wants us to comply with state and local guidelines, WE WILL implement the newly enacted state guideline that we all wear a face mask or face shield indoors. There are exceptions, so please read them beginning on page 2. In addition, our bishop wants us to wear the mask outside during the liturgical services so we will try our best to wear a face mask or face shield during liturgical services and anytime a minimum of 6 feet cannot be maintained.

Praying in church afterward: Once Divine Liturgy is over, those who have been outside who want to pray inside for a while may do so. Just make sure to keep to no more than 10 people inside at a time.

Face masks REQUIRED with some exceptions: When indoors, you are required to wear a face mask that covers the nose and mouth or a clear plastic face shield. These need to be brought by the persons coming inside. Courtesy masks for those who forgot their masks are still available at this time. A face mask needs to be removed just before receiving Communion and should be placed back on the nose and mouth after you are done chewing. The priest, deacon, and altar servers will wear a face mask while the priest or deacon distributes Communion. For people outdoors whether inside or outside their car when we are not in the middle of a liturgical service, masks are not required to be worn. According to the state guideline, a mask should be worn outdoors when people cannot maintain at least 6 feet of distance.

Exceptions listed on the state guidelines for where a person should not wear a mask indoors (or by extension, outdoors during liturgical services):

- Persons age two years or under. These very young children must not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service.
- Persons who are seated at a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service, while they are eating or drinking, provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence.
- Persons who are engaged in outdoor work or recreation such as swimming, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, when alone or with household members, and when they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.
- Persons who are incarcerated. Prisons and jails, as part of their mitigation plans, will have specific guidance on the wearing of face coverings or masks for both inmates and staff.

Distribution of Holy Communion and sanitizing process of the spoons

- If you are live-streaming in the parking lot, come out at the appropriate time to receive Communion.
- The deacon (or priest) and anyone assisting him with distribution will be wearing a face mask.
- One clean/sanitized blessed metal spoon will be used per person. Each Communicant will open his or her mouth wide and receive the normal way. A cloth or a tray will be used to catch drips. If there is no altar server or deacon to hold the cloth, you will need to hold it under your chin.
- Each metal spoon for Eucharist distribution will be sanitized through the following method:
 - The spoons will be rinsed and the rinse water with its contents will be put outside on the ground and not down the drain with sewer water.
 - The spoons will be hand washed in soapy water and this water will be put outside on the ground and not down the drain with sewer water.
 - The spoons will be boiled for at least ten minutes, dried with a paper towel or left to air dry, and placed in a tray of sanitized spoons for future use at Divine Liturgy. He or she will make sure to have freshly washed hands if drying the spoons with paper towel.
 - During the time that the spoons are boiled and dried, the person sanitizing them and in their near vicinity will wear a face mask.
 - The person washing and sanitizing spoons understands that wearing gloves is recommended for his or her own health (to prevent infection on his hands), especially if he has small scratches or cuts on his hands.
 - While we have resources to show that boiling water will inactivate viruses and kill other pathogens, there may be people who desire other methods of sanitizing. We think that washing and boiling will adequately remove danger from COVID-19. However, if you are not confident this is enough, you are invited to make a spiritual communion until you are ready to receive the Eucharist again.
- The deacon has agreed to sanitize the spoons using the above protocol. Please be aware, however, that in the event the spoons were not sanitized with the method outlined above, Fr. Michael will clearly state this at the beginning of Divine Liturgy and he will use one spoon for everyone, following our tradition. In those circumstances, anyone coming to receive the Eucharist must be willing to take any risk he or she believes might be associated with a shared spoon in regard to contracting the coronavirus or any other sickness. Our faithful have used a shared spoon for the Eucharist for centuries, and eventually we will move back to that. Simply open your mouth wide, keep your tongue in, and do not close your mouth on the spoon.

Activity and protocol inside church: With few exceptions during this time, the only times to go inside church is to go to the bathroom or to pray in church after a liturgical service. It is not for socializing indoors. If you need to go indoors:

- Please physical distancing of 6 feet or more between you and those outside of your household/carload.
- You are advised to not shake hands or hug outside your household.
- Hand sanitizer is available for you to use upon entering and exiting the building.

YouTube channel:

- YouTube Channel link is on the front of our bulletins and is also listed here. While Sunday Divine Liturgies are still available, regular daily liturgical services are not. Any camera and wiring will be setup and taken down each time by a volunteer(s). Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEiGyrM11cIqPLBfWMXssbw>

Other notes:

Spiritual obligation: The spiritual obligation to attend a Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days of Precept has been restored by our bishop since June 1, 2020. Those who are in the "at risk" category, such as old age, or considerable health problems, or those caring for such people may stay home but are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to live stream our Sunday Divine Liturgy via our YouTube channel, set aside special time for prayer and Scripture reading, and/or pray the Typika designed for this sort of situation.

This means that all others ARE OBLIGED to attend a Divine Liturgy either in the parking lot or inside St. Anne's on Sundays and Feast days of Obligation. If you are sick, please stay home. If you have any fever, bad cough, and/or have any other type of communicable disease, you must stay home.

Confessions: The Holy Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation will be available outside in the upper lawn. The priest will wear a face mask even outdoors when hearing Confession and at least 6 feet of distance will be maintained.

Restroom use. All four bathrooms will be open for use. Access to the bathrooms during liturgical services are through the downstairs so as not to disrupt the service. One bathroom downstairs is reserved for seniors 65+ only. Seniors may use any of the four bathrooms, but this one is reserved specifically for them. If you have trouble with stairs, please ask an usher or someone else to assist you. Sanitizer spray will be placed in each bathroom and available for anybody entering to sanitize before and after using the bathroom. Make sure to use those chemicals and wipe down the areas you touched for others health.

Donation/tithe drop off. Passing around a collection basket poses some extra health risk, therefore it will not be passed around. While outdoors, a special locked box will be anchored on a pole of the cross outdoor shrine. When indoors, one or two collection baskets will be placed in obvious places for you to drop your tithe donation.

Places for kids to play. People who need their kids to play and burn energy can do so outside in the lower lawn. For this period of time, please be sure to keep physical distance between your household/carload people and another household/carload.

Coffee Socials. Outdoor coffee socials are taking place outdoors, usually at the cross shrine. Someone wearing a mask and regularly sanitized hands (or, if desired gloves) will distribute coffee in cups with lids and pass out prepackaged food such as peanuts, trail mix, and granola bars. Please do not reach into the basket to pick up food for yourself, but wait for that designated person to distribute it to you. People can talk and socialize a bit in the lawns and parking lot after church services, but not inside the building. You are advised to maintain physical distance at all times.

Other situations: There are other situations or scenarios or variations that the pastor, deacon, and ushers could not have foreseen. In those cases, just await instructions from them.

Let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us rejoice that we are attending church, whether indoors or outdoors. We are taking safety precautions, yet we trust in God and know that He is with us!

In Christ,

Fr. Michael Bezruchka, Pastor of St. Anne's