

I REALIZE THIS IS A LONG EMAIL. 😊  
IF YOU CAN'T READ IT NOW, PLEASE READ IT SOON FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

**April 15, 2021**

**Dear Faithful of Saint John's:**

### **Holy Week and Pascha Services**

A year ago we were required to do Holy Week Services with only two clergy, two chanters, and general participation by livestream only. This year, thank God, we can do much more. Our goal for Holy Week services this year will be to allow as many people as possible to be present and at the same time to respect current Anchorage Municipal mandates. We are encouraged by our Metropolitan to cooperate with local mandates and can do so with a good spirit knowing we are part of a larger community effort. The city mandates most relevant us, and which were renewed just this week by the Mayor's office, are now very familiar:

- Maintain 6-foot social distancing in our gatherings.
- Wear a mask inside the Cathedral.

### **Double Groups**

Beginning Lazarus Saturday, we will double-up the current Liturgy Groups assigned to attend the major services, and make some services open to "ALL." This [schedule](#) is posted on our Cathedral website, but here is a summary.

**Olivet & Sinai** – Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy 9:15am; Holy Monday Bridegroom Matins 7:15pm; Holy Saturday Vespers Divine Liturgy 4:15pm; Saint Thomas Sunday Matins and Liturgy 9am, 10am.

**Tabor & Zion** – Palm Sunday Matins and Divine Liturgy 9am, 10am; Holy Tuesday Bridegroom Matins 7:15pm; Holy Friday Vespers 6:15pm; Bright Wednesday Evening Liturgy 6:15pm.

**ALL** – Palm Sunday Bridegroom Matins 7:15pm; Holy Wednesday Anointing Service 7:15pm; Holy Thursday Vespers Liturgy 6:15pm; Holy Friday Matins 7:15am, Royal Hours 12:15pm, 3:15pm; Holy Saturday Matins 7:15am; Agape Vespers for Pascha 3:15pm.

This schedule will allow as many people as possible to be present. However, it is very important that we all work together to defer to one another and to seek another's good above our own. Our goal is to make Holy Week "holy," and not anxious or contentious.

### **Other Helpful Information**

- The chairs in the Nave will remain arranged as they have been throughout Lent. This means there are 105 chairs in the Nave, allowing for a maximum capacity of a little less than this. 25 Chairs will also be set up in the Narthex for overflow. So please do not crowd into an area where there are no chairs, and be willing to overflow into the Narthex as needed, or to let an elder or another take your place in the Nave.
- Chairs and livestream (without any lag) will also be set up in the Cathedral basement for a second level of overflow.
- From Holy Friday through Pascha people can also gather outside on the lawn for some services. The Cathedral doors will be propped wide open with a speaker broadcasting the service. Those in the basement or outside will be ushered in to offer veneration or to receive Communion.
- There will be a "greeter/usher" in the Narthex for each service to help.

- Please do not ask to join a service assigned to a different Group, since there will already be a lot of people coming.
- All Holy Week services will be livestreamed, beginning with Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday.

A BIT MORE. 

KEEP READING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE WILL DO FOR THE MAIN PASCHA SERVICE.

### **Pascha – Matins and Divine Liturgy – 4:00am**

It does not seem right that the main service of Pascha would be assigned to specific Liturgy Groups as the other services of Holy Week will have been, since most people would like to attend. Instead, we will ask those who are able and willing to choose one of the alternatives to being inside the Nave or the Narthex (livestream, basement, lawn). Those who need to be inside for health reasons or other special needs, will automatically have a place reserved inside. To fill the remaining places inside, we will randomly draw names of family groups from those who indicate they would like to be inside the Nave or Narthex. We will aim for a maximum capacity of 110 in this space.

### **Pascha - A Form to Fill Out**

To assign who will be inside we are asking that every family fill out the following form and turn it in by Palm Sunday. These forms are available in the Narthex or they can be filled out on line by clicking [here](#).

One last thing to note, it would be bless-able under these circumstances, I think, to come for the beginning of the Pascha service in the middle of the night, to make the procession around the Church with everyone, to hear the Gospel and the proclamations on the porch of the Cathedral, and then to depart in peace. Those remaining outside (or returning) will be ushered in for Holy Communion and all Easter Baskets will be blessed at the end of Liturgy.

So let us now press on patiently to the conclusion of Lent, and let Holy Week become the special week the Church meant it to be – a time to behold the love of Christ for us, to bow before His Cross, to sing burial hymns before His Shroud, and to absorb with deep joy the proclamation of His resurrection on Great and Holy Day of Pascha.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Marc

THANKS FOR GETTING THIS FAR. 

THE INFORMATION BELOW IS ABOUT OTHER HOLY WEEK SERVICES.

### **Holy Wednesday - The Anointing Service, 7:15pm**

This long service (about 1 hour, 40 minutes) will be open to “All,” but clearly all will not be able to attend indoors. We will set up the livestream in the Cathedral basement. But more importantly, those who follow along by livestream at home (or in their car in the parking lot) can be anointed by coming to the door of the Church at about 8:30pm. Anointing will also be available after the Holy Friday services of Matins and the Royal Hours.

### **Holy Saturday – All-night Vigil**

This year we will have the usual sign-up for families to stand with the Shroud in the candle-lit Church and read Psalms throughout the night from the end of Vespers on Holy Friday to the beginning of Matins on Holy Saturday.

### **Pascha – Agape Vespers and Meal, 3:15pm**

This Vespers will be served from the front doors of the Cathedral with room for everyone to gather on the Church lawn. For those who need to be inside, chairs will be set up at the east end of the Narthex. After the Vespers we will make our customary procession to the Cathedral cemetery. This will be followed by Easter Candy Hunts for the children and a specially-prepared Take-out Easter-Meal. You may take this meal home or share it on the Church lawn with others. A few folding chairs may be available, but please feel free to bring your own camp chairs or blankets, as you wish.

### **Bright Week and Saint Thomas Sunday**

We will have Paschal Liturgy on Wednesday Evening at 6:15pm assigned to Groups Tabor & Zion. Saint Thomas Sunday Matins and Liturgy will be assigned to Olivet & Sinai. For the weeks following this, we will make a new schedule for Divine Liturgy based on our experience of Holy Week.

YOU MADE IT. THANK YOU FOR ENDURING. MAY GOD BLESS US ALL.

