



ЕПИСКОП ИСТОЧНОАМЕРИЧКИ
СРПСКЕ ПРАВОСЛАВНЕ ЦРКВЕ

BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

E. No. 230
May 13, 2020

**TO OUR BELOVED CLERGY, MONASTICS AND FAITHFUL
OF THE GOD-PROTECTED DIOCESE OF EASTERN AMERICA
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

RE: Guidelines for “Opening Up America Again”

As the United States of America continues to face this globally unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, we remain fully committed to providing Archpastoral guidance throughout this crisis and fulfilling our duty to ensure the safety of all of you, our cherished clergy, monastics and faithful, and through you the communities in which we abide, while fully respecting the precepts of our Orthodox Christian Faith and the governance of this land in which we live.

As is known to you, President Trump has unveiled Guidelines for “**Opening Up America Again**”, a three-phased approach, which is based on the advice of public health experts. These steps are intended to assist state and local officials when reopening their economies, getting people back to work, and opening houses of worship, while continuing to protect our lives. The same may be accessed at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

For our considerations in helping facilitate the **reopening of our churches, parish centers and monasteries**, The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States of America has issued, as of this day and date, a common statement (attached), titled “Feed My Lambs”:

<http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/2020/covid19-reopening>

Importantly, this document has taken into consideration all of the diverse legal restrictions among varying civil jurisdictions and recommendations from public health experts concerning the reopening of our churches, in order for the faithful to return to liturgical services and, as permissible at this time, limited social functions. **The following link will provide you with constantly updated, pertinent information to assist in facilitating the same by typing in your local parish zip code:**

<https://script.google.com/a/macros/easterndioocese.org/s/AKfyxcbzDwz2l3VDJXt8P11wgl1WfmANignQr6KqwnCrThG5Buz5tpLE/exec>

Prior to reopening any of our parish churches or, eventually, social centers, as conditions will vary from parish to parish, you must consult with your Dean, and/or directly with your Bishop. As such, it will be critically important for our faithful, *at this time*, to attend only their home parish to avoid regression. All clergy and church staff must follow the applicable, preventive measures set out, before church attendance was restricted, in our Act E. No. 167 of March 13, 2020:

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<https://www.easterndiocese.org/files/2020/20-0167.-COVID-19-Guidelines-for-EA-Diocese.pdf>

Finally, and most importantly, the reopening of our churches, monasteries and social centers, and in many ways, the reopening of our life in common i.e., our communities, will be possible only through constant and fervent prayer! Therefore, it is imperative that, *without exception*, the Liturgical Petitions, which have been set out in our Act E. No. 169 of March 14, 2020, remain integrated in the appropriate litanies of all Divine Services, until further notice, throughout the Eastern American Diocese:

<https://www.easterndiocese.org/files/2020/petitions-english.pdf>

These directives are to be posted on all church websites and distributed through all social media and parish mailings, electronic, or otherwise.

With Archpastoral blessings and Paternal love,


Bishop of Eastern America

