

# Risk reducing measures specific to Orthodox services

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The majority of measures are supported by common sense and evidence from other, similar pathogens. However, not all is known about COVID-19 and some may not ultimately be found to reduce the risk of transmission. We will not reiterate the [general risk-reduction measures](#) that many are hearing about frequently, but would recommend as many of these measures be implemented as possible to support lower risks regardless of which recommendation is taken. **The more recommendations that are combined the lower the risk would be expected to be and, in many cases, would be expected to be synergistic.** In addition, we would like to highlight the following risk-reducing measures specific to Orthodox services.

- ❖ Minimize the size of the group serving, ideally just a priest and chanter(s).
- ❖ Use the same group of servers for every service.
- ❖ If clergy, servers, or either of their families are sick in any way, no services should be held.
- ❖ Ideally the serving group would be only the priest's family.
- ❖ Minimize interaction by scheduling separate times for each family to commune.
- ❖ Clergy should simply give the faithful communion and the faithful should leave, minimizing conversations. Long conversations should be held separately by phone or video conference.
- ❖ If possible, consider having interactions outside or provide additional ventilation if services must be held indoors (increase air from outside, open doors, open windows, use fans, etc.).
- ❖ In cases where there are multiple clergymen, utilize as many as available to distribute communion, minimizing the risk each individual clergyman receives from more frequent interactions with the faithful.
- ❖ Common food (e.g., antidoron) should be distributed by a single, healthy person preferably with a gloved hand, or excluded from distribution.
- ❖ Common drink (e.g., zapivka) should be distributed in individual containers placed with adequate separation that no one would contaminate an adjacent vessel while picking one up, or excluded from distribution.
- ❖ If possible, the faithful should consider wearing something to cover one's face, ideally a medical mask, but, considering the needs of our first responders and healthcare workers first, one might also consider a homemade cloth mask.
- ❖ Everyone who wears contact lenses should wear their glasses (clergy especially), when communing or congregating **any** size group (even 2 or 3). Glasses are more protective than contacts because they help shield the eyes from droplets.
- ❖ Establish a clear flow of traffic and spacing by placing markings on the ground to minimize the length of interactions and as a reminder of appropriate social distancing.