

March 20, 2020
Fr. Joseph, Pastor
St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Waldorf, MD

Dear Faithful:

It was with a heavy heart that Metropolitan Gregory announced that, in accordance with directives from the Ecumenical Patriarch, liturgical rites are canceled until the end of March due to the Coronavirus.

There has been a change.

We will now be holding services as usual, but with only a few people present to assist Fr. Joseph. For the time being, please don't come to these services and put others at risk. Under these circumstances, social distancing is love. Parishioners are encouraged to watch services online at our Cathedral during our time of exile.

<https://www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/>

In March, people can come, light candles, and pray at St. Thomas on Wednesdays from 5:00-7:00 pm, Saturdays from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, and on Sunday from 12:00 to 2:00 pm. Some of these times are before services—please don't plan on staying.

Also, there are a number of nurses who are parishioners at St. Thomas, and they are in direct contact with people suffering from this virus. Please pray for them daily, and all the overworked healthcare providers dealing with this crisis.

If you are furloughed, fired, or your hours are cut due to this crisis, and you are in urgent need of financial assistance, please contact Fr. Joseph at (703) 532-8017 or fredgington@gmail.com .

Remember also that the monthly bills at St. Thomas don't stop, even though our exile might be long.

Some of our parishioners have found that an easy way to tithe is through their bank's Bill Pay feature.

By setting-up a recurring payment to the Church, your tithe check will be mailed weekly, or twice a month, or once a month, whatever you prefer, and will come straight to the Church, so you don't have to remember and hand-write your check.

If you'd like to try, log into your online banking system, find the bill pay section, and then put the following in for the "Pay To" information and address:

St Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

4419 Leonardtown Road

Waldorf, MD 20601

To designate where your tithe is directed, annotate in the memo line how much is meant for each category, such as pledge, building fund, candles, prosphora, and charity. If you prefer to hand-write and mail a check, that will also work. The money received will be counted and verified every Sunday afternoon as usual.

Finally, it's still Great Lent, and we are all journeying with Christ to the cross and His glorious resurrection. We are drawing near to Him, and purifying our hearts through our prayer, our fasting, and our charity.

Nothing has changed. Maintain your focus and your fast.

Fill your time at home by meditating on the "48 Days to the Great Day," "Way of the Ascetics," and the Gospel of Mark together with your family (SPF50). Pray the prayer of St. Ephraim with prostrations at the end of your prayers before you go to bed, give generously to the work of the Church, engage with the online services of our Cathedral.

Above all, pray that we can celebrate our Lord's glorious resurrection together!