



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΒΟΣΤΩΝΗΣ

October 1, 2020

### **Statement of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston Regarding St. Nicholas Parish of Portsmouth, NH**

1. The Church, like all members of the community, has been taking special precautions in this era of Covid-19. The health and well-being of our parishioners, and of the broader community, during this pandemic, is of paramount importance.
2. According to information from St. Nicholas Parish Safety Team and Parish Council, none of the parishioners who contracted Covid-19 had actually received communion. To date, the Metropolis has not received information of the virus associated with the voluntary practice of taking communion.
3. St. Nicholas immediately closed after learning that some parishioners had been diagnosed with the virus. The Church has been closed for the past three weeks. In addition, the Church has been thoroughly cleaned by a cleaning company which is following Centers for Disease Control Guidance.
4. The Attorney General's letter raises important issues of Church-State relations.
5. Recognizing the public health threat, but mindful of historical Church practices protected by the Federal and State Constitutions, Metropolitan Methodios is monitoring the situation closely, has been in contact with the Attorney General's office, and has referred this issue to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for decision.

**Reverend Theodore J. Barbas**  
*Chancellor*