



# Sri Venkateswara Temple (Balaji Mandir)

Bridgewater, New Jersey

## Coronavirus COVID-19

## Closure of temple facilities

**Effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, all temple facilities will be closed to the public until further notice**

To our devotees,

The HTCS Management has spent the past few weeks taking actions and putting measures in place in response to the worldwide spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Even though we have always emphasized cleanliness at our facilities, we have made the commitment to critically assess the effectiveness of our cleaning and hygiene program and make whatever investments that we need to. We have contracted with an institutional cleaning supplies company and completely revamped our facility cleaning program. Our janitorial and cafeteria staff have gone through specialized cleaning and sanitization training. We have hired additional janitorial staff and ramped up cleaning schedules.

We have been closely following the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) and State of New Jersey guidelines and recommendations on the steps to help prevent the spread of the virus. The most effective way to minimize risk of the transmission of Coronavirus is to reduce congregation density and maximize social distance. So, we have made communication with our devotees a critical component of our response. In addition to emails and online postings, we have placed signage throughout the temple facilities to provide instructions and guidance to our devotees. We have shared specific instructions with our employees and volunteers on the importance of following recommended practices. Our security staff has been instructed to strictly enforce all guidelines. Steps have been taken to minimize contact between our priests and the devotees. We have curtailed all nonessential activities.

Even with these comprehensive measures in place, given the rapid progression of this threat, we feel that the time has come to shut down all possible avenues of social contact and that it is our civic responsibility to do so. With this in mind, we are announcing that the temple facilities will be closed to the public effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, until further notice.

Nitya Puja and other ordained religious services will continue to be performed by our priests to all the deities. We are exploring ways for devotees to participate remotely in services and in the upcoming religious festivals via telecasts and expanded online registrations. We will communicate further with you about these events.

We have one simple principle that guides us – keeping you, our employees and volunteers safe. We will continue to communicate our plans with you as we adjust to this evolving threat. During this difficult time, we pray that Lord Sri Venkateswara keeps us safe.

HTCS MANAGEMENT

Hindu Temple and Cultural Society of USA, Inc. (HTCS)

One Balaji Temple Drive • Bridgewater, NJ 08807 • Telephone 908.725.4477 • [www.venkateswaratemple.org](http://www.venkateswaratemple.org)