

# St. Luke Catholic Church

## Mint Hill, NC

*To be a Christ-Centered Church Responsive to the  
Needs of All. Preserving, Spreading and Celebrating the Teachings of  
Jesus. Offering Hope, Comfort and Peace.*

# COVID-19

## PARISH PLAN



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## COVID TEAM SUMMARY

The aim of this plan is to help the parish prepare for the gradual reopening of public masses and to provide recommendations for safety, volunteers, and facilities. This plan has been prepared by a collaborative COVID subcommittee set up by the St. Luke Servant Leadership team. Members of the subcommittee represent feedback or individuals from various groups within the parish including but not limited to the following: Servant Leadership, Staff, Faith Formation, Middle and High School Youth Ministries, Audio Visual, Finance, Outreach, WeCare, Spirituality, Safety & Security, Knights of Columbus, and Liturgy. Additional individuals or feedback will be solicited when other parts of the church become available for use. Draft plans and recommendations for Mass were requested from all Liturgical ministries, the Safety & Security Team and the Welcome Ministry. In addition to transition planning, the committee met remotely via Zoom to also undertake a number of other COVID related tasks including the following:

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- Improving Communication to all parishioners during the pandemic through the use of the parish website, e-blasts, social media, phone trees, pulpit announcements, bulletin and mailings.
  - Livestreaming and recorded Masses
  - Communion Distribution Services
  - Remote Community Building and engagement of parishioners.
  - Assisting with outreach to the greater community
  - Matching volunteers with parish needs
  - Developing safety protocols to address the virus concerns
  - Keeping informed by Finance on offertory issues and raising awareness of e-donations and mail in options
  - Outreach
  - Ensuring effective communication with the Hispanic Community
  - Reviewing state, local, CDC, and Diocesan guidelines
  - Communication with ministries as plans are developed
  - Planning for the phased transition back to Mass
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Version 1 - Written to address the standards to be put into place beginning the weekend of May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Additional revisions will continue to be made in response to future Diocesan recommendations or other issues and concerns as they arise.

Version 2 – Revised to include a change in the music portion to allow for 2 instrumental musicians in addition to 3 vocal musicians.

Version 3 – Revised to address Executive Order 169 - NC Phase 3 guidelines and the Charlotte Diocese recommendations issued October 1, 2020.



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## ACCESS TO MASS

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- **Capacity:** A total of approximately 100-150 parishioners will be permitted to attend each daily or weekend Mass. This number will vary with a maximum of 150 based on the makeup of households who attend since social distancing standards are required for seating among different households.
  - **Sunday Mass Obligation Waived:** The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains lifted for all Catholics of the diocese until further notice. The dispensation does not remove the obligation to keep the Lord's Day holy: seek to refrain from work, spend time in prayer individually and as a family, and extend charity to others. Communication will be given to parishioners to recommend they still need to exercise prudential judgment in deciding whether to attend Mass.
  - **Communion Services:** Communion services on Sundays from 2-3 will continue to be offered until further notice to encourage parishioners to stream at home but still have access to communion.
  - **Livestreaming:** St. Luke will continue to offer at least one or more livestreamed Masses until further notice. Recorded options are also available.
  - **Ensuring Access:** The parish will provide communication to parishioners highlighting many of the changes being made so they are prepared.
  - **Information on Livestream:** Information on livestreaming will be available on the church website and Facebook pages. If parishioners arrive after the church has reached its allowable seating capacity, information on livestreaming options are posted on signs.
  - **Parishioners with Symptoms:** Signage will be placed on the entrance doors and in various parish communications asking anyone with a fever or other flu-like symptoms to not enter the church.
  - **Parking & Attendee Count:** Mass Coordinators or other volunteers will keep count of those entering the church and the amount of seating available. When the church is nearing its limit, walkies will be used to alert a volunteer in the parking lot so others can be alerted before they exit their vehicles. Information on streaming will then be given. The backlot will be used for handicap and musician parking only. Communication to parish via eblast and social media in October reminding parishioners that when the church reaches capacity, streaming is available and to consider the 4:30 Sunday Mass which has had available space each week.
  - **Visitors:** The COVID crisis has helped to lead many people back to their faith or inspired them to seek out new places for worship. Being clear with communication and warmly greeting all will be especially helpful for those unfamiliar with St. Luke.
  - **Love Thy Neighbor Covenant –** The St. Luke Love Thy Neighbor Covenant will be posted in the Worship Space, the Family Life Center, and the Spirituality Center. Additionally a copy is posted on the church website and individuals scheduling a space reservation (both indoor and outdoors) will be required to acknowledge it and share with their group prior to their event.
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# MASS PROTOCOLS

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- **Face Masks:** As outlined by the NC COVID guidelines, Parishioners ages 5 and older are to wear face masks out of concern and love for others.
  - **Communion:** Depending on the number in attendance at a particular Mass, Father may opt to distribute communion at the end of the Mass to help facilitate an orderly and socially distanced exit. Communion lines will be single file with social distancing between households. Those distributing Holy Communion are asked to purify and sanitize their fingers as they move from one household group to another. Small tables will be placed at each communion station so that hand sanitizer is accessible.
  - **Holy Communion:** The faithful are reminded that it is not necessary to receive Holy Communion and that they may choose to make a spiritual communion if they think this is best in light of their own particular circumstances.
  - **Lectors** will be asked not to touch the microphone or book. Lectors will also be given the option of doing all the readings for a particular mass.
  - **Altar Servers** will not be used. Servers will be encouraged instead to volunteer for other roles if they attend Mass (i.e. cleaning or ushering)
  - **Hand Sanitizer & Washing:** Parishioners are asked to carry their own hand sanitizer and to use it frequently. Additionally, the church will supply hand sanitizer at various locations and for liturgical ministers. Lectors and Ministers of Communion are asked to wash/sanitize their hands before and after Mass, and before and after the distribution of Communion.
  - **Social Distancing:** Maintain at least six (6) feet social distancing from other individuals, except for family or household members.
  - **Seating:** Existing chairs will be used but rows will be pushed together rather than roped off. Volunteer Ushers will assist with seating. A minimum of 3 seats (approx. 6') between households is required.
  - **Volunteers:** All volunteers should wear masks and should not make physical contact when greeting parishioners.
  - **Offertory:** E-donations and mailed in envelopes are strongly encouraged. Collections baskets will not be passed but an offertory basket will be available by the baptismal font and will be supervised by a Mass Coordinator or designated volunteer at all times.
  - **Spiritual Communion:** Parishioners will be reminded that they are not obliged to receive Holy Communion and that they may choose to make a spiritual communion if they think this is best in light of their own circumstances.
  - **Music:** There is to be no congregational singing. Music will be limited to 5 musicians, with a maximum of only 3 singing and all positioned at least 6 feet from each other and the congregation. No song lyrics will appear on the screens. The goals are to limit transmission, shorten the time for everyone in an enclosed space and allow more time between masses for cleaning.
  - **Bulletin:** A limited number of printed bulletins will be available but will be distributed by a volunteer with gloves.
  - **Nursery:** The nursery will remain closed during Mass.
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## ADDITIONAL SAFETY AND SANITATION ISSUES

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- **Frequently Touched Surfaces:** Frequently touched surfaces in the church (chairs, door handles, microphones, etc.) will be cleaned and sanitized by volunteers after every liturgy. Church hymnals and other paper resources will not be used. One volunteer per Mass will help with assigning areas. Those in attendance at daily masses may be asked to assist with cleaning their own area before leaving.
- **Hand Sanitizer** will be available in various locations. Attendees are also encouraged to bring their own to use.
- **Holy Water:** Holy water fonts will remain empty and the baptismal area covered.
- **Entrance doors:** A Mass Coordinator or Volunteer will prop open doors to limit contact with door handles.
- **Bathrooms** will be limited to the single stalls for emergency use in the Faith Formation hallway and the office wing. The main bathrooms will be closed with signage directing people to the single stalls. Bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized after each Mass by volunteers. Handwashing signage will be placed in bathrooms.
- **Healthy and Low Risk Volunteers** should be utilized to sanitize pews and other frequently touched surfaces between masses.
- **Face Masks.** A limited supply of disposable facemasks for individuals who are not able to bring their own cloth masks will be available.
- **Gloves:** Gloves will be used for cleaning and distribution of paper materials (postcards with streaming information and limited supply of bulletins).
- **Cleaners:** Appropriate cleaning supplies based on CDC recommendations will be used. Sufficient supply of spray bottles will be available for multiple volunteers to disinfect surfaces in various areas at the same time.
- **Piano:** Kurt will handle sanitizing and make sure wipes are available to clean.
- **AV Area:** Wipes will be available to sanitize but it is not safe to spray any cleaner on audio console or computer keyboard because of electronics. Will encourage the use of hand sanitizer before/after Mass or wearing of gloves.
- **Mic Stands / Music Stands/ Mic cables:** Kurt and Chris will communicate cleaning process to music volunteers. Wipes will be used after every group. Hand sanitizer will be available to singers/musicians.
- **Microphones:** No cleaner on the market is safe to use to sanitize microphones from virus. Kurt will purchase additional grill covers and take responsibility for washing in hot water and Dawn after each Mass. Kurt/Chris will communicate cleaning/replacement process to all folks that use.



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## VOLUNTEERS

### Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices.

- **Recruit:** New volunteers will be recruited with a sign up on the church website. Information will be communicated via e-blast and social media.
  - **Train:** Each mass will need to have a trained Mass Coordinator who can provide instruction to volunteers on cleaning, seating, social distancing, hygiene, and other concerns.
  - **Emails** will be sent to liturgical ministers, so they understand that they are not required to be scheduled. Lectors will also receive communication instructing them to not touch microphone or book.
  - **Music** limited to a maximum of 5 musicians (only 3 permitted to sing) per Mass. Musicians can confirm/decline dates in Planning Center.
  - **AV** is limited to 1 volunteer per Mass because of need to social distance at sound board.
  - All volunteers are able to 'opt out' by declining any scheduled times.
  - Participation from those in vulnerable populations will be discouraged.
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## ST LUKE OFFICE OPERATIONS

- The St. Luke Office has resumed normal operating hours.
- Temperature checks will be required for all visitors to the church office
- Staff are to wear masks in hallways and other common spaces. When working alone in individual offices no masks are required.
- Staff who test positive must immediately inform their supervisor to discuss protocol and contact tracing.
- Staff or volunteers who may be contagious or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter church property.
- Staff or volunteers who have been exposed to those who have been diagnosed with or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter church property.
- Staff should continue to self-symptom check each day in accordance to the guidelines outlined for the Diocese of Charlotte Phase 3 Appendix D.
- Staff should be aware of fellow staff feelings and/or concerns related to COVID-19.
- In the event a staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and could possibly have exposed others to the virus while onsite, St. Luke will follow the Pastoral Center Operations Phase 3, Appendix B, C, and E guidelines for notification, contact tracing, cleaning, quarantine and confidential documentation.



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## ST LUKE FAITH FORMATION

- Faith Formation classes will be home based at least through the end of 2020. Catechists will check in with families via phone or Zoom. Special emphasis on virtual classes will be prioritized for sacramental years.
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## MEETING PLANNING & FACILITIES USE

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### OUTDOOR MEETINGS

- With restrictions for the number of attendees for outdoor gatherings increased in Phase 2.5 to 50 people, an [online sign-up form](#) will be utilized to request a date and space for an outdoor ministry events.
  - Ministry leaders are required to keep attendance records of events on church property.
  - Ministry leaders are required to acknowledge the safety protocols when scheduling their events and to communicate the Love Thy Neighbor Covenant with their attendees.
  - Completed forms will be reviewed by the office staff and an email confirmation sent once an event has been scheduled.
  - When planning an outdoor meeting or event, ministries are encouraged to also include plans that will be inclusive of all of their ministry volunteers. Many individuals have underlying health issues, are in at-risk groups or are not yet comfortable meeting in person.
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### INDOOR EVENTS

- Facility use will be permitted only for the following at this time:
    - Staff led functions
    - Unique Ministry Needs that cannot be met with virtual or outdoor options. These requestes will be reviewed on a case by case basis. For example: A blood drive, with established safety protocols provided by the Red Cross, and which cannot be held virtually and provides an essential outreach and service to our community.
  - Temperature checks, attendance logs, cleaning, social distancing, and mask use are required.
  - Maximum room capacities for social distancing requirements are listed in Appendix A
  - Ministries are encouraged to continue using virtual or outdoor options for events and meetings
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## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

1. **ZOOM** - For those holding online events, please remember the Church now has two Zoom accounts available to host your event. Please visit the sign-up to reserve your meeting time. You will receive an email acknowledgement once your meeting has been scheduled with information on how to log in and share the invitation with your members. **Please allow at least two business days for your meeting time to be scheduled and the confirmation email to be sent.** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f054aaaab22a4f94-zoom1>
2. **CALENDARING** – Once your meeting has been scheduled it will also be added to the church calendar. Please share this with your members as a helpful reminder to your anticipated attendees. **If you are using your own Zoom account - please contact Mary Forgach at [MaryForgach@stlukechurch.net](mailto:MaryForgach@stlukechurch.net) so that we can also add that meeting to our church calendar.**
3. **VIRTUAL MEETING RESOURCES:** Resources including ice breakers, online service ideas, and other virtual activities were shared with ministry leaders on September 22, 2020 via e-blast. If you would like a copy of those ideas, please contact a member of the SLT or COVID team.

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## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Building Trust:** It is important for all volunteers to remember that parishioners all have their own personal views and concerns as it relates to worship, safety and the virus. Implementing and communicating safe practices will help to build their trust in our parish and create a welcoming environment for worship.
  - **Visitors:** The COVID crisis has helped led many people back to their faith or inspired them to seek out new places for worship. Being clear with communication and warmly greeting all will be especially helpful for those unfamiliar with St. Luke.
  - **Separation of Parishioners:** Once more attendees are welcomed back to Mass, we must remember to be cognizant that many parishioners will continue to remain at home.
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## SIGNAGE & COMMUNICATION (English & Spanish)

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- **Parishioners with Symptoms:** Signage should be placed on the entrance doors and information contained in parish communications asking anyone with a fever or other flu-like symptoms to not enter the church.
- **Bathroom:** Signage needed on main restrooms indicating that single stalls should be used.
- **Social Distancing:** Signage with information on social distancing should be placed in various locations (i.e. 3 chairs = 6 ft; social distance between different households, patience is needed, etc.)
- **Handicap Parking:** An outdoor sign will be created indicating that the back lot is to be used only for handicapped parking.
- **Announcements:** Announcements on the screens prior to Mass is anticipated to begin the first weekend in June.
- **St. Luke Love Thy Neighbor Covenant:** The St. Luke Love Thy Neighbor Covenant will be posted in the Worship Space, the Family Life Center, and the Spirituality Center. Additionally a copy is posted on the church website and individuals scheduling a space reservation (both indoor and outdoors) will be required to acknowledge it and share with their group prior to their event.
- **Notice of St. Luke's Actions to Reduce the Risk of Transmission of COVID-19** – In accordance with NC House Bill 118/Session Law 2020-89, a list of St. Luke's actions to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 will be posted on site, on the parish website and communicated via the bulletin.
- **E-Blasts & Social Media:** Will be used to communicate changes and recruit new volunteers.
- **Key Information to Be Communicated Prior to Mass (e-blast, social media and signage):**
  - The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains lifted for all Catholics of the diocese until further notice.
  - Social distancing expected between different households
  - Kindly requesting those in attendance to wear masks out of concern for others
  - Main bathrooms will be closed but individual bathrooms in Faith Formation hallway and office wing will be available for emergency use.
  - When the church reaches its allowable capacity, volunteers will inform those not yet in the church of livestreaming and times for other masses and communion service.
  - Ill parishioners should not attend
- **Other Information to be Communicated During Mass**
  - Information on restrooms
  - No congregational singing
- **Outdoor Signage**
  - Back Lot Closed. Handicapped access only
  - YouTube Streaming Information
  - Access Closed
  - Communion Service Information



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## PROTOCOL FOR CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE IN THE CHURCH

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- Parishioners should notify the church of any positive test results if they have been on church property.
  - Parishioners will be notified electronically of known positive cases in individuals that have attended Mass.
  - Ministries are to keep attendance records of any onsite events (outdoors or indoors). In the event of an attendee testing positive, those in attendance at the event will be notified electronically.
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## APPENDIX A

### MAXIMUM ROOM CAPACITIES

Space	Maximum Capacity
Classroom A	5
Classroom B	4
Classroom C	5
Classroom D	5
FLC	24
Spirituality #1	6
Spirituality #2	6
Spirituality #3	6
Spirituality #4	6
Spirituality #5	6
Spirituality #6	6
Spirituality #1 & # 2 combined without divider	12
Spirituality #4 & # 5 combined without divider	12