

## **WELCOME BACK TO HOLY FAMILY AND ST. LUKE'S CHURCH !!!**

It is great that we can finally come together as the Body of Christ, to hear Jesus speak to us in the Scriptures, and to share in his *agape* meal – his meal of unconditional love. You have been deeply missed!!!

As we come back, we are aware that the pandemic is not over. We want to be able to worship God and seek his continued guidance and protection during this very difficult time. And at the same time, we want to do so as safely as possible. Since this is a public gathering, we must do it in a way that protects the most vulnerable members of the Church. There have been a lot of documents that suggest how we do this safely. These guidelines below are based on the wisdom of the medical experts, the CDC, State of Georgia, the Bishops' Conference, and the Diocese of Savannah. You will find these to be fairly common in most Catholic churches/dioceses.

1. **Deciding if you should come to Church:** If you have a fever, or have been sick, or have been around anyone with the Covid-19 symptoms, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CHURCH. If you are at risk, please consider staying home. You are dispensed from the obligation of attending Mass. Fr. Mike or Deacon Scott can bring communion to your home (wearing masks and gloves).
2. **What to bring:** if you have a face mask, gloves, and hand sanitizer, please bring these with you. We have some extra masks and gloves at the church, but the supply is very limited and we may not have enough for everyone. And our supply of hand sanitizer is also very limited.
3. **Upon Arrival:** Please arrive at least 15 minutes early. It is going to take time for us to get everyone seated. Before exiting your car, please put on your mask. If you wish to wear gloves, please put them on. As you gather outside, please maintain the six-foot social distancing. And please keep this distancing while at Mass and while on the property. We need to prevent any spread of the disease; so, this is necessary.
4. **Limited seating:** In order to maintain the six-foot social distancing, the seating capacity will be limited. At St. Luke's, we can seat 19 individuals. At Holy Family, we have seating for 20 in the pews; another six chairs at the back; and a few chairs in the Social Hall. Families can sit together and that will permit a few more in the Church. Most of us have our usual location in the Church. For the time being, we will have to be flexible and just be grateful to be able to worship together.
5. **Options for Mass:** We have 3 weekend Masses. There should be more available seating on Saturday evening at 6 pm at St. Luke's or on Sunday at 12:30 pm at Holy Family. If English-speaking parishioners come to the Spanish Mass, we will make this Mass bilingual – which is not ideal; but at least we can worship together. If you are concerned about seating on Sunday, or if we run out of seating on Sunday, another option would be to come to the Wednesday evening Mass at 6 pm instead of Sunday.

6. **Some items have been removed from the Church:** following the requirements, we will not have Holy Water at the entrance. There are no hymnals and missalettes in the pews (we cannot reuse these from week to week). The bread and wine will be on the credence table in the front. We will not be singing, since singing can propel the virus much further.
7. **Before entering the Church,** please use the hand sanitizer. An usher will lead you to a seat.
8. **As you enter the Church,** the collection box or the collection basket will be there. Instead of passing the basket (with the risks involved), you are invited to drop your offering as you enter or as you leave. Please remember that we have not had regular collections in ten weeks. And in Blakely, we have had to replace the two HVAC systems. If you are able, please considering helping us catch up on our expenses. And thanks to those who mailed in their offering.
9. **Fr. Mike and Deacon Scott will wear masks until they are on the altar.** Then, the masks will be removed, due to the social distancing. At communion time, they will put the masks back on for the distribution of communion. And they will wear them for the recessional and while greeting all of you outside.
10. **For the Our Father and the Sign of Peace,** please stay in your place and avoid physical contact. It is not the same as we used to do; but it is necessary.
11. **For Communion,** please wait for an usher to lead you out of the pew. Please maintain the six-foot distancing. There are taped lines in the aisle to help us maintain the proper distance. Communion on the tongue and from the Chalice are not permitted. To receive Communion, remove your gloves (if you are wearing them). And remove or lower your mask. Please hold your hands very steady. Deacon Scott or Fr. Mike will drop the host in your hand. The point is that there should be no physical contact, and less chance of transmission. If there is contact, then hand sanitizer will be used. There is no need to rush. What is important is that Jesus is giving himself to us in the Eucharist.
12. **Dismissal:** please wait for an usher to lead one pew at a time out of the church. We need to do this slowly so that we can maintain distancing.

**Weekday Masses:** The Covid-19 virus can stay on surfaces for several days. And, we don't have sufficient disinfectant. To avoid possible transmission, we will temporarily discontinue weekday Masses/gatherings, except for Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm. This will keep the church sanitary. We will evaluate this as we move forward.

**The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession):** Starting on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> and continuing through the month of June, Fr. Mike will be available on Saturdays from 9-10 am at Holy Family, and from 4:30 – 5:30 pm on Saturdays at St. Luke's for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He is available also by simply calling and scheduling it. You don't have to identify yourself (keeping it confidential) and he will meet you in the Reconciliation Room. He can also come to your home. Please wear a mask during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.