

Dear Parishioners,

As we celebrate the feast of Pentecost this weekend, we celebrate the birthday of the church. On this day so many years ago, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and disciples and gave them the courage to go forth and proclaim the good news. On this weekend, we too call upon the Holy Spirit to give us courage to be faithful Catholics and to proclaim the joy of Christ even in the midst of the darkness of pandemic. Let us consider our light for Christ as a shining light in the gloom of fear and sadness that surrounds many as we look to the early Christian community we know they suffered persecution; many lost homes, loved ones and their own lives for the faith. They trusted in the mercy of God and understood that they were not of this world but pointing to the world to come, Heaven.

With great joy last Monday, we reopened the church. Bishop has sent a letter to each pastor trusting that those who were prepared would open their churches observing the strict necessary guidelines. We here at St. Luke, thanks to our amazing staff, were prepared. We had a system of social distancing prepared. We had designated spacing prepared in the church and we had previously ordered all the necessary sanitizing supplies needed to follow the necessary procedures. Maureen, Nina and I, with the permission of the Bishop had divided our Confirmation and Holy Communion families into small groups of 20. Sadly, late on Tuesday evening our bishop informed us that we had to close the church again. He had hoped that our Governor would understand that we, Catholic priests, in a responsible way, would not only shepherd our flock but also take care to ensure their safety. Our Governor refused to allow the churches to open and would make no concessions. My gratitude goes to our beloved bishop who with his staff really tried to help each pastor in the process of re-opening. At this point, we have no idea when the Governor will allow this and we just pray that federal and state politicians can work harmoniously together while at the same time respecting each other's beliefs. We pray that scientists and governments throughout the world will help each other to find a vaccine that will give us some comfort when we return to our normal way of life.

We are allowed to have outdoor gatherings of up to 25 people so I announce the following liturgies:

- Daily mass Monday through Saturday at 9:00 a.m. in the outdoor chapel in the back of the parking lot. If inclement weather, please bring an umbrella and a coat. Please wear a mask and bring your own sanitizer.
- 10 a.m. Mass live streaming from the church (no parishioners).
- Drive-In confessions on Saturday at the back of the parking lot from 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Sunday drive-in masses at 10:00 a.m. (live streamed) and 12:00 noon. Please remember that we have a limit of 88 cars per mass. Fr. Alex and I will distribute Holy Communion at the exit of the parking lot to those in the car. We ask you to please arrive 15 minutes early to allow for parking. Please remember that you cannot leave your car, please sanitize your hands before and after Holy Communion and you must keep your masks on until you receive Holy Communion and put it back on after.

For the season of Lent, I spoke a lot about the lives of the working poor, thanks to all of you who helped the working poor for your Lenten sacrifice. Every year for the feast of Corpus Christi, (this year, June 14), every parish in the diocese is invited to help stock our food pantries by donating non-perishable foods to our local Catholic Charities food pantries. This year, because of the virus, we are asked to donate online. Please use this link to make your donations: <https://yougivegoods.com/stluke>. Donations start at \$17.00 and know that this generous act we undertake will help the working poor during this even more difficult time for them.

On behalf of Fr. Alex, I wish you a beautiful Pentecost weekend as we celebrate the gift of our faith and the beginnings of the holy Roman Catholic Church, which we love and cherish so much.

Fr. Owen