



SAINT ELIZABETH CHURCH

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May 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

It has been a long time since we have been able to gather in the sacred space of St. Elizabeth Church. Our first public celebration will be on the feast of Pentecost, traditionally known as “the birthday of the Church.” For us, the celebration this year will be like the experience of the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who realized at Pentecost, there would be a “new way of doing things.” Jesus urged them not to be fearful and promised the Spirit's presence to lead and guide them. As we approach this new way of community worship, may we let go of any fear, and trust in the promise and presence of the Spirit.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass is extended to all Catholics in Ohio until at least September 13th, 2020. Consistent with our Governor’s and Bishop’s direction, we strongly encourage those 70 years or older and those with existing health conditions to continue to stay home and attend Mass through live stream outlets. Please fully examine the issues affecting your safety, and the safety of others, when deciding to gather again with the community. *If you are in one or more of the “high risk” categories, it is still too early to come out. And, of course, if you are experiencing any signs of illness, you have a serious obligation to stay at home.*

St. Elizabeth will be open for public worship May 30/31. Note that for the foreseeable future, Sunday and weekday Masses will continue to be livestreamed at the regularly scheduled times. Check the website for updates: www.stelizabethchurch.org I will announce when public daily Mass will be available. Please share the following information with friends, those who are homebound, especially those who do not have access to parish email.

Various committees have been working to help plan our return to the church. Your cooperation during this “phase-in” period will be appreciated. The updates and changes are itemized for you. Please study them, check the website photos, join us in prayer – whether in person or at home.

In Christ,

Fr. Antony Varghese, CFC

Parish Administrator

LITURGICAL ADJUSTMENTS & GENERAL INFORMATION

- Parishioners are to maintain a 6-foot distance between other parishioners.
- Parishioners are expected to wear a mask the whole time while in the building. (Note: infants and small children under 2 should never wear a mask.)
- Parishioners will sit in every second row and maintain a three-seat distance between your family /household and the next family/household within that row. (See photos posted on the website.)
- Early arrival is recommended due to the change in the seating pattern. Your “normal” seat may not be available. It will take time to determine just what seating is available, especially during the early phasing-in period.
- Greeters will be wearing masks and gloves and will assist with seating if necessary.
- The Holy Water font will be empty.
- There will be no offertory procession or sign of peace.
- We will not be utilizing Altar Servers or Extraordinary Ministers.
 - You will receive Communion at your seat. The priests / deacon will bring Eucharist to you. Please lower your mask *after* you receive Communion in your hand.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood is suspended.
- There will be music and a cantor, but no choir singing during this time. Hymnals have been removed from the chairs. Music will be posted for people to follow.
- Restroom use will be limited to the family restroom and for emergency use only.
- Water fountains should not be used.
- Please practice hand hygiene before and after Mass. Bring your own sanitizer. The church will have a limited amount available.
- Always maintain a 6-foot distance from other people both inside and outside the building. Exception is household groups who may be together.
- Both front and back entrances will be open for entrance and exit. Caution is stressed regarding keeping a 6-foot distance, especially when exiting. Please leave immediately after Mass due to current circumstances.
- St. Elizabeth is a welcoming, warm community. Socializing, with appropriate distancing, is acceptable in the parking lot after Mass.

- In the back hall, the sacristy door will be kept closed, the kitchen will be locked, and there will be no access to the classrooms.
- In case of overflow, some adjustments will be made contingent upon the situation.
- Parishioners can pick up the Sunday bulletin at each entrance. The weekly bulletins are also posted on the website, and on the bulletin boards at the church entrances.
- Parishioners are encouraged to use online giving for their contributions. <https://stelizabethchurch.weshareonline.org/> as collection baskets will not be passed at Mass. Sunday collection envelopes or cash can be dropped into the slot of the secure offertory box behind the baptismal font (see website photo). Contributions may also be sent to the parish office through regular mail.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation will continue to be by appointment. Specific information is available on the website.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST -- ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENT

During this building closure time, improvements have been made in the church. The money to finance these improvements was available from the parish funds. An application for a grant to help offset the improvements is being submitted to the Catholic Foundation. Any additional contributions will be used to replenish the parish funds.

- The sound system has been repaired and updated to handle the streaming of Masses to the homes.
- Technological improvements have been made so that streaming of Sunday and daily Masses can continue during the time the public Mass is being celebrated in the church.
- When seated in your chair prior to Mass, everyone will notice the two TV screens that have been mounted. This project has been under consideration for some time. The pandemic gave us reason to proceed now since we cannot use hymnals at this time. Hymns and responses will be posted throughout the liturgy.
- The lease on the printer in the parish office has been updated so that more flexible printing materials can be handled to accommodate current needs.

Everyone's help and support during the shutdown has been appreciated. We look forward to the time when we can all be together as the St. Elizabeth Parish Community. Meanwhile, please continuing praying for the health and safety of our parishioners and their families.