

SPECIAL COVERAGE: THE CHURCH RESPONDS TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CONNIE RIES

Preparing for church to reopen

STATESVILLE — Many parishioners at St. Philip the Apostle Church volunteered to spend a recent Saturday morning sanitizing their church, after it was announced that the churches could reopen. The volunteers cleaned the pews, doors, tables, bathroom fixtures, prayer books and other high-touch surfaces in anticipation of returning to in-person worship services. The parish's regular Mass schedule has since resumed, but as at other parishes across the Diocese of Charlotte, services are being organized to ensure safe physical distancing and other public health directives to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Parishioners who are ill or vulnerable are encouraged to stay at home and attend Mass online through livestreamed services.

Online giving reaps results for parishes

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SENIOR REPORTER

CHARLOTTE — A significant number of parishes are seeing robust offertory collections despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and offertory giving on average is at about 80 percent of what it was this time last year.

Churches have been closed to public Masses until only recently, so parishes have had to shift to online giving for parishioners to continue providing financial support to their church. Weekly offertory collections provide the largest source of operating income for parishes.

More than three-quarters of the diocese's 92 parishes and missions now offer online giving options, and these efforts are making it easier for people to give.

In April, 21 parishes collected more than 90 percent of their weekly offering compared to the same month last year, including 16 parishes that received offertory amounts over and above what they had received in April 2019. Another 18 parishes received between 80 and 90 percent of their weekly offering compared to last year.

Queen of the Apostles Church in Belmont is among the parishes seeing strong stewardship through its online giving program, which uses ParishSOFT. In fact, they are seeing offertory levels slightly higher than last April.

"I would like to commend our church members for continuing to support the church and thank the members that have signed up for our online giving program since the closure began," said Susan Colone, parish business manager. "We are pleased that they are finding this program a convenient way to donate. I also want to say 'thank you' to the members that have been longtime users of the online giving program."

St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Charlotte has also seen sustained support for the parish via online giving. In a livestreamed message, Father Matthew Codd, pastor, appealed to parishioners to continue supporting the parish if their circumstances allowed for it.

"I am grateful for the response," Father Codd said. "I shared with them

how much I missed seeing them at Mass and at the church. I told them I was praying for them and to please not forget us in their giving."

However, more than a dozen parishes have seen a steep decline in their weekly offertory amounts, receiving 50 percent or less compared to their collections in April 2019.

The diocese is supporting parishes that are experiencing strained finances with financial advice and relief grants.

Jim Kelley, the diocese's development director, and Bill Weldon, the diocese's CFO and chief administrative officer, have been communicating frequently with pastors to connect them with resources, share ideas and troubleshoot problems.

Through the diocese's Coronavirus Relief Effort, grants are being awarded to cash-strapped parishes to cover their operating costs for the duration of the pandemic. The relief funding is available to qualifying parishes that continued paying staff their regular wage (for those that have them) during the period that churches were closed.

Weldon explained, "This effort is designed to provide parishes with the cash needed such that they retain at least 75 percent of current unrestricted reserves or enough to cover one month's expenses, whichever is greater, after absorbing losses due to the curtailment of offertory."

So far, four parishes have received this financial relief, provided in the form of a grant that does not have to be repaid.

The good news, diocesan leaders report, is that many parishes around the diocese have been able to weather this financial storm due to sound fiscal planning in place before the pandemic.

"As our churches continue to provide the sacraments, to educate and to serve, we are grateful to those who are giving regularly to support the work of the Church," Kelley said. "We also pray for those affected by the coronavirus, as we look for ways to provide them hope, encouragement and support."

"If you haven't given yet to financially support your parish, please consider the options of giving online, through the mail or by dropping off a gift at the church."

CHURCH	MAILING ADDRESS	ONLINE GIVING?
Christ the King Church	1505 MLK Jr. Dr., High Point, NC 27260	Y
Christ the King Mission	818 McGowan Road, Shelby NC 28150	Y
Church of the Epiphany Mission	163 Galax Lane, Blowing Rock, NC 28605	Y
Divine Redeemer Church	P.O. Box 370, Booneville, NC 27011	Y
Good Shepherd Mission	105 Good Shepherd Dr., King, NC 27021	Y
Holy Angels Church	1208 North Main St., Mount Airy, NC 27030-3640	Y
Holy Cross Church	616 South Cherry St., Kernersville, NC 27284	Y
Holy Family Church	P.O. Box 130, Clemmons, NC 27012	Y
Holy Infant Church	P.O. Box 1197, Reidsville, NC 27323	Y
Holy Redeemer Church	214 Aquone Road, Andrews, NC 28901	Y
Holy Spirit Church	537 NC 16 Business, Denver, NC 28037	Y
Holy Trinity Church	1041 N. Hwy. 90 West, Taylorsville, NC 28681	Y
Immaculate Conception Church	1024 West Main St., Forest City, NC 28043	Y
Immaculate Conception Church	611 N. Church St., Suite 101, Hendersonville, NC 28792	Y
Immaculate Conception Mission	42 Newfound St., Canton, NC 28716	Y
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church	4145 Johnson St., High Point, NC 27265	Y
Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission	P.O. Box 546, Murphy, NC 28906	Y
Our Lady of Consolation Church	1235 Badger Court, Charlotte, NC 28206	Y
Our Lady of Fatima Mission	211 West Third St., Winston-Salem, NC 27101	Y
Our Lady of Grace Church	2203 West Market St., Greensboro, NC 27403	Y
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church	6212 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, NC 28214	Y
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission	P.O. Box 727, Bryson City, NC 28713	Y
Our Lady of Lourdes Church	725 Deese St., Monroe, NC 28112	Y
Our Lady of Mercy Church	1730 Link Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27103	Y
Our Lady of the Americas Church	P.O. Box 159, Candor, NC 27229	Y
Our Lady of the Angels Mission	290 N. Garden St., Marion, NC 28752	Y
Our Lady of the Annunciation Church	416 N. Second St., Albemarle, NC 28001	Y
Our Lady of the Assumption Church	4207 Shamrock Dr., Charlotte, NC 28215	Y
Our Lady of the Highways Church	943 Ball Park Road, Thomasville, NC 27360	Y
Our Lady of the Mountains Mission	315 North 5th St., Highlands, NC 28741	Y
Our Lady of the Rosary Church	619 South Main St., Lexington, NC 27292	Y
Prince of Peace Mission	704 Tallulah Road, Route 129 South, Robbinsville, NC 28771	Y
Queen of the Apostles Church	503 North Main St., Belmont, NC 28012	Y
Sacred Heart Church	150 Brian Berg Lane, Brevard, NC 28712	Y
Sacred Heart Church	375 Lumen Christi Lane, Salisbury, NC 28147	Y
Sacred Heart Mission	P.O. Box 1208, Hamlet, NC 28345	Y
Sacred Heart Mission	P.O. Box 1406, Mars Hill, NC 28754	Y
St. Aloysius Church	921 Second St. NE, Hickory, NC 28601	Y
St. Andrew the Apostle Church	P.O. Box 1406, Mars Hill, NC 28754	Y
St. Ann Church	3635 Park Road, Charlotte, NC 28209	Y
St. Barnabas Church	P.O. Box 39, Arden, NC 28704	Y
St. Basil the Great Eastern Catholic Church	1400 Suther Road, Charlotte, NC 28213	Y
St. Bernadette Church	P.O. BOX 1252, Linville, NC 28646	Y
St. Benedict Church	109 West Smith St., Greensboro, NC 27401	Y
St. Benedict the Moor Church	1625 East 12th St., Winston-Salem, NC 27101	Y
St. Charles Berromeo Church	728 West Union St., Morganton, NC 28655	Y
St. Dorothy Church	148 Saint Dorothy's Lane, Lincolnton, NC 28092	Y
St. Elizabeth Church	259 Pilgrims Way, Boone, NC 28607	Y
St. Eugene Church	72 Culvern St., Asheville, NC 28804	Y
St. Francis of Rome Mission	P.O. Box 367, Sparta, NC 28675	Y
St. Francis of Assisi Church	299 Maple St., Franklin, NC 28734	Y
St. Francis of Assisi Church	P.O. Box 634, Jefferson, NC 28640	Y
St. Francis of Assisi Church	328-B Woodway Lane NW, Lenoir, NC 28645	Y
St. Francis of Assisi Church	862 Yadkinville Road, Mocksville, NC 27028	Y
St. Gabriel Church	3016 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC 28211	Y
St. Helen Mission	1235 Badger Court, Charlotte, NC 28206	Y
St. James Church	P.O. Box 1208, Hamlet, NC 28345	Y
St. James the Greater Church	139 Manor Ave. SW, Concord, NC 28025	Y
St. Joan of Arc Church	768 Asbury Road, Candler, NC 28715	Y
St. John Baptist de la Salle Church	275 CC Wright School Road, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659	Y
St. John Lee Korean Church	7109 Robinson Church Road, Charlotte, NC 28215	Y
St. John Neumann Church	8451 Idlewild Road, Charlotte, NC 28227	Y
St. John the Baptist Church	180 Laurel Ave., Tryon, NC 28782	Y
St. John the Evangelist Church	234 Church St., Waynesville, NC 28786	Y
St. Joseph Church	720 West 13th St., Newton, NC 28658	Y
St. Joseph Church	512 West Wainman Ave., Asheboro, NC 27203	Y
St. Joseph Church	P.O. Box 727, Bryson City, NC 28713	Y
St. Joseph Church	108 Saint Joseph St., Kannapolis, NC 28083	Y
St. Joseph of the Hills Church	316 Boone Road, Eden, NC 27288	Y
St. Joseph Vietnamese Church	4929 Sandy Porter Road, Charlotte, NC 28273	Y
St. Jude Church	3011 US-64, Sapphire, NC 28774	Y
St. Lawrence Basilica	P. O. Box 1850, Asheville, NC 28802	Y
St. Leo the Great Church	335 Springdale Ave., Winston-Salem, NC 27104	Y
St. Lucien Church	P.O. BOX 688, Spruce Pine, NC 28777	Y
St. Luke Church	13700 Lawyers Road, Mint Hill, NC 28227	Y
St. Margaret Mary Church	102 Andrew Pl., Swannanoa, NC 28778	Y
St. Margaret of Scotland Church	P.O. Box 1359, Maggie Valley, NC 28751	Y
St. Mark Church	14740 Stumptown Road, Huntersville, NC 28078	Y
St. Mary's Church	812 Duke St., Greensboro, NC 27401	Y
St. Mary Help of Christians Church	818 McGowan Road, Shelby, NC 28150	Y
St. Mary, Mother of God Church	22 Bartlett St., Sylva, NC 28779	Y
St. Matthew Church	P.O. Box 49349, Charlotte, NC 28277	Y
St. Michael the Archangel Church	708 St Michael's Lane Gastonia, NC 28052	Y
St. Patrick Cathedral	1621 Dilworth Road East, Charlotte, NC 28203	Y
St. Paul the Apostle Church	2715 Horse Pen Creek Road, Greensboro, NC 27410	Y
St. Peter Church	507 South Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28202	Y
St. Peter Yu Korean Church	4112 Romaine St., Greensboro, NC 27407	Y
St. Phillip the Apostle Church	P.O. Box 882, Statesville, NC 28687	Y
St. Pius X Church	P.O. Box 13588, Greensboro, NC 27415	Y
St. Stephen Mission	101 Hawthorne Road, Elkin, NC 28621	Y
St. Therese Church	217 Brawley School Road, Mooresville, NC 28117	Y
St. Thomas Aquinas Church	1400 Suther Road, Charlotte, NC 28213	Y
St. Vincent de Paul Church	6828 Old Reid Road, Charlotte, NC 28210	Y
St. William Church	P.O. Box 546, Murphy, NC 28906	Y