

FAQ for Saint Luke's Guiding Principles During COVID-19

Q: Is July 31st a hard and fast date?

A: If conditions improve (using the parameters set by the CDC guidance) we may consider beginning Phase One for returning to church (as outlined in our guiding principles) prior to July 31. The Session will monitor and evaluate public health developments on a bi-weekly basis, next on May 8th.

Q: How will we receive updates from the Session regarding next steps for re-opening church?

A: The Session will monitor and evaluate public health developments on a bi-weekly basis, next on May 8th. David will communicate updates regarding the suspension end date every other week in the Friday "Staying Connected" churchwide email.

Q: How can I find out more information about Saint Luke's program, ministry, and other details during COVID-19?

A: Church-wide emails, including Highlights (usually emailed on Wednesdays) and the Saint Luke's Staying Connected (emailed on Fridays) have a wealth of information about ongoing and new ways to be connected together. Our website has updated information specific to this time: <https://slpres.org>. There you will find information, including all previously emailed communications, about how to stay connected to your church family in many ways!

Q: How do I contact a member of the staff while they are working remotely?

A: As always, all of our staff members are available via email. Check the [Saint Luke's Staff directory](#) for information. You may also contact the pastors on their cell phones: David 847-899-5652, Shannon 404-964-3760, Phil 970-215-9041.

Q: I will miss my church family during the summer! Will there be opportunities to gather virtually if we are unable to gather in person?

A: Yes, we will miss you, too! The staff and other leaders are actively working on creative opportunities for fellowship, faith formation, and outreach and mission. Please keep checking the Highlights emails for the latest updates! If you have an idea to share, please reach out to a member of the staff via email. See the website for a complete listing: [Saint Luke's Staff directory](#).

Q: Why are we cancelling summer mission and conference trips?

A: Many of our mission and conference partners have already cancelled or modified summer events prior to our decision. All trips require in-depth logistics planning. With the continued uncertainty around the timing of when it will be safe to return to non-essential travel, all summer trips need to be cancelled. Depending on how quickly things improve, we may be able to conduct some alternative outings during the summer.

Q: My teenager is having a particularly difficult time with not being able to go on summer trips. Any suggestions for helping them through this time?

A: We wish we had magic words to make the grief disappear from losing opportunities and experiences that are so important or to make not going on summer trips any easier. A helpful perspective is that they truly are grieving a loss. With grief comes anger, sadness, negotiating, acceptance, and denial. All these emotions come in different ways and will come at different times. However they are feeling is okay, affirm their emotions, and don't try to fix them. Walk with them, let them know you hear them, and that it's okay to be mad, upset, and sad about all this. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta has a helpful article [here](#). The American Red Cross has a [free online course](#) if you'd like some more in-depth information. Of course, the pastors are here to help too. Let us know how it's going and if we can reach out in any way.

Q: As a church member, how can I support the youth and their families while they navigate their grief over summer trip cancellation?

A: Thank you for asking! As a church family, we can support our youth during this time by reaching out with notes, emails, calls, really any way that you would normally care for another member of our church.

Q: How will Saint Luke's support our mission and outreach partners and our conference center partners if they are impacted by having to cancel summer trips?

A: Many of our partners have pre-emptively cancelled summer trips and have created opportunities to assist them during this time by contributing funds, deferring refunds, etc. Saint Luke's strives to support our partners in any way feasible and we will continue to work with our partners to do so.

Q: I'm not sure I will feel comfortable participating in worship or other gatherings even when it is safe for most of the population to do so. How can I be a part of our church life?

A: Our number one priority is to offer ways to keep our members and community as safe as possible. We will continue to live-stream worship, offer online small group opportunities, and find other creative ways for folks who aren't able to attend in person to participate. We would love to hear from you if you have ideas! Please contact the pastors at pastors@slpres.org.

Q: Will church ever be “normal” again?

A: We know that it is hard to get our heads around this situation and its long-term impact on life as we know it. First, as the people of God have done for centuries, we trust that God will continue to be faithful to us and call us to be faith-filled people bringing hope to the world. In that assurance, we know that whatever “tomorrow” brings, we will continue to be the same strong congregation, and perhaps even stronger. Our calling from God won't change in spite of tweaks that we may need to make in our life together in the months ahead.

Q: If my Saint Luke's small group meets off-site, can we go ahead and begin meeting in-person again?

A: No matter where group gatherings are located, all Saint Luke's meetings or events will follow the guidelines set forth in the Guiding Principles document. All small groups will continue to meet virtually until the Session gives authorization to do otherwise.

Q: Will Saint Luke's be ok financially?

A: The good news is that the congregation continues to faithfully and generously give during this time, and we trust that this will continue. Thank you! Be assured that the Finance Committee of Session is working diligently and attentively on all aspects of the church finances. We do, of course, have substantial ongoing expenses related to staff and our facility, even if we are unable to be there to enjoy our wonderful campus. If you have specific questions, ideas, or need information about your particular giving, please contact a member of the finance team at finance@slpres.org.

Q: I typically put my tithe in the offering plate and have not submitted my monthly tithe. Who can I contact to get set up to tithe via auto payment?

A: We are grateful for your continued support of the work and ministry of Saint Luke's! To set up a regular contribution or to give a one-time donation, you may do so here: <https://onrealm.org/slpres/-/give/now>. If you need assistance, please email the finance team at finance@slpres.org.

Q: I live by myself or have limited technology and would like to have regular communication with someone from the church (doesn't have to be staff member). Who should I contact to set this up?

A: In addition to your Deacon, we have many members who have volunteered to reach out to Saint Luke's members to help us all stay connected, especially during this time. Shannon would love to connect you with another Saint Luke's member! Please contact Shannon at shannondill@slpres.org or 404-964-3760.

Q: I want to support efforts to help our community during this time but can't leave the house. Are there opportunities that the church is involved in that I can help with?

A: That's awesome! We do have opportunities for church members to help in many ways. For information on how you can get involved please check out the [Keeping Connected Volunteer Page](#) of our website. Thank you!

Q: I/my neighbor have been laid off/furloughed. Does the church have resources they can suggest that could help us/them during this time?

A: Yes, in these difficult economic times, furloughs and layoffs are becoming all too common, and we want to support each other and our neighbors in employment transition. Saint Luke's is so fortunate to have human resources professionals willing to support and network with those who need it. Jared Elliot (jared.elliott@att.net 770-262-9601) and Tracy Coffie (tcoffie@mac.com 404-273-3003) are each willing to help as they are able. And your pastors are, too! Let's support one another and share the burden of these difficult times.