

Our Lady of the Lake Communications Policies

Priority of Communications

1. Our Lady of the Lake Parish events and announcements.
2. Events and announcements from affiliated groups. (Corpus Christi Catholic School, Corpus Christi Foundation, Knights of Columbus, Sister Parish in Haiti, etc.)
3. Diocese of Grand Rapids events and announcements.*
4. Local events or other announcements, if appropriate.

*Top priority will be granted to the Diocese of Grand Rapids when they release 'must print' information.

General Policies

- All communications will build up the Our Lady of the Lake community and reflect a broad Catholic consensus that is faithful to the teachings and practices of the Church.
- All communications will be evangelical, meaning they are intended in one way or another to spread the Gospel and strengthen the faith of our internal and/or external audiences.
- Communications will provide opportunities for engagement (e.g. calls to action, prayer, or conversion) whenever possible.
- Content will be specific to the parish as much as possible. If the content is more general, there will be a clear local application. Content will always be related to the life of the parish, diocese, and Church in some way.
- Preference will be given to OLL ministry departments and Corpus Christi Catholic School over other content providers.
- Content provided by the Diocese of Grand Rapids, the Michigan Catholic Conference, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Vatican will always be used when required. Such content will be used with discretion when optional.
- Information that is widely available from other outlets, especially secular outlets, will be avoided.
- Information will come from established, reliable, nonpartisan authorities, generally from within the Church.
- All claims will be credibly substantiated. Quotations and paraphrases will be clearly and accurately cited (authors, links, book/article titles, etc.).
- Unnecessary engagement in controversy, partisanship, and politics will be avoided. Engagement in political issues will be dictated by the Diocese of Grand Rapids, the Michigan Catholic Conference, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- The AP Stylebook and Merriam-Webster's Dictionary are the parish's authorities on matters of grammar, spelling, and English usage. However, communications will use the Oxford comma. Other divergences in matters of style will be considered on a case-by-

case basis. If the AP Stylebook mandates anything out of keeping with typical Catholic usage, we will defer to the relevant Catholic authority.

- While the level of formality will differ based on context, written communications will generally avoid the use of words written in all capital letters for emphasis. The use of slang, contractions, bold font, italics, and exclamation marks will be kept to a minimum to maintain a professional tone.
- The Director of Communications will enforce the OLL Communications Policy and may accept, edit, or reject a submission under the supervision of the Director of Ministry and the Pastor.

Specific Communication Channel Policies and Submission Deadlines

Bulletin Articles

Audience: Parishioners and visitors

Purpose: To communicate what is happening at the parish and how our audiences can engage in the liturgical, devotional, social, charitable, and missionary life of the Church in the context of our local community.

Guidelines: Information will not be repeated unnecessarily in the same bulletin or week to week. The length of the columns will vary, but adequate and equitable space will be provided for all ministry departments and Corpus Christi Catholic School. Articles will not be excessively lengthy and will include relevant imagery whenever possible. Whenever possible, articles will provide opportunities for action or direct readers to where they can get more information. Inserts will be included infrequently and only when required or for topics of paramount importance.

Submission Deadline: Two Thursdays before the weekend, unless an earlier deadline is announced.

Mass Announcements

Audience: Parishioners and visitors

Purpose: To remind the people in the pews about items of immediate relevance.

Guidelines: Announcements will be brief, direct, and engaging. They will include a call to action and/or directions on how to get more information. Preference will be given to events taking place immediately after Mass, time-sensitive messages, schedule changes, and the most important parish happenings. Very few announcements will be included each week. Announcements will be rarely repeated.

Submission Deadline: Two Thursdays before the weekend, unless an earlier deadline is announced.

Bulletin Board, Slideshow, and Narthex Displays

Audience: Parishioners and visitors

Purpose: To provide a brief reminder about the most important and time-sensitive happenings at our parish.

Guidelines: Posters and slides will be eye-catching and will provide only the minimum level of detail in brief text. Interested readers will be directed to the bulletin, the welcome desk, or elsewhere for further information and follow-up. Narthex displays will ideally be interactive and may only be set up in the hallway West of the Kid's Room entrance and the East Hall entrance. All narthex materials will not block the flow of traffic through the space. Content will remain in place only as long as it is relevant.

Submission Deadline: Two Thursdays before the weekend.

Facebook Posts

Audience: Parishioners and the general public

Purpose: To provide a brief reminder about an item of interest from within the parish, or to direct our audiences to a relevant link.

Guidelines: All posts will contain an image, video, or link. Text will be brief and invite the audience to engage in some way (click a link, watch a video, etc.). Content will be sourced from the parish or shared from other Catholic sources or ministry partners, particularly local ones. Posts containing similar content can be repeated when relevant.

Submission Deadline: Two weeks before the date.

Website Pages

Audience: Parishioners and the general public

Purpose: To provide up-to-date general information on all aspects of our parish life in a well-organized manner.

Guidelines: This content is relatively static, though it will be updated when necessary. When possible, imagery, videos, and opportunities for engagement will be included. The text should be as brief as possible while still containing the necessary information.

Submission Deadline: Groups and ministries may submit updates to their pages at any time.

Website Posts

Audience: Parishioners and the general public

Purpose: To inform our audiences about the most important and time-sensitive events at our parish.

Guidelines: Posts will resemble bulletin articles, but typically with additional information, imagery, videos, and/or opportunities for engagement (e.g. register for an event, download a document, etc.). Brevity will still be maintained. Posts will remain on the website for as long as they are relevant. The most time-sensitive items can be displayed in the Breaking News section at the top of the website.

Submission Deadline: No website posts submissions accepted.

Emails

Audience: Parishioners

Purpose: To highlight the most important happenings at our parish.

Guidelines: When possible, no other emails will be sent besides the weekly bulletin email. This email will contain a link to the weekly bulletin, brief summaries of the most important and time-sensitive items, and relevant links. Other emails will be sent infrequently; possible

topics include special events and LANE content. All emails will contain imagery, opportunities for engagement, and links to videos, the parish website, and other relevant content.

Submission Deadline: No email submissions accepted.

Text and App Messages

Audience: Parishioners

Purpose: To remind parishioners about imminent parish happenings, including schedule changes and other time-sensitive items.

Guidelines: These very brief messages will provide necessary information and suggest a way to respond (e.g., register, click a link, etc.). They will generally not be repeated. Occasions include special events, funerals, and cancellations.

Submission Deadline: No text or App submissions accepted.