

# Our Lady of Consolation

## Communication Guidelines

At Our Lady of Consolation we recognize the value using many different methods of communication. Through these methods we hope our parishioners are encouraged, inspired, informed, challenged and even entertained. Ultimately our goal is to: “Be a Christ-centered Catholic community that welcomes, serves and guides people to a life of holiness.”

### **How can members participate in the communication process?**

Members of Our Lady of Consolation are encouraged to attend Mass regularly. Participation in a small group, ministry, program or event is critical for connecting in community. Members can also read the bulletin, check the bulletin boards and monitors regularly, follow the “News” on our parish website and read OLC E-News and other email from the parish. In addition, if possible, download the myParish app, “Like” us on Facebook and/or follow OLCis4me on Twitter. Most importantly, keep the parish informed about contact information changes and your areas of interest. If we can contact you and know what you enjoy we can personally invite you to participate in the community. Member and Ministry information forms are available on the parish website or on the Welcome Table in the Commons.

*All methods of communication are based on prerequisite approval. For fundraisers and solicitations, please see the Solicitation Policy. The approval for events, service projects and other programs is determined by department or parish staff at the direction of the pastor.*

## Methods and Guidelines

### **Personal Invitation**

Personal invitation is proven to be the most successful means of increasing participation and overall engagement in parishes. All ministries, formation opportunities, programs, events and departments should preserve and foster relationships to encourage spiritual growth and advocacy. Therefore, other communication vehicles should be viewed as secondary.

### **Announcements**

Announcements primarily help to remind and reinforce previously promoted parish-wide events or activities. Occasionally an announcement for immediate response will be shared. (ex: funeral or critical need) Announcements will be shared after post communion prayer by the presider. As good stewards of our parishioner’s time and attention weekend announcements will subject to the following criteria.

Criteria for pulpit announcements:

1. Announcements for activities/fundraisers/solicitations need to be approved through the appropriate process and have been previously promoted through other communication vehicles.
2. Announcements should be submitted at least one week in advance to the parish office. (Exceptions: disaster relief, emergency care to individuals or families in need, funerals, etc.

### **Witness talks/Testimonials**

Witness talks or testimonials can be a very effective way to reinforce an important message from the parish. In an effort to be good stewards of the time and attention of parishioners, testimonials will be considered by the Stewardship Council and Pastor by referring to the overall parish communication plan. Request for testimonials should be submitted at least one month in advance. Written remarks should be submitted to the parish office one week before the presentation, for staff review of content and length. Parish staff will help prepare speakers by coordinating a time to discuss protocol. Witness talks and testimonials should be presented at all of the Masses on the scheduled weekend.

### **Display Tables – Sign up or Sales**

Displays give parishioners an opportunity to make an actual physical contact with a representative of an event, program or ministry. Displays also reinforce previously promoted parish-wide events or activities. Occasionally there may be a need for a display for immediate response. (ex: funeral or critical need)

- For proper planning, displays should be scheduled through the Administrative Assistant.
- Every effort will be made to coordinate displays with hospitality weekends for increased exposure.
- Parish staff can assist with proper promotion prior to the scheduled display weekend. (bulletin announcement (see bulletin submission guidelines), flyers, email and website and other social media posts as applicable.
- A designated representative should be in attendance at each Mass to provide information and answer questions. The representative should be prepared with signage, promotional materials and to set up and take down the display.
- As a general courtesy, within one week of the display, interested parishioners should receive an enthusiastic follow up phone call with an invitation and/or specific direction.
- Ministries should keep the Membership Receptionist informed of changes in membership.

### **Display Areas**

#### **Commons**

##### Fundraising displays (if there is an exchange of money):

The designated area for fundraising promotions/solicitations display table is in hallway/commons in front of the vestry. This space is a compromise to the general rule that no fundraising activities (exchange of money) may be conducted within the church proper, the chapel, or the commons of the church.

##### Promotion or membership:

Displays may be in the commons.

#### **Family Center**

There are no limitations on displays in the Family Center. As a courtesy, please discuss plans to move the general configuration of the room with a parish support person for proper communication and planning will in advance.

### **Bulletin Boards/Posters/Signs**

The main bulletin boards are located in the vestry hallway and entryways. The bulletin boards provide another promotional opportunity for parish/ministry activities and events. Please submit flyers to parish administration for posting. (Flyers for fundraising events are subject to the Parish Solicitation Policy.)

General personal solicitations and information may be posted on the “Community” bulletin board available in the vestry hallway.

For planning purposes, please discuss the use of easels, posters and banners, either inside and outside, with parish administration.

Literature Rack material will be available as appropriate to the season or event upon approval of parish administration.

### **Bulletin**

Bulletin submissions should be sent to the Administrative Assistant no later than noon on Wednesday, 10 days in advance. Due to limited space in the bulletin, proactive communication is recommended to ensure adequate time for promotion. Long term promotional series may be submitted in advance and should change frequently to ensure continued engagement.

Bulletin inserts are typically reserved for large parish-wide programs or initiatives. Requests for an insert should be submitted two months in advance for planning purposes.

Bulletin covers are designated annually for liturgical, sacramental or parish-wide events with approval from parish administration.

### **Website**

The website should be updated continuously to reflect current events and allow for two-way communication as applicable. Particular areas for promotion within the website include: pages, news feeds, current event listing, contact forms, photos and additional links.

### **Email**

*Privacy of parishioners' email address is maintained at all times*

In order to protect the privacy of our parishioners, email addresses will not be shared or distributed to anyone requesting an email message. Rather, the parish staff will send the email on behalf of the requesting party. Email solicitations will be addressed individually or by blind carbon copy (BCC).

*Parish-wide emails are periodic and reserved for significant parish events.*

*Request for emails to those whose areas of interest who match a ministry opportunity with may be requested as needed.*

Please submit a request for an email messages to the Membership Receptionist two weeks in advance. Prior promotion, including a bulletin article, flyers and website posts, should precede the email by at least one week. (see specific method for guidelines)

**Monitor**

Parish monitor will be updated as per the approved current events submitted for bulletin and other announcements. Special requests for monitor display should be submitted at least two weeks in advance to the Administrative Assistant.

**Social Media**

OLC Facebook, Twitter and Text accounts are tools of interaction and used for contemplation, catechesis, motivation, humor and information. The tools are also a way to direct attention to other communication vehicles to enhance overall engagement.

**Weather Closing Information**

For all closing information, please access the information through our local NBC and ABC affiliate news stations: channels 8 & 13. In addition, you can check the parish website for current closings or cancellations.

*Additional details:* When OLC School closes and Faith Formation classes are canceled - all evening activities and meetings are also cancelled. If daily Mass is cancelled, it will be specifically noted on the news affiliates.

As always we encourage you to use your best judgment during inclement weather. Your safety and well-being is our main concern

*In an effort to be good stewards of the time and attention of parishioners, Our Lady of Consolation will make every effort to combine "like" events/programs for promotion within the Parish Communication Plan.*