

The 120 families in our parish are grateful for the presence and prayerful support of you, our pilgrim brothers and sisters. In your travels, we commend you to the gentle care of Our Lady of the Valley. Thank you, and please come again.



### Are you new to Luray?

We invite you to become a member of Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church. We welcome all to participate in our services and become an active parishioner. Please complete the parish registration form in our vestibule and contact the rectory. We look forward to meeting you!

### Our Lady of the Valley Covenant

We, the parish family of Our Lady of the Valley, do hereby covenant ourselves to God by working to proclaim His word, build His community, celebrate His liturgy, and serve His people. We affirm this covenant to you, Father, in unity with the Holy Spirit, through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

**Our Lady of the Valley  
Catholic Church  
200 Collins Avenue  
Luray, VA 22835  
(540) 743-4919**

**Reverend Edwin E. Perez**

web: <https://ourladyofthevalleyluray.org/>  
email: [office@ourladyofthevalleyluray.org](mailto:office@ourladyofthevalleyluray.org)

## SCHEDULE

### Mass Times

**Saturday:** Vigil Mass at 5:00 PM

**Sunday:** 9:00 AM and 11:15 AM

**Monday-Saturday:** 8:30 AM

### **Holy Day Masses:**

**Vigil Mass:** 5:00 PM

**Feast Day:** 8:30 AM and 6:00 PM

### Confessions

**Wednesday:** 6:30 - 7:00 PM

**Saturday:** 3:30 – 4:30 PM

also by appointment

### Devotions

**Rosary:** Daily before Mass at 8:05 a.m.

**Divine Mercy Chaplet:** After weekday Mass

**Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help:**

Saturdays after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:**

1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month from 3-7:00 p.m.

### **Other:**

For Holy Communion to the Sick, please call the Rectory at 540-743-4919.

**We welcome all visitors to**



## Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church, located in the town of Luray, is in the beautiful Page Valley region of the central Shenandoah Valley. Page County, Virginia, is defined by the mountain ranges which are its natural boundaries. The Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah National Park lie to the east. The Massanutten Mountain and the George Washington National Forest are on the west. The legendary South Fork of the Shenandoah River flows leisurely to the north and through the length of our valley.

**Did you know** the early and mid-18<sup>th</sup> century settlers here were immigrant Swiss and German farmers of diverse protestant denominations? Because they were expected to serve as a defense on the frontier, the governor of the Crown Colony of Virginia encouraged their settlement west of the Blue Ridge, and the established Church of England permitted them to practice their religion in what was then a remote area. In the Page Valley today, Catholics are only one percent of the Page County population.

## Why do we have so many visitors?

Luray, a small town of approximately 4,800, draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year because of its scenic location and visitor attractions. Tourists begin to appear at Mass in our little church in noticeable numbers in early spring. They come to enjoy the beauty of the redbud, forsythia, and dogwood blooming. The outdoor adventures offered by Shenandoah National Park, the national forest, the South Fork of the Shenandoah, Luray Caverns – and the attraction of nearby Civil War battlefields, campgrounds, golf courses, and wineries – keep our attendance up during the summer vacation months. In the fall, the spectacular autumn colors on our surrounding mountains draw immense crowds to the area, and to our church. After that, we see a significant decline in the number of our visitors that last through the winter months.

Thus, this little parish family must strive, as best it can, to maintain a standard of religious services and activities consistent with those offered Catholic travelers everywhere. We are thankful for this House of God, where we can with you, our visiting brothers and sisters, meditate and commune with the Lord. Our greatest pleasure is to see you at Mass with us when you come to Luray.

## How did our church get here?

The history of our parish begins, as it does for all Catholic communities, with the founding by Jesus Christ of His Church on earth. In 33AD, He appointed Peter as the Bishop of Rome and chose him as the first Pope. Eighteen centuries later, Peter's successor, Pope Pius VII, created the Diocese of Richmond and appointed the Right Reverend Patrick Kelly as its first Bishop.

Almost 100 years passed before a Catholic Church was reasonably available to valley residents. In 1883, St. John Catholic Church was built in Front Royal, 25 miles north of Luray. Catholics in our valley began to make the 50-mile roundtrip to Front Royal, first in horse-drawn vehicles and on the train, later by bus, and eventually by automobile.

Priests from the Redemptorist mission at Elkton, Va., first came to Luray in 1951. For three years, Sunday Mass was held in the Rotary Room of the Mimslyn Inn. In 1954, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kopec of this parish helped to facilitate the purchase of 10 acres of land on the edge of Luray. Construction of the church began at once, thanks to the generosity of the Catholic Extension Society. Seating for 100 was provided.

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church was dedicated on October 31, 1954, by the Most Reverend Peter L. Ireton, D.D., Bishop of Richmond. It was a mission church, served by the Redemptorist Father Robert Smith, who resided in Elkton, 27 miles south of Luray. In December of that year, an anonymous donor gifted a statue of Our Lady (now located in the Stations of the Cross Garden). The statue was blessed and installed in the front of the church.

Responding to the need for a church hall and additional seating for our seasonal visitors, a wing was added in 1960 to the south and east of the church. In 1972, the open portico on the front of the church was enclosed and became the vestibule.

In 1968, the Bishop assigned Fathers Robert Hickman and Thomas Schutte to replace the Redemptorists at Elkton. One of them travelled weekly to our Lady of the Valley to say Sunday Mass. In June 1970, Father Charles Ryan was

appointed pastor of the Catholic communities of Elkton and Luray. He resided in Elkton.

In 1976, Pope Paul VI created the Diocese of Arlington and appointed His Excellency Thomas J. Welsh as its first Bishop. Luray was placed in the new diocese, while Elkton remained in the Diocese of Richmond. Two years later, Father Charles Ryan was transferred from Elkton to Luray and became the first resident pastor of Our Lady of the Valley. After 22 years, we were no longer a mission church and had, at last, our own pastor. We began to have daily Mass, a Vigil Mass on Saturday, and two Masses on Sunday. This was a most welcome change for our parish members and visitors. Our rectory was completed in August 1977, and we celebrated our parish Silver Jubilee on October 31, 1979.

Subsequent Diocesan pastors included Fr. Eugene Neyer, Fr. James Gould, and Fr. Joseph Loftus. In 1992, the Third Order Regular friars of the Franciscan Order began serving in our parish. They continued their ministry here until 2016, with Fr. Gervase Cain, Fr. Andrew Draper, and Fr. Christopher Lemme, with many Franciscan friars as assistants. The parish returned to the ministry of the Diocesan priests in 2016 with Fr. Edward Horkan, followed by Fr. Edwin Perez, our current pastor, in 2019.



**Thanks be to God, we will celebrate Our Lady of the Valley's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oct. 31, 2024!**