



# ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

*“Changing Lives  
through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education.”*

June 4, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Savior, Jesus!

***“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’ (Psalm 122:1)”***

As we announced in our online services on June 7th, we are resuming in-person worship services the weekend of June 13th & 14th. As you can imagine, the services will not have the same "feel" because of health concerns and social distancing, but we are excited that we will be able to see you once again in the Lord's house. Before we get to Guidelines and Procedures, as your pastors, we want to frame this discussion and worship transition to help us all join together in worship as one body of Christ.

There is so much discord, discouragement, and fear in our world. We need to move past fear and hold on to faith in the Lord and His promises. Faith in the midst of fear is what will help us. I say this as a reminder that as we navigate the task of reopening, we need to be mindful that people are at different places of comfort as well as concern about reopening too soon or not fast enough.

Dear friends, we cannot let the coronavirus divide us. We need to deal with each other in love, patience and understanding. St. Paul gives us a good reminder from 1 Corinthians 8:9 ***“Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.”*** We need to realize that some are still fearful or may have health issues that keep them from coming back immediately to church. In the same way, many have differing views of the government's ongoing restrictions. We need to listen with understanding and patience.

In talking to the church, James gave this admonition: James 1:19 - ***“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”*** So let us be humble as we contact and encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ.

There is the old adage that ***“you can't please everyone.”*** So, as we step forward with our plans, these words from Paul to the Ephesians are important: Ephesians 4:1-3 - ***“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”***

## **Guidelines and Procedures for Resuming In-Person Services Before Coming To Church**

As we prepare to gather once again, these are our requests and guidelines:

- 1. Deciding Whether Attend.** If you are running a temperature or not feeling well, please stay home. If you are worried about your own safety, please stay home. Our worship services are still available on our website ([www.stpaulslutheran.net](http://www.stpaulslutheran.net)), on Facebook and on Youtube.
- 2. Practice Good Personal Hygiene.** Please wash your hands before coming to church (and even after arriving if you are so inclined). If you have some, please bring your own hand sanitizer (the church has limited amounts). When entering and exiting the building, we ask that you wear a mask. (If you wish, other than for singing, you may remove it while seated in your pew/row.)

### Arriving For The Worship Service

- 3. Bulletins.** Please pick up your own bulletin as you come in (at the school, you can use the screens instead, if you wish) and, as you leave after worship, we ask that you take your bulletin with you or place it in the recycle container.
- 4. Hymnals.** Many people want to use the hymnals. If you choose to do so, please leave it in the pew/row so it can be wiped down after the worship service.
- 5. Use Caution When Socializing.** We know that you cannot wait to see each other, but we do need to exercise some restraint in how we interact with each other. Please refrain from shaking hands for now. Also, if you want to have extended conversations, please be aware of social distancing or have conversations outside before and after the service. That's what the open air is good for.
- 6. Socially Distancing Seats.** Sections of pews and chairs will be closed for seating. Please sit in an open area and try to keep the suggested six feet from each family group. If you are the first ones in, please go in as far as you can to leave the end areas open for people who come after you.
- 7. Items On Hold For Now.** For right now, we want to limit the time for people to gather, so we are not having coffee & donuts, Sunday School or Bible Classes.

### During Service

- 8. Feel Free to Sing.** We will have our normal style service, with responses and singing. Please feel free to sing. But to be cautious, please wear your mask while singing.
- 9. Tithes and Offerings May Be Placed in the Plates Near the Exits.** We will not be passing the offering plate at this time. Instead, offering plates will be located near the exits. You may simply place your offering in them on the way in or out.
- 10. Communion.** We will not be celebrating communion in our first worship service (June 13-14), but the following week, we will have some procedures to share with you at that time. Children are welcome to come up for a blessing during communion.
- 11. Pastors Are Available.** The pastors will not formally greet you in line as you exit. However, the pastors are available after the service if you have any cares or concerns.

### Concluding Thoughts

All of us have been living through these strange few months. We all know the general precautions that are being encouraged. In general, some of us abide by them more, some less, but here at church, please lean toward caution for the sake of your fellow members, many of whom are older.

We will keep a watch on cases in our community. If cases spike dramatically, we may have to evaluate and adjust our services. We will keep you informed of any changes to these plans.

You know yourself and you know what you are comfortable with. While we would love to see you here, we want you to be comfortable. When you are ready, we'll be here and ready to see you again. Don't feel pressured to attend. Don't feel pressured to commune during the service. If you would prefer not to commune or to receive communion from pastor at another time, that is fine. We will be flexible and all take care of each other. Be safe – but more importantly, be at peace in Christ Jesus!

Know that we have missed you greatly and have been praying for you while we've been apart! We are excited and anxious to see you in God's house again! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

In the Peace of Jesus!

*Pastor Karl Koeppe*

Cell - 815-592-2296

[kkoeppen@stpaulslutheran.net](mailto:kkoeppen@stpaulslutheran.net)

*Pastor Michael Hanel*

Cell - 913-940-8817

[mhanel@stpaulslutheran.net](mailto:mhanel@stpaulslutheran.net)