

Dear Friends & Members,

As Sunday approaches, and schools are closed for at least two weeks, after-school activities are cancelled, and Governor Wolf has called upon us citizens to cancel gatherings of 250 or more, what is the most appropriate course of action for us at St. Paul's this Sunday?

For many of you, perhaps for most of you, the answer is to stay home. For some, coming to worship this Sunday will create unnecessary risk and anxiety. For some, coming to worship might create unnecessary risk of carrying a virus to your home, retirement community, or place of work.

For others, coming to worship can provide comfort, bolster and increase faith, and give a greater sense of God's peace in a time of societal fear.

Some of you may be planning to come to worship this Sunday out of a sense of duty or obligation. Please do not. Please do not feel in any way guilty for staying home. If staying home is best - please stay home - especially if you are in any way uncertain about your health or concerned about your vulnerability. As my wife wants to be healthy for her patients, she will be staying home this Sunday.

Especially for those who need or want the church in this moment of time and in this time of world-wide crisis, I will be at St. Paul's this Sunday to lead you in worship.

Steven plans to be at St. Paul's also to live stream the worship service, so that you can participate in worship from the comfort of your own home. If staying at home, click on this [Live Stream](#) link to watch the worship service online.

For those who are coming this Sunday, I want to note the following:

- + We will *not* be passing the offering plate. It will simply be on a table.
- + We will *not* be Passing the Peace.
- + We are *not* scheduled to have communion this Sunday.
- + We will *not* be passing the Welcome Pads.
- + We will *not* be using hymnals (all the music will be printed in the bulletin).
- + I encourage you *not* to offer to shake hands in greeting. (You all desire to be friendly, but at this moment of time, that might create unnecessary anxiety and risk, rather than a sense of friendliness).
- + We will *not* be having nursery, so as not to need to worry about sanitizing toys, furniture, and other objects in the nursery room. Children, as always, continue to be very much welcome to sit with their families for worship.
- + We will be doing extra cleaning of the backs of the pews (where people commonly put their hands) and the arm rests, and temporarily removing the hymnals to make cleaning easier; as well as door handles and other commonly touched places.
- + We will leave the inside doors open in the sanctuary and hallway throughout the service (so you need not touch them).
- + Like many churches, we too are encouraging members to sign up for electronic giving by clicking on this [electronic giving](#) link, as doing so reduces risk through the passing, handling, and counting of money and envelopes.
- + Please be mindful to wash your hands with soap and water frequently.
- + Avoid touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes).
- + Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or in your elbow, and washing hands after.
- + Use your knuckle (rather than your finger tip) to operate the elevator buttons.
- + Use your elbow (rather than your palm) to push open doors.
- + Stay home when sick, until the illness unnecessary resolved (vomiting, fever, nose drainage, lethargy, sore throat, cough, rash, diarrhea, etc).
- + We have hand sanitizer in the hallway and for when you come into the building.
- + Please spread out in the sanctuary pews, for the comfort of all.

To minimize exposure an unnecessary risk:

- + Sunday school is *CANCELLED* for March 15 & March 22
- + There will be *NO* Fellowship Hour after worship on March 15 & March 22
- + There will be *limited* Pastoral Visits in the next two weeks. Please call \or e-mail if you would like a visit. My traveling between various hospitals and nursing homes can create a risk of me becoming a potential carrier from one institution to many others, so for the health of all, I will be significantly limiting those visits.
- + I am recommending the VCT Members and Elders *NOT* do hospital, rehab, and nursing home visits for the next two weeks
- + The March Soup 'n' Such is *CANCELLED*.
- + The Ham & Dandelion Dinner is *CANCELLED*.

Youth Singing This Sunday

- + If enough children come, we will continue with the plans for them to sing. If not, we will postpone the children singing. Since we do not have Sunday school, if you are interested in having your child sing, please have them come at 10:00am for practice.

Wednesday Evening

- + At this point, we are still planning on having our Lenten Wednesday Evening worship and *Half Truths* discussion. We are planning to have that in the sanctuary, so that people can sit further apart from each other.

Information Yet To Come:

- + The Conrad Weiser Ministerium has not yet made a decision on Lenten Afternoon Worship Services.
- + The church leadership and I are in ongoing conversations about how best to be in Christian ministry at this time. My thanks for their time, effort, wisdom, discussion, and prayerful discernment.
- + As the course of the Coronavirus changes over time and as we receive information from the CDC and other officials, our plans and decisions may also change accordingly.
- + Please look for potential updates about March 22 and the following Sundays.
- + Please look for potential updates about March 18 and the following Wednesdays.
- + Please look for potential updates about other church activities.

Coronavirus News In Moderation:

- + Please be careful not to over-saturate yourself with media reports about the Coronavirus.
- + More importantly, parents and others supervising children, please be careful not to expose children to too much media throughout the day/week/month about this virus, particularly video images. Please keep aware of what they are watching on TV and online, how much they are watching, and how they are interpreting and processing what they see.

Please keep in prayer all those who are afflicted by this virus and their loved ones; those who are seeking to provide medical, spiritual, and emotional care to the afflicted; those who are researching medical care; those who are in quarantine and isolation; those who are anxious and fearful; those seeking to provide leadership and guidance for populations; and your church leadership and myself as we seek to be of pastoral support and ministry leadership.

Prayefully, Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Ben Motz