

COVID-19 Response

In March 2020, St. Paul Congregation took several steps to support the physical health of its church family and friends and to foster awareness as we experienced the initial impact of the latest Coronavirus, COVID-19.

Necessary modifications to services and activities were made.

- following the second Sunday in March, meeting together in person for worship, Bible Study and other activities was suspended.
- Additional educational material and information was shared with the membership and friends of the congregation by letter (refer to "Supporting the Health of St. Paul...").
- "Operation Staying Connected" was created.
- Sermons were provided by email in written format quickly followed by audio then video recording accompanied by the Sunday Bulletin and prayers.
- Zoom Sunday School, Zoom Council and committee meetings were initiated. Most recently several additional Zoom Bible Studies have been added.
- Behind the scenes, this Website was created to link to Facebook to enhance the sharing of the Word and our fellowship.

As our Lord blesses our community with health, we consider and make preparations to meet together for worship (with modifications).

We encourage respecting the needs of one another as we look to resuming our corporate worship services desiring to reflect the love that our Father has shared with us in caring for one another.

Consider:

- what we don't know about a virus that is unpredictable and has caused over 100,000 deaths in our country alone.
- following guidelines provided by our government and local authorities and applying them to the specific needs of St. Paul Lutheran Church.
- those in our home, community and church who have a different immunity and cannot handle illness the same as we may be able to.
- the special needs, unique demographics of our congregation.
- preparations that are necessary to support our members and friends in worship.
- taking precautions to protect one another and ourselves (wearing masks, physical distancing, forgoing handshakes, modifying our worship service, etc.)

Supporting the Health of St. Paul Lutheran Family and Friends

(Updated 03/18/2020)

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses with origin in bats that cause illnesses such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). A virus known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is causing the disease called Coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 and is the cause of the disease outbreak in China. This disease is now spreading person to person and thru community spread. The virus may spread by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. COVID-19 symptoms range from mild to severe; may appear 2-14 days after exposure; and, include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The immediate impact has been seen in older/elderly individuals (60 and above) with compromised health. A vaccine is not currently available.

To avoid respiratory viruses, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommend prevention by exercising precautions and practicing healthy habits:

- **Social distancing (6 feet) and limiting interactions as directed by authorities.**
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer at least 60% alcohol.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue** when you cough or sneeze.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** at home, work or school.
- Stay home from work, school and public areas if you are sick.
- **Practice other good health habits** that include: Get plenty of sleep; be physically active; manage your stress; drink plenty of fluids; eat nutritious food; and, take recommended vaccinations.
- **Facemasks** should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others or by those caring for the ill. The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

This information was taken from the following excellent resources: Mayoclinic.org; CDC.gov, NIH.gov and the WHO.