

Dear Family and Friends at St. Paul –

How we've longed to be able to write this announcement to you! After a number of weeks of streamed and/or parking lot services, we're excited to be able to look forward again to the day of gathering in our regular sanctuary for worship. We're happy to announce that we will resume in-person worship the weekend of June 7th. At the same time, we recognize that the people of St. Paul will likely be at varying levels of comfort and readiness for a return to in-person worship, so we have made the following plans for the immediate future:

- We will resume in-person worship the weekend of June 7 at our regularly scheduled worship times (Thursday 7pm, Sundays 8 and 10:30 am).
- We will continue to offer a parking lot service on Sundays at 9:15 am.
- We will continue to produce a recorded service for use at home.
- We will continue to have services broadcast on Hagen Sports Network.

The response to this virus has become a divisive issue across our state and our nation. Therefore, as we move forward from staying at home to opening up, this is an issue that requires patience, understanding, and most of all, love for God and for our fellow believers here at St. Paul. As we go forward, may we be endowed with the kind of spirit that the Apostle Paul spoke of in Ephesians 4:1-3, *"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, 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."*

While we rejoice at the thought of gathering together in person soon, we also recognize that just because the restriction has been lifted does not mean that the threat of COVID-19 has gone away. Therefore, as a matter of Christian love, we will be implementing some practices to promote an extra measure of public health safety among our congregation. At the same time, we also urge those who do not feel comfortable and safe attending worship to continue to use the parking lot service, or make use of our recorded services at home, without shame or guilt for doing so.

If you choose to gather here for worship, you will notice a few changes from the procedures you were used to. Please read the list carefully so that you are familiar with what to expect.

- **Duration:** We will follow an abbreviated service in effort to keep the total time under 45 minutes.
- **Doors:** Entry doors will be propped open to allow more fresh air and reduce the amount of surfaces that are frequently touched. Please enter the building through the open doors from the parking lot and Superior Ave, and enter the sanctuary via the side aisles.
- **Greeting:** Please refrain from shaking hands at this time. Try to go directly to your seat with little interruption.
- **Seating:** To allow for plenty of space between families, we will be operating at about 25% of our regular seating capacity. The pews for each particular service will be marked with signs. Please allow 6 feet between family units in

the same pew. There will be overflow seating in the basement and the service will be streamed to that projector and screen.

- **Pews:** The hymnals, Bibles, and friendship registers will all be removed from the pews. You may bring your own hymnal if you choose.
- **Bulletins and screen:** The entire service will be printed in the bulletin and on the screen, including all liturgy and hymns. Please do not leave your bulletin for re-use, but take it home.
- **Offerings:** We will not be passing an offering basket. Rather, offerings can be placed in baskets near the exit for your use. Please use these or consider giving online at www.stpaultomah.org/give
- **Communion:** We will be distributing the Lord's Supper via continuous distribution to allow for more space between communicants. While continuous distribution is new to many at St. Paul, it is a practice with broad acceptance in WELS and broad usage in liturgical churches. We will continue to offer communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month.
- **Fellowship:** Part of the joy of gathering together with other Christians is opportunity to see people face to face and socialize. This kind of fellowship is invited and encouraged to be done outside, where there is abundant fresh air.
- **Sanitizer:** You will find hand sanitizer in many convenient places around church.
- **Restrooms:** To minimize the need for cleaning between services, if at all possible, please refrain from using the restrooms. The services will be abbreviated.
- **Masks:** Masks will be available, but not required. The health department encourages the use of masks not as a means of self-protection, but as a means of protecting others, should one be infected without symptoms.
- **Be smart:** If you do not feel well, please stay home. If you've been in contact with someone who has been sick, please take any necessary precautions to protect your fellow Christians here.

All of these modifications are intended to be temporary, with the hope of being able to resume our normal customs and routines in the future. The Board for Lay Ministry (BLM) will be monitoring the situation continually, and will, when appropriate, make further adjustments toward a return to normal.

Once again, please be sensitive to the diversity that likely exists among our congregation surrounding these issues. As each one of us has been shown patience, self-sacrifice, and love by our Savior, may each and every one of us reflect those virtues as we live and worship with one another. We are confident that the Lord will bless our time together as we strive to show love for another as is fitting for members of Christ's body, the Church. This is a special opportunity to show Christian love and encouragement for one another.

Though we have had to change some of our normal routine, we are supremely joyful that God's love for us in Christ Jesus remains always the same. Again, we declare with the Psalmist, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" (Psalm 122:1).

Christ's servants to you,

St. Paul's Board for Lay Ministry (BLM) and pastors.