

# Our Church

## St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

**June 2020**

Sunday Holy Eucharist 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
Holy Days as announced  
Education 9:15 a.m.



*Church preparation  
for social distancing.*

*The return of the  
lectern for use by  
those reading the  
Sunday lessons.*

## Executive Committee Continues Weekly Meetings

The Executive Committee has been meeting every week via Zoom to stay abreast of the needs, concerns and plans for our faith community. President, Tristan Ericson; Vice President, Deacon Ellen Doughty; Secretary, Kathryn Wicker; Treasurer, Peter O'Connor; and Pastor Stan Reep continue planning for our life together. Each week they check the attendance figures based on the Facebook and website. They report on congregation envelope giving making sure we are on track to meet all of our financial obligations. They respond to staff concerns and ask members to check in with our staff to make sure things are going ok during this time of social distancing. They observe guidance offered through the CDC, office of the Governor, and the office of the Bishop. They share concerns, collaborate on strategies, and pray. During this time apart, our leadership has intentionally planned to be together weekly for the up-building of the congregation. Their efforts have led to securing a PPP loan through the Federal Government CARES Act. They continue to monitor the investment portfolio. They provide for the counting and deposit of all offerings. Most recently they are finalizing a small group of members to serve on a COVID-19 Task Force which will provide over-site and up- to- date information as it relates to our life together at St. Paul's. But mostly, they are concerned about our spiritual well-being, our devotions and prayers, and about the community of faith which comprises St. Paul's. They are aware of the painful sorrow and grief for the family and friends of our members who have most recently died. They strategize about ways in which to bring the congregation safely back together and what our congregational life will be like as we press through this time of pandemic. Please continue to keep the entire church council and staff in your daily prayers.

## Cottage Meetings Planned for July and August

### A New Normal after COVID-19

We have been planning for a series of Cottage Meetings for this summer. The Council at their retreat in March began to formalize some questions for discussion at the gatherings. Perhaps heading the list of discussion questions will be thoughts and vision for a New Normal after COVID-19 for St. Paul's. There are plenty of articles about the changing shape and focus of the Church and her mission during and after this pandemic. Our congregation is like all others, in need of clarity for the quickly changing landscape for Christianity. Carey Nieuwhof writes about congregational life in the current age and climate. He offers some thoughtful insights for pastors and church leaders to be thinking about as we move through the next few months. This is timely for us as we have 10 cottage meetings scheduled for July and August hosted by our members. I share some of his data as it pertains to us and to our mission *To teach the world that God is love*.

First, "Church will further consolidate as it expands". This sounds a bit odd but it has to do with our digital presence. In the last four weeks 48% of our members have not viewed any church services posted on St. Paul's website or Facebook page. Another 40% have watched what we have posted and engaged fully using the service folder and reading announcements. Another 23% have been streaming different services from different congregations. (I don't take this personally we are at home. I watch many of my colleagues and classmates now because I can.) What this means is that while we have been having a huge viewing audience in the digital arena it means that only 40% of those viewing are our members. The other 60% are people we may not even know and who may not live anywhere near York PA. Sharing our posts is critically important to have a larger share of the digital arena. Putting it another way, does what we say and do make a difference? Does it proclaim our mission? (I have gone back and listened to my own sermons to see if the congregation's mission as well as the gospel of Christ Jesus is clearly proclaimed.)

The plan put forth by the Executive Committee and to be worked on by the Congregation Council at their June meeting to re-open St. Paul's will not necessarily have folks rushing to return to church no matter how clearly thought out, how closely CDC guidelines are followed, or even how devout a person may be. "The reality is that 25% of our members will not return to worship any time soon; maybe never." With that in mind we may want to have some sort of check in plan to see when our sisters and brothers plan on returning. This could help us in our planning. Why should we be planning to add extra service times if honestly we will not exceed the 50 people outlined in the "Green Phase" in PA and in the CDC recommendations?

The truth is that our "ministry reality might change from a physical organization", St. Paul's Lutheran Church, "with a digital presence through the website and Facebook page, to a digital organization with a physical location". This may take some time to wrap your brain around, it certainly did for me. The example I use is that for years I would watch things from Westminster Abbey in London, choral evensong, and recitals. Then on sabbatical in 2013 when we were in London for a week, I visited the location, actually went to Vespers three times! This means that our physical building may become more of a destination for guests who are passing through the area and stop to participate or see on a tour. It means that how we greet and usher will need to adapt. It means that our options for financial giving to support the work and mission of the congregation need to be more clearly spelled out and easier to utilize. It means that fabulous Sunday school classes that have been taught in the past might need to be placed in a video archive so that others may view them at their leisure. The implications for this change in thinking are abundant.

The quality trait most sought after in leadership, both pastoral and lay, will be "agility". How quickly can the leadership team rethink and refocus the current situation to extend the mission? It is inevitable that dislocation and uncertainty will continue. How swiftly can and will the leadership of the congregation set in place experimentation, framing ministry in an authentic theological structure, and providing new opportunities to fulfil the historic role of the faith community in daily life and livening? These are the

hallmarks that will keep the church alive as community. This means of course that the staff can be both physically located in York or could be in a remote area but see his or her contributions building up the body of Christ both here and around the world. Staff members will need to be flexible, willing to think in new ways.

“Spiritual formation will most likely be facilitated in the home.” We have witnessed some of this already with our families taking turns reading Bible stories and sharing what God’s love and grace means to them through Facebook posts. Remember only 40% of those stories were most likely viewed by our members. Some 60% of viewers bore witness to something about our faith community that makes it vital and alive in Christ. They saw you actively participating! As Lutheran Christians this should come pretty easily for us as Martin Luther prepared the Small Catechism to be utilized in the home by the head of the family. Ideas of how to take our classes and projects and move them into a digital formula for people to use at a time conducive to them is only natural. I think about the days when I would hurry home from Thursday evening Choir rehearsal so that I could watch the TV sitcom *The Office* which aired at 9:00 PM. During these days of quarantine we watched lots of episodes at our convenience! Spiritual formation will more and more be facilitated in a variety of ways. I believe more of faith and life will be discussed and studied in our homes.

One of the things setting us apart from other congregations prior to the pandemic was the amount of events that we scheduled and hosted at St. Paul’s. As a matter of fact that was part of the driving force for many aspects of our renovations. We will see the “on-demand” view or watch at one’s convenience eclipse the “live events” that we host. An aspect of the renovation that is not complete but one for which we planned was a camera to record the action in the chancel. Originally we thought it would only be used to send an audio visual image to the new nursery during worship. Little did we imagine that this component is essential as we continue through these days of COVID-19. When it is added and complete with the new sound system, we will be able to capture a digital image of everything that takes place in the church for present and future viewing.

I share all of these rather raw thoughts with you as a way to let you know that as a pastor in the Church I still believe that our better days are ahead of us. I believe God is indeed at work making a way for us even while we might be in exile, or a desert, or social distancing at home. The next round of cottage meetings are critical for us as we cast a vision for St. Paul’s for the next five to ten years. I am aware more than ever that we most likely will need to host at least one or two Zoom sessions so that we can have the greatest number of participants and the fullest expression of who we are as God’s people at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, York PA. Who knows, someone from the opposite side of the country might join us. Or imagine someone from our sister congregation in Tanzania! A special thank you to all who have agreed to host this summer: Ann Anstadt, Tina Llorente, Josh and Lisa Miller, Dan and Kathryn Garber, Sheridan and Jamie Palmer, Jeff and Rose Riese, Alex and Erin Bastian, Sean and Leah McComas, Jim and Carolyn Kapoun. I eagerly await these times for us to be together and share in hope and expectation as we discern what God is calling us to do and be as we boldly *teach that world that God is love*.

In love and service to our Lord, Pastor Reep

While the preschool is closed physically, our preschool teachers have been able to reach out to students by posting educational videos. From singing songs to reading books, and more, our teachers are doing a great job trying to help their students feel connected during this time when we cannot be together.

In addition, Preschool Registration for the 2020-21 school year is now open to the public. If you have further questions you can contact Deb Becker. The main phone number for the preschool is (717) 854-1996. You can also register online at <http://www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com/>.



## **Heeding Guidance While Planning a Path Forward**

This week the Governor announced that on Friday May 22 York County would move out of the Red Phase and into the Yellow. This announcement provides us the opportunity to begin honestly accessing how we will open and resume ministry and mission at St. Paul's Church.

Given the guidelines from the CDC, the State of Pennsylvania, and from both the Presiding and Synodical Bishops, the Executive Committee has drafted a plan utilizing the Yellow and Green Phase outlined by the Governor. Knowing that we are not bound by such civil governing decisions it seems prudent at this time to work within them as a way to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

**The Yellow Phase at St. Paul's (Groups less than 25 in number meeting within the building.)**

Developing Procedures and Processes by the staff and elected and rostered leadership of the congregation. This includes appointing a COVID-19 Task Force.

Week-day office hours to resume observing best practices during this pandemic.

Training for staff

Preschool planning for up-coming academic year and rethinking procedures in light of what we currently know about the Coronavirus.

Permitting some committees to meet as determined by the Executive Committee.

Worship for elected and rostered leaders and their families if they so choose to be part of a trial and experimental approach for Sunday morning. Such participation would permit valuable feedback in a collaborative setting which would benefit the entire faith community. Our elected council members and the rostered ministers who comprise our congregation can provide practical and theological insight during this unprecedented time. Video through social media would continue to be provided for the congregation. Their willingness to participate in a trial period will help the congregation prepare to re-open when we move into the Green phase in York County.

Bible Study could resume on Wednesday mornings.

## **The Green Phase at St. Paul's (Groups of 50 in number meeting within the building.)**

Congregation following the Procedures and Processes established during the Yellow Phase.

Sunday Worship to resume for members and guests. Given the size of groups and the amount of time needed between gatherings we are considering adding additional worship times.

Training for the Congregation.

Religious Education planning for up-coming year and rethinking procedures in light of what we know about the Coronavirus.

Permitting others (non-church groups) to utilize the building.

Providing Worship for all members and guests will mean that our schedule will need to be expanded. We will need to identify an ever more dedicated group of volunteers to facilitate additional liturgy time or times. Servers, now more than ever, must be open to provide welcome, hospitality, safety, and guidance in this new era.

Parish activities would resume.

There is a significant amount of work to be done. We do not need to rush or feel pressured to take a next step if we are honestly not ready to do so. And of course you must take personal responsibility where your health is concerned. Please do not participate in worship or other activities of the faith community if you are running a fever, coughing, or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19. We do not want to put anyone at risk.



## Going Green When We Go Green

Sunday's at 8:00 AM

When the County of York goes Green and we can resume worship in person we are planning to hold the 8:00 AM liturgy outside on the south lawn. Worshipers would need to bring their own lawn chairs and or a blanket. With the CDC advising group gatherings remain safer outside than in, we are planning to be together, 6 feet apart, on the beautiful green grass. The 8:00 AM service time was selected because it will be cooler and the sun will not be so high in the sky. For members who have trouble maneuvering on the lawn, you may wish to attend the 10:30 AM liturgy in the church nave. This also means that surfaces in the church will not have to be immediately cleaned between services (only on days when the weather is not cooperating). We can also have more than 50 people gather outside! We will be utilizing the portable public address system, the bulletin will be emailed on Friday, the outside service will be video recorded and posted on social media. There are plenty of details to work out, but for now, this is something for us to get excited about. For our many families, we know that this is early on Sunday morning, but hope you will feel free to bring snacks for your children.

At this point we are planning that this will be a spoken liturgy of Holy Communion. During this pandemic we will, as many of our Christian brothers and sisters are doing around the world, receive communion in one kind, bread only. Instructions will be something like this:

*Those desiring to receive communion gather on the sidewalks surrounding the lawn.*

*There are positions marked on the sidewalk with a cross and properly spaced.*

*An entire household will gather at each cross.*

*Please cup your hands together to receive the host.*

*After receiving communion remain at your place until the Benediction.*

*Then return and collect your chair or blanket.*

*Please be respectful of personal space and distance as we continue through this time of pandemic.*



This may work brilliantly. This may not work at all. As we learned during the period of construction; patience and flexibility will serve us well. What this will do is allow us to be together and to be seen together by everyone who passes by. The public witness of our gathering on the green lawn, and surrounding the entire lawn when we prayerfully receive communion and give thanks for Christ Jesus, will stand as a witness to God's abiding grace, mercy and love for humanity. So start gathering your church supplies so that you are ready for the green when we go **Green!**

## Music Notes

This was written for a church newsletter by an eminent Boston organist, professor and church musician. He has allowed this to be shared. Peace, Victor

## On Singing Together

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.  
There on the poplars  
we hung our harps -  
How can we sing the songs of the Lord  
while in a foreign land? - Psalm 137

The world we live in - for now - is a foreign land indeed. The pandemic has brought devastation and calamity on many fronts, and one casualty – for now - is singing together. It's been well established that choir rehearsals and congregational singing are among the riskiest activities for infection; singers, even amateurs, are 'super spreaders' because of their athletic breathing and projection.

Simply put, as long as we must have social distancing we cannot have corporate singing.

This is a tragedy for now – but it is for now.

Nothing keeps us from singing together in family circles.

Nothing keeps us from singing along to recordings, or on Sundays to the organ accompaniment on our livestreamed service.

Nothing keeps up from singing when on our walks outside.

Singing will continue, and when we come together again there will be a joyful noise of gratitude heard all over the world as we blend our voices in a chorus of wonder, love and praise.

These words were never more true...

My life flows on in endless song;  
Above earth's lamentation,  
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn  
That hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife,  
I hear that music ringing  
It finds an echo in my soul  
How can I keep from singing?  
No storm can shake my inmost calm  
While to that rock I'm clinging  
Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth  
How can I keep from singing?



We will sing together again.=

Please remember to notify Pastor Reep of any life events (births, illness, deaths, etc.,,) that you would like him to be aware of directly or through the office.



**Deadline for the  
July newsletter is  
June 15th**

## **Children & Youth Ministry**

While sheltering in place I took some time to step back and rethink how I could do Children's Ministry at St. Paul's without being with the children in our Church space. Thinking about what the children like to do on Tuesday evenings I decided to do age appropriate "CREATE Mailings" for grades K through grade 6. These mailings will be patterned after our Tuesday evening CREATE time together. Each mailing will include a letter to the child and a project that they can CREATE at home. It's my hope that they can do the projects at their own pace any time throughout the summer.

The first mailing went out in May and included a Butterfly to decorate along with coloring sheets and word finds for the older children. I heard back from some parents mentioning that they their children were happy to receive an art project and something to do that was not screen time.

Starting in June the mailings will be focused on The Fruits of the Spirit. I know the children will find many ways to see God through love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. As they complete their projects parents are always welcome to share the picture with me and I will see that it is posted to our Website.

The youth grades 7 through 12 will also be receiving a Fruits of the Spirit activity / project to work on. The high school graduates will be receiving a Graduation goodie bag from the congregation. I will be delivering these bags to their doorsteps the first week of June.

The new normal for St. Paul's Children and Youth Ministry is yet to be known. The children and youth are all very important to me and I hope that reaching out to them through personal greetings and projects will make them smile and help to keep them engaged in St. Paul's church life.

Miss Kelly

## **Congratulations Class of 2020!**

It's Graduation time so please join me in showering our graduates with cards. Their information is listed below if you would like to send them a graduation greeting. It does not have to be a graduation card; any card or letter will do. I know they will all appreciate knowing that we are all thinking of them and keeping them in our prayers. Each graduate will also be receiving a graduation goodie bag from the congregation which I will be hand delivering to their homes Thank you so much for being part of this and wishing them all success in the future.

God's Blessings, Miss Kelly

Tyler Jones	Graduated from Central High School
Katherine Hutton	Graduated from West York High School
Chris Kapoun	Graduated from York Suburban High School
Nick Kapoun	Graduated from York Suburban High School
Andrew Schultz	Graduated from York Suburban High School
Micah McKee	Graduated from York Suburban High School

You may find their addresses in the Church Directory or by calling the office.

## Just what have you been up to during this time?



We just adopted a new dog a week ago. His name is Red and he is the cutest dog ever, a young beagle and hound mix. Red and white in color. He is a love bug. Full of personality. He loves people and loves to play. Our only problem is he chases cats and we have 3 outside cats. He's a lot of fun and tries hard to do the right thing. We are working on simple commands right now. - Linda Hanson

Since our service schedule is uncertain, we are requesting those who have signed up for Altar Flowers whose date has been canceled to have their dedication moved to another date. We are planning to utilize the next available Sunday to honor requests. Thank you.



Easter Flowers—For those who placed Easter Flower orders we are planning to have flowers in the church for the first full participation service we are able to safely have. By making this adjustment we will honor your intention, fill the church with beautiful flowers on the joyous occasion of our church family reuniting, and support our local florist and greenhouse.

## FALL PLANNING

A planning group has been brainstorming and “ZOOMING” to discuss Adult learning opportunities for next fall. Here is just a sampling of some of the possible topics....

Mpguso Sunday – learn about and celebrate our ministry in Tanzania

Bible Stories through African art

How can we be good stewards?

Go in peace, Serve the Lord...What does that mean? What are we doing? What could we do?

5 Women in Jesus lineage.



## *In our prayers we remember...*

*George Fitch, Gene Shue, Abbie Rider, Gayle Guyton, Rodney Miller, Amanda, Jim Young, Penny Bailey, Eddie Turner, Sr., Jessica Ericson, Kristine Gross, Porter Stacey, the families and loved ones of Sylvia Little and Monte Smith. Please keep all medical personnel and those in the military and in mission work in your daily prayers.*



## Italian Wine Dinner Updates

Attention all church members! St. Paul's members have the first priority to purchase tickets for the Italian Harvest Wine Dinner prior to tickets going on sale to the community. There are a limited number of tickets, so please be sure to complete the ticket application form below and submitted it to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, **attention tickets**, 25 West Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

### TICKET ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail the ticket order form to:*

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Attention – Tickets  
25 West Springettsbury Avenue  
York, PA

*Questions may be directed to:*

ann@anstadt.com

**ITALIAN HARVEST WINE DINNER**  
*with* ART AND SILENT AUCTIONS



### **NEW GAME! Name that food pantry worker!**

Thank you to all our Pantry volunteers for wearing masks and practicing social distancing for the health of themselves and our Pantry clients.

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
25 W. SPRINGETTSBURY AVE.  
**YORK, PA 17403**  
(717) 843-8155 (717) 843-0261 (Fax)

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*Please send us your e-mail so we may go paperless.*  
*If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter please notify the office. Thank you.*

Thank you to all who helped to get this newsletter  
out this month!

**STAFF**

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Preschool Director	Deb Becker	<a href="mailto:director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com">director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com</a>



**Worship Schedule**

Sunday Holy Eucharist  
8:00 & 10:30 a.m.  
Education 9:15 a.m.