

COVID-19 UPDATE – Rising COVID cases in PA.

Last week Bishop Dunlop, Lower Susquehanna Synod ELCA Bishop, and Governor Wolf issued new updates addressing the surge in COVID cases and hospitalizations across the commonwealth.

How do these two communications affect our worship and use of the St. Paul's building?

For St. Paul's, the Governor's COVID mitigation efforts primarily refer to mask use. Masking orders now call for wearing a face covering at St. Paul's at all times, for both inside and outside activities such as the Grocery Ministry. While all of our issued protocols have called for the wearing of masks on St. Paul's property, some groups/committees have made the decision on their own to lower masks when 6ft of distancing is maintained. This is no longer acceptable, masks must be worn at all times. Two exceptions would be staff members working in isolation and when we receive the Eucharistic elements.

The Bishop's letter talks about mask wearing, building capacity and corporate singing. Mask wearing is required 100% of the time as shared above. In regards to building capacity, there are various maximum capacity limits ranging from 20%-50% depending on the business. We have measured and evaluated seating in our sanctuary and will continue to operate at 20% capacity utilizing every other row and seating just 2 family units in each pew, knowing that we could expand to 50% if need be. In regards to singing, we continue to review various university studies whose testing shows that singing with a mask on is just as safe as speaking with a mask on.

The greatest precautions have been taken to protect our staff and congregation. Please continue to follow our protocols on hand sanitizing, social distancing, building sanitation and disinfecting, notify the church if you experience an illness or test positive, and most importantly – wear a mask. And if you feel ill or unsafe around others, please stay home and join the virtual weekly worship service found on the St. Paul's website.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE November 23, 2020