

Message to all St. Paul's Committees, Missions, and Groups:

June 11, 2020

We understand that the work of our church continues even though the building is closed. The COVID-19 Committee and Congregation Council is evaluating how to worship and conduct church business during this current time, throughout the summer and into the Fall. Consideration is given to the overall health of everyone, limiting exposure to the Virus as much as possible, and protecting the safety of our Sexton who is responsible for cleaning the building following each use.

Until further notice the building is closed to everyone, with a few exceptions where the essential business of the church must be accomplished. All other Committees, Missions, and Groups are restricted from access; however, they may meet at other locations off-site. When gathering off-site, consideration should be given to the following CDC and State guidelines:

- COVID-19 is an airborne virus. Maintaining 6ft distancing is a minimum protection against droplet spread from talking. The virus can linger in the air for an hour. Singing and projecting your voice, coughing/sneezing increases the distance that the virus can travel.  
*Will you require masks? Recommend masks? Hold your meeting outside where ventilation is the best? Require 6ft of social distancing?*
- The Virus can live on hard surfaces. There are inconclusive studies on the potential of contracting the virus from a hard surface. The best precaution is to wash/sanitize hands frequently especially following exposure and to refrain from touching your mouth/eyes/nose.  
*Will you refrain from share items such as minutes, books, bulletins? Will you sanitize the meeting area before and after exposure? Provide/require hand sanitizing? Will you refrain from providing food that creates opportunity for sharing commonly touched utensils/plates/ cups and condiments? Will food be set up so that social distancing can be maintained? Or will attendees bring their own food/drink?*
- The Virus can be transferred through sharing handshakes, hugs, up-close greetings.  
*Will you control arrivals/departures, greetings?*

When scheduling a meeting/event/get-together, please communicate with the attendees on how you plan to safeguard their health and what steps will be expected from them.

We realize this is very overwhelming. Why can't we just proceed as normal? Haven't we been confined and restricted from our activities long enough? We can lament for hours but the truth is COVID-19 continues to be a realistic threat for now. Scientists say we will not be 'normal' until 70% of the population is immunized or has developed immunity from exposure. As members of St. Paul's our only recourse is to protect ourselves and our fellow Christians through wise and informed actions.

Think and plan wisely, pray frequently,

St. Paul's COVID-19 Task Force

We welcome any input, suggestions, concerns. Please feel free to contact any Task Force member: Pastor Burkhart, Suzanne Butler, Carla Hausmann, Russ Johnson, Peg Sennett (Chair).