



St. Paul's Presbyterian Church

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March 17, 2020

Dear St. Paul's Family,

As the Body of Christ at 1845 N. Center Avenue we are vitally connected to Christ and to one another. In the days ahead, we will each feel the loss of that connectedness as our fellowship together is kept apart by a needed, but unwanted, "social distancing." It will feel a bit like we're being torn apart from one another. My prayer is that as we pass through this trial together we will grow closer to Christ, and deeper in our appreciation for one another.

The Session of St. Paul's, having considered the recommendations of national, state, and local leaders, as well as the expertise of physicians in our own congregation, have decided to cancel all church services, activities, and events at St. Paul's through at least Monday, March 30. This closure may extend if needed, so please pay attention to the church website for updates.

There is a very intentional medical warning to slow and flatten the curve (spread) of COVID-19 before it becomes more harmful and even deadly to especially the elderly and health compromised in our community. There is also the real concern of overwhelming hospitals, medical resources, and healthcare providers.

There is a lot of information out there, and much of it is very confusing to navigate. Dr. Ken VanAntwerp and Dr. Bill Thompson, members of St. Paul's, both recommend an article entitled "*COVID-19 Update; 3/14/2020. A Message From Concerned Physicians*" by Dr. Howard Luks MD. At the end of this letter is an excerpt of some useful takeaways from the article. The full article can be found at www.medium.com by searching the title. At the end of the article is a useful list of actionable points we can all take to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

As representatives of Christ, we want to be at the forefront of loving our neighbors, and if a temporary social distancing is determined to be the safest course of action at this time, then we must seek ways to joyfully comply and creatively minister in that context. This may be a great time to re-engage with others by calling and talking with them on the phone - as in the good old days - particularly with the lonely and the isolated.

Sunday morning worship services will be offered online. Links will be posted on the church website (www.stpaulsepc.org). In coming Sundays we also hope to post links to Adult Sunday School classes and other resources for your family and children to use in worshipping together as families. If you need technical assistance in connecting with the worship service we are ready and glad to help, simply call the church office.

We will be setting up a 'Community Benevolence Fund' to be used in our community as many needs are sure to arise in the days to come. We will also provide an online giving option to assist you in giving to this fund, as well as, to continue giving your offering to the church. A link will be on the church website for online giving. You may always simply mail your gifts and offerings to the church.

Office hours will be reduced to 9:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday - Friday. We encourage you to call, not come to the office unless absolutely necessary. Although the office hours are reduced, the office phones will be answered (814-445-5341).

There will be many opportunities to serve one another and our neighbors as a result of this crisis. Please let us know if ...

- You become ill - We have tangible and safe ways to minister to you and your family.
- You need something - We can help getting groceries, picking up prescriptions, etc.
- You have neighbors that are going through especially difficult circumstances - We'd love to help you love your neighbor and those that may not have a supportive network like St. Paul's.
- You want to serve others - We will have lots of efforts that we coordinate through the church.

Check your email, the church website, and Facebook (list address) regularly for further updates. And please feel free to contact the church office at any time for any reason.

His,

Pastor Tony Myers
tony@stpaulsepc.org

“COVID-19 Update; 3/14/2020. A Message From Concerned Physicians”

by Dr. Howard Luks MD

Article can be found at www.medium.com

... Who should follow our suggested social isolation measures? EVERYONE. If you do not need to go out for a mission-critical purpose, do not. Again, you WILL be saving the lives of at-risk members of your own family, as well as people you will never have the pleasure of meeting.

What should we do? The importance of social isolation.

Containment of COVID-19 is no longer possible. The virus is already in the country and is currently spreading very rapidly. We need to slow the spread. We need to aggressively slow the spread. Mitigation is the best current strategy available to us. Mitigation involves very strict social isolation.

If 50% of the US population becomes infected, 5% of infected people will need a ventilator in an ICU, and if we have only a limited number of ventilators available in the country, you can quickly see the issue at hand.

This is an extremely time-sensitive and serious issue that needs to be addressed now. We can't simply manufacture the number of ventilators necessary. We need to slow the spread and decrease the overall rate at which people will be coming to the hospital.

We use the description: We must ***Flatten The Curve***. That means that we need to slow the rate of infection so that the number of people who need hospital services remains in the range that our healthcare system can supply ...

All of you can save lives starting now. The actions you take starting today will save the lives of people you will never meet.

- Support your schools' decisions to close - Playdates counteract the intent of closed schools.
- Keep a 6 foot gap - The COVID-19 virus spreads through droplets - 6 feet is the safe space.
- Meticulous hand washing: Wash thoroughly and wash often.
- Do not touch your face. This is hard. This is a learned skill... practice often.
- Clean doorknobs, toilets, cellphones, countertops, refrigerator handles, etc. The virus can live on certain surfaces for 4–72 hours.
- If you can work from home, work from home.
- Cancel all travel - Vacation or Business.
- If you are over 60 years old you should stay home and only go out if it is a critical need.
- If you feel sick stay home. It doesn't matter if you don't feel too sick.
- Expect supply chain issues. Be patient.