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**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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March 17, 2020

## **Subject: Coronavirus - Congregational Response**

Dear Disciples of St. Paul Lutheran Church,

We are all in an ever changing world as we daily receive information on the spread of the Coronavirus and the recommendations to reduce the impact of it on all of us. As we assimilate all this information, we seek to balance our desire to be both responsible and faithful while staying in Christian community with one another during these unprecedented times.

In an effort to address the concerns surrounding the Coronavirus and the safety of the congregation, staff, members of outside groups using our facilities and visitors; the St. Paul Church Council made the decision on March 16 to suspend all normal operations, coming together as an “online worshipping community” for 8 consecutive weeks, beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

This means ALL church related on-site worship services, meetings and events within and outside the church’s physical plant have been suspended. In addition, it means that all community group meetings held at St. Paul facilities will be suspended for 8 weeks as well.

As you know, the status of our community and country in regard to this virus is fluid. To this end, we will continue to follow the CDC guidelines and the recommendations of the State of South Carolina and, consistently, reassess our situation. It is our desire to come together as a church family in our physical space as soon as possible. We continue to “love and serve all,” but, at the same time, we want to maintain everyone’s health and safety.

Therefore, **“Suspending normal operations” does not mean our ministry is suspended.** We will utilize our Live Streaming capability to worship together on-line each Sunday morning (including Easter) at 10 a.m. In addition, we plan to stream worship services Maundy Thursday at 7 pm and Good Friday at 7 pm. Our staff will be providing a meaningful worship service with as few on-site coordinators as possible to honor “social distancing” guidelines for the safety of those involved.

All services will be accessible from our website [www.stpaulc.net](http://www.stpaulc.net). From the Home Page, click the “Camera” icon and you will be taken to the streaming page. You will have the option of

participating in the worship service in real time or you can view it from the archive (last two Sundays). If you are not worshipping in real time, please note that there may be a few hours delay until the service is placed in the archive file. During the time where we normally would gather our tithes and offerings, you will have an opportunity and be encouraged to maintain your support of our ministries offerings by making your financial contribution on-line or sending by mail while we are apart one from another. The Home page on the website has a "Give Online" button with directions on how to set up this option.

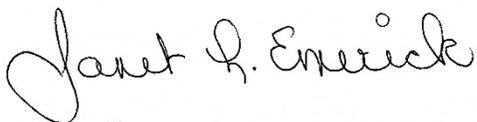
In addition to these services, our rostered leaders will continue to provide worship resources, devotions, and online interactions through our website. Also, they will be readily available via phone or email. The on-call phone number for pastoral emergencies 803-617-1979 continues as normal. Finally, committee and group leaders will receive information soon on how to use online technology such as "Zoom" in place of on-site meetings during this time.

Caring for one another and our community has not been suspended. Even though physical visits may not be possible, our staff will continue to utilize phone, text, Facebook, email, etc. to keep in touch with our members. St. Paul disciples are encouraged to maintain communication with one another as well as friends and neighbors, providing help and support when needed. Those who coordinate various groupings of volunteers within the congregation are encouraged to maintain a link with their "flocks" by phone, email, or card or note.

This is a difficult time for all. With the help of the Lord, we will get through this. Soon, St. Paul will return to a vibrant, healthy and loving community of disciples serving all.

Sincerely yours,

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**



Janet Emerick,  
Congregation President



Norm Traub  
Congregation Secretary