

March 2021

Fellow members of St. Paul's,

We are excited to announce that we are planning to reopen for in-person worship beginning on Maundy Thursday! We will be in church for Easter! Hallelujah! Keep reading for the whys, whats and hows, and what you may expect when we reopen for in-person church. Yes, this is a long email, but please read it in its entirety to understand how this will unfold.

As the COVID-19 numbers in the county have come down, we have been looking at when it would be safe to reopen, and how to do so without disrupting the streaming service that many of you have come to rely on. Anne Arundel County COVID numbers for the last two weeks have been consistently at or below where they were in October, and meet the CDC's Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission in the Moderate to Low category. Also, the County Executive two weeks ago eased restrictions on some businesses to align with state standards. The Governor has allowed even further easing of restrictions as of Friday, March 12, though we do not yet know whether Anne Arundel County will follow. Some of our members who fall in eligible categories have been able to receive one or both doses of a vaccine. We understand that some of you are eager to return to church in person, while others remain more cautious.

Reopening for in-person worship isn't as easy as you might think, however. Pastor Teklu, the Worship staff, and the Tech team have been working very hard to ensure high quality streamed services during this busy Lenten season. It will take several weeks to prepare to resume in-person services. A key objective is to retain a quality streamed or online service for those who do not yet feel comfortable returning to church in person.

We will be offering two services on Easter and on Sundays thereafter! We have listened, and heard that many of you are not happy with the type of services we have been using. Therefore, beginning Easter Sunday, you will have your choice of an 8:15 Traditional Liturgy service with primarily organ, piano or choral music, or a 10:30 Contemporary service with music primarily provided by the band. The hour between services will be used for Bible class, Sunday school, or (eventually) Fellowship time.

Our primary limitations on live-streaming right now are trained members of the Tech crew, and the ability to reproduce sound from the traditional service musical elements. The organ, piano, and choral ensembles are difficult to reproduce with the equipment we currently have. The four currently trained members of the tech crew are involved primarily in the Contemporary service. Therefore, our broadcast of the traditional service will be different than that of the Contemporary service **FOR THE TIME BEING**. We will work at improving the streaming of that service as we get more trained tech crew members and improve our equipment. In the interim, we will be simply videotaping that service and will upload it to the YouTube channel later on

Sunday – NOT live as it is happening. The Contemporary service will continue to be streamed live.

Many people have told us they really, REALLY want to be able to sing in church and hear as much of the music live as possible. Therefore, we will be allowing singing in church. We ask that the congregation remain masked, and sing softly so as to limit the air you expel while you sing to about what you expel during speaking. For the Contemporary service, the band members who sing will be singing WITHOUT masks. If there is live choral music during the traditional service, the singers will be masked, at least for now.

If you are so inclined, one place we can REALLY use some help is on the tech crew, running the equipment for either or both services. Please contact Charlie at tech@stpaulscrofton.com if you are interested.

So now for the details: What to expect when you return to church.

For all services, we will continue our social distancing, wearing masks, and signing in or registering for contact tracing purposes. All members are asked to self-monitor any symptoms, and stay away if you are feeling ill, have been confirmed with COVID 19, or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or is exhibiting symptoms. We ask that prayer requests be submitted in advance, either via the website, email to pastor@stpaulscrofton.com, or a prayer card or call to the office. Prayer requests will not be taken during the service.

If you enjoy the Traditional service but intend to continue online, you may wish to purchase your own Lutheran Service Book, pew edition. They may be purchased either from Concordia Publishing for \$26.99 for a hardback copy <https://search.cph.org/search?p=R&srId=S1-5DFW-AWSP&lbc=cph&w=lutheran%20service%20book%20pew%20edition&url=https%3a%2f%2fwww.cph.org%2fp-98-lutheran-service-book-pew-edition.aspx&lgsku=031170&rk=1&uid=541851822&sid=2&ts=ajax&SLIPid=1615254186149&rsc=-TAE2KcsxW68P2UR&method=and&isort=score&view=grid> Or from Amazon for \$19.99 for the Kindle version https://www.amazon.com/Lutheran-Service-Book-Pew-LCMS-ebook/dp/B00W6FYNFK/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=lutheran+service+book%2C+pew+edition&qid=1615254288&sr=8-2

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 1, 7 pm. This service will be fully live streamed. Music will be organ, piano, and possibly St. Pauli's Girls, either live (singing masked) or prerecorded. The order of service and words to the hymns will be projected on the screens. Congregational singing while masked WILL be permitted. During the live stream, the altar will be stripped; online service continues with prerecorded benediction

and dismissal. There will be a holy communion service only for those in attendance as this will not be live streamed.

GOOD FRIDAY, April 2, 7 pm. This service will be fully live streamed. Music will be provided by the band Whatever, primarily live, with band members singing unmasked. Congregational singing will be permitted masked. The order of service and words to the song will be projected on the screens. No communion will be offered on Good Friday.

EASTER, April 4 – We are asking you to preregister via the website. This is so we know how many people to expect and can ensure adequate seating. Nobody will be turned away if they did not preregister, but it would be helpful. Please arrive early to your chosen service to allow us to get everyone checked in and seated on time!

8:15 Traditional Liturgical service. This service will NOT be live streamed, but will be recorded and made available later the same day (time TBD) for viewing from our YouTube channel or a link. (This is primarily due to limitations in tech crew.) Ushers wearing gloves will offer all attendees a one-page service bulletin. This bulletin will also be available on our website for use at home or if you want to print it out and bring it with you so you are not handling paper others have touched. Music will be provided primarily by the organ and piano, and possibly by a choral ensemble. The choral music may be prerecorded or it may be performed live, with singers masked. Congregational singing will be permitted, masked. The hymnals will be located in the pews for use. The words to the hymns may or may not be projected on the screens (still a work in progress depending on tech crew training.) Words to the hymns will also be available for advance download from the website. Communion will be offered in church, but NOT included in the video of the service.

10:30 Praise and Worship service. This service will be fully live streamed. Neither printed bulletins nor hymnals will be used since all service information will be projected on the screens in church and on the live video feed. Music will be provided by the band performing live, and singers in the band will NOT be masked. Attendees may sing but must remain masked. Communion will be offered in church, but not on the live stream. At the time communion begins, the live stream will cut to a prerecorded benediction and dismissal.

A small to-go snack will be provided to everyone between services, and children will receive a special small gift. No formal fellowship activities are planned between services. No Bible study on Easter Sunday. No brunch or Easter egg hunt this year (hopefully next year!) but you are welcome to enjoy each other's company between services outside if you wish and the weather is nice!

SUNDAY SERVICES after Easter will follow the pattern as above. Bible Study will be held as a hybrid online and in person at 9:15. We are polling families about opening

Sunday school in person. At some point we hope to begin in-person Fellowship opportunities as well.

Thank you for reading this far, and if you have questions you may call Diane Segelhorst at 410-991-4386 or email her at diane.segelhorst@verizon.net.

Yours in Christ,
The Reopen Committee