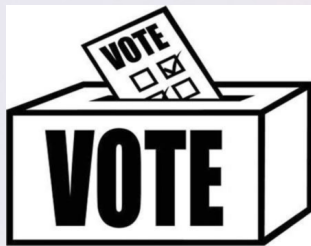
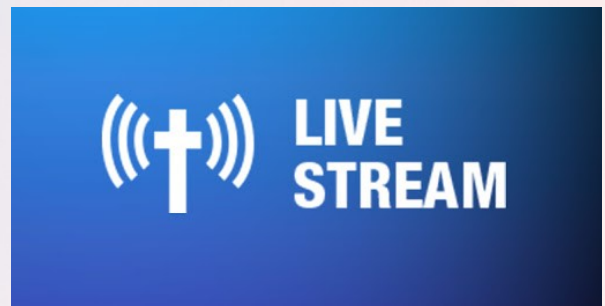


Epistle

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER | SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH |
14 & 19 W. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE | WALKERSVILLE, MD 21793
WWW.SAINTPAULSLUTHERANCHURCH.ORG | 301-845-4600



'Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the government restrictions on gathering, the Call Vote has been *rescheduled for May 3rd*. This date may have to be adjusted depending on restrictions over the next few weeks. Please watch your email and regular mail for more updates later in April.'



As we navigate these new ways of worshiping over the coming weeks, we are honing our skills in the video-recording and live streaming avenues! Below is the link you can click on to see both Sunday and Wednesday services. This is thru YouTube and you watch it once and be done OR you can subscribe to our channel and will be notified as soon as there is a new video!

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSP6I9JEpgsBUXlow1I7_-Q/featured

If you have Facebook, we are live streaming every Sunday at 9:25a and Wednesday's thru Lent at noon. This is the church's page

<https://www.facebook.com/saintpaulslutheranofwalkersville/>

All of this information is also available on our website

<https://www.saintpaulslutheranchurch.org/>



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Vicar's Valley

Greetings:

In these times of uncertainty, fear, and isolation we should now, more than ever be going to the Lord in Prayer. In our busy world today, it is easy to forget about all of these events that led up to Jesus' death. There was so much that happened between the cries of "Hosanna" and the angel's proclamation, "He is not here."

As we prepare for Holy Week, it is "holy," set apart from all other weeks because of the love poured out by Christ for each and every one of us. As Jesus invited his first disciples to pray with him, so Jesus invites us to stay awake and pray. We are called not to fret because we are not sitting in a church building where we feel comfortable with our fellow parishioners, but we are entreated to explore our relationship with God and our neighbors in a much different way. At St. Paul's we have jumped in with both feet to explore worship with you via livestreaming on the internet. We have continued to post the weekly sermons and have added a modified Sunday worship experience that I hope you have been able to participate. Your council members and I have been reaching out via personal phone calls to re-establish relationships that may have been interrupted by the impact of the COVID 19 virus.

One of the difficulties that most congregations face in this time of isolation is the need for continued giving so that the church can maintain its activities in the world. I would ask that you prayerfully consider online giving which can be accomplished through our webpage (<https://www.saintpaulslutheranchurch.org/>) by clicking on the ≡ tab in the upper right-hand corner of the page, then click on Give. You can also set up automatic payments which can be modified at any time. If you need assistance, do not hesitate to call the Church office.

The journey to the Cross is not easy and it is fraught with danger and, much like today there is an air of uncertainty. We look to the Resurrection at Easter where Christ defeated death on the Cross and fought to restore our relationship with God. There is certainty that Christ is always with us, even through the darkest of times. Christ is our Hope, Love, Comfort, and our Salvation. Take this time to stay vigilant and pray, call someone with whom you can share the Good News and be a Disciple of Christ.

It has been some time since we have been able to share in the Lord's Supper, and for me who likes to celebrate this meal each week, it has been a time of hunger and lament. As we will soon be at Easter and celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, it is even more difficult for me to continue to fast from the Meal. Seeking ways in which to faithfully administer the Sacrament has been of great discussion with my colleagues these last few weeks and there are no easy answers. Just know that I am prayerfully discerning the best path forward with our Synod and Congregational leadership in these uncertain times.

We are still connected to Christ through Scriptures, preaching, and intercessory prayers knowing that Christ is ever present in our lives. The Meal is the method by which our Church fellowship grows and nurtures our faith in Christ but in this time of physical distancing it is difficult for us to join as the assembly of saints and celebrate the goodness of Christ. The Good News is that Christ died, overcame death, and defeated sin for our salvation. As you are sharing meals within your homes, take this time to revisit prayer at the dinner table, take time to revisit prayer with those whom you are with, find solace in the Scriptures, and if necessary phone a friend to share God's Good News.

I look forward to us coming back together as a Church and as a family in Christ. Please know that I continue to hold all of you in my prayers and I ask you to hold me in yours as well.



Peace

Vicar Phil

Email: pastor@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

Cell phone: 202-497-0584

Council's Corner

A note from your Council President-

To my St. Paul's family,

I want to share that I am humbled to be in this position of leading our congregation during these unprecedented times. Leaning on my faith in our Lord and lots of prayer, I give you my promise that I am striving to gather information that helps guide the leadership team in making the necessary decisions for our congregation. I am sure that St. Paul's will weather this storm and see the other side with a fresh perspective and renewed sense of community for our neighbors.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Psalm 32:8

As the COVID19 Pandemic has brought so much of our life to a halt, please know that the work at St. Paul's continues, it just looks a bit different right now! In our last in person meeting on March 15, the council divided up the membership directory in an effort to keep in contact with everyone. This 'new/old' way of communicating will continue for the foreseeable future on a weekly basis. Recognizing that there are many people who do not have access to technology and therefore can't watch our live stream services, we know that the phone calls will be even more important. We pray that by calling all of the membership, we will continue to feel 'socially connected' to one another, even though we must be 'physically distant' at this time.

I would like to offer thanks to those who have either mailed their offerings or signed up to electronically share their gifts! (You can just make a weekly gift, it does not have to be a recurring withdrawal.) The work of St. Paul's continues during this time and your generosity is needed and appreciated. Our office administrator, Joann, continues to work 9-1, M/F and Belinda continues to find ways to minister to our youth and families (St. Paul's Pen Pal's and Easter Egg Hunt to go!) As you have seen, Vicar Phil continues to bring us Good News through the Sunday morning services and the mid-week Lenten devotions. He is actively calling the entire membership to connect personally through this challenging time. There are many ministries that continue to be planned and still occur even though we are not actively together. Unfortunately, because we cannot be together in person, our Congregational Vote to Call Vicar Phil as our Pastor had to be delayed. The vote is currently on the calendar for May 3, after worship—but please be patient and stay tuned because that date may have to change depending on how the Covid-19 virus is responding to our response of physical distancing. Be assured that Vicar Phil is committed to St. Paul's and we will work with him on an extension of his current contract if that need arises.

As we walk this path of challenge together, I would encourage you to reach out to a neighbor or fellow congregant in a phone call. Maybe a short chat could lift their day or even yours—they may have a need that you could fill by just listening. Perhaps they might need a hand picking up groceries or medication, and if you can't offer that, please call the church office 301-845-4600. Even if it's after normal business hours, the phone messages are checked regularly and we will find someone to help. This is the time for us to come together and remind one another that we are a community in Christ, gathered together to share His love with each other and ourselves.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

In His Service,
Trisha



During this difficult time, the Congregational Life Committee has decided at this point, the festival has been postponed indefinitely until we are able to be in gathering. The news of Covid-19 changes daily. *We will keep everyone posted.*

Members of the Congregational Life Committee will be making phone calls to solicit donations for the Festival and also putting a list of needs in the Weekly Reminders. We are still getting ready, planning and organizing for when we do have a date!!

Please contact Deb Loso through the Parish Office (301-845-4600) with any questions, or if you would like to donate items or money.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding. We pray for healing for all of the families who are affected by the virus.



Strawberry Festival

*****PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT NEWS, UPDATES AND ORDERS REGARDING COVID-19 CHANGE DAILY, SOMETIMES HOURLY, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE REGULARLY FOR UPDATES/CHANGES WE NEED TO MAKE IN ORDER TO COMPLY.**



Palm Sunday: Facebook—Announcements at 9:25am, Worship at 9:30am

(Palms will be available after Worship on the Church Steps if you would like to come by and take one.)

Wednesday: Livestream on Facebook — DE/MD Synod Devotional

Maundy Thursday: Facebook at noon Gathering at the Table — Round table discussion on Communion

Good Friday: Livestream on Facebook at 3:00pm— Cross Walk

EASTER SUNDAY: Livestream Service — Announcements at 9:25am, Worship at 9:30am