



St. Paul Lutheran Church

2256 Bahia Vista Street , Sarasota, FL 34239
941.955.6479 , www.StPaulSarasota.org

April 1, 2020

Dear St. Paul members,

Our buildings are mostly empty now, except for a handful or two. The preschool children are home, sometimes connecting through technology with their teachers in order to remember them and what they've been a part of since late last summer. Children can forget quickly so it's important to stay in touch even when they can't come to their school building for this extended time. Adults have longer memory tracks. They have seen and done and connected to many things, people, and places in their respective lives. We know the value of these experiences and need to remind ourselves to continue connecting to them.

Although our St. Paul church building is mostly empty, it's still alive and healthy thanks to Ricardo and his crew keeping it that way. It still has a faint pulse of people moving through it daily. Dorrie keeps the doors open and the communications flowing from 9a-12n, Monday through Friday. Food pantry volunteers are a busy bunch on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, keeping a healthy distance. The numbers being served are growing weekly. The Community Meals ministry (to-go only) is continuing to flourish. Property volunteers can still be seen routinely grooming the campus and repairing the buildings on Wednesdays. An occasional member can be seen stopping by the memorial garden to remember a loved one or friend. Neighborhood dog-walkers and passers-by can be seen admiring the building with maybe a sadder look wondering if it has become a lonely place in this Lenten season and if the bustle of the Easter Season will bring it back to more activity, more cars in the parking lots, more sounds of noise and laughter and music coming from its buildings. Our buildings still house the memories of our fellowship time and worship gatherings, but the buildings are not the church. The people maintaining it, remembering it, and still serving it, are the church.

You are the church by physically caring for the building, people, and the community, nation, and world of which it is a part, by communicating with members through snail mail, email, text and telephone, and even by streaming Sunday services and reaching out to people beyond our church doors, out to our city, state and even other parts of our country and world (maybe not into our galaxy or universe-yet!). You do it through personal prayer and financial gifts showing that God has the power to grow and continually expand His creation. Wherever you are in His kingdom, connect with us. Write, call, visit (in small groups at this time), or watch a recorded service.

Your congregation council met on Monday, March 30, via teleconferencing and decided, in compliance with the national and state guidelines during the COVID-19 crisis, to continue to suspend public worship services through the month of April. Holy Week services will include Palm Sunday (9:30a), Maundy Thursday (7p), Good Friday (7p), and Easter Sunday (9:30a) all on Facebook Live only and then posted onto our website. We'd love to feel your presence at this time when we all cannot be physically present with each other.

God's peace and blessings to all during these unparalleled times.

PrAshley Nicolls
Pastor

George Hutfilz
Congregation President