

# St. Paul Worship: November and December

## 8:15 – Two options

### In the Sanctuary

- Traditional Lutheran Liturgy
- Soloist and instrumental music, but no congregational singing
- Masks must be worn
- 50 person limit (for now)
- On-line sign-ups required\*



or

### In your home

- Traditional Lutheran Liturgy
- All the singing you want
- Available on YouTube and call-in through Zoom.
- No sign-ups required



## 10:45 – Sing Out, Followed by Pray-In with Four options

### Begins Outside: Sing-Out!

- We will gather outside (near Walnut St. Parking Lot) for the first 15 minutes of worship, which include lots of singing!

### In the Sanctuary

- Soloist and instrumental music
- No Congregational singing
- Masks must be worn
- 50 person limit (for now)
- On-line sign-ups required\*



or

### In your home

- Available on YouTube and by phone: 625-4210
- We will try to broadcast both Sing-Out and Pray-in!



### In the Car

- Park in Walnut St. Lot
- FM Radio 88.1
- You can also watch it on YouTube on your cell-phone
- Pastor will bring Holy Communion outside when we celebrate this
- No sign-ups required



or

### In the Social Hall

- Sermon and music Live-Streamed, but St. Paul staff will lead prayers, Creed, etc. within Social Hall.
- 25 person limit (for now) to allow for a smaller indoor setting
- Masks must be worn
- On-line sign-ups required\*



\* To worship indoors, sign up on our website:  
[www.stpaullititz.net](http://www.stpaullititz.net)

## Worship at St. Paul

### The Next Chapter: Inside, Outside and Online!

#### **Big Picture**

This November and December, St. Paul will continue to offer worship in a variety of formats. Starting November 1, this will include inside, outside, and online options. In this letter, I outline how worship will work and also offer some background into why we are pursuing this path.

#### **Some words of Thanksgiving**

Before I go into details, I have three words of thanks to share. First, I thank each of you for your flexibility and adaptability the past few months. Worship provides rhythm and community in our lives; we know that the necessary changes we've undergone have been very hard on many of you. You have shown a resilience and commitment to St. Paul that is moving. I also personally thank everyone for your support and kindness to me and the other leaders in the church. Many pastors have faced extreme and often hostile pushback for how they've handled 2020. When people occasionally have expressed frustration and disappointment, no one has done so in a way that was rude or unhelpful. You all get it: we are working hard to worship in ways that are physically healthy and spiritually edifying.

Second, I thank those who have labored to make new ways of worship possible. The tech crew at the early service and the "roadies" at the second have enabled us to do something we never were able to do before: offer weekly online and outside worship. The number of people who have participated in our services (well over 200 most weeks) means we've included a greater percentage of our congregation in worship during the pandemic than any other church I know of. Furthermore, we've reached out to new people through these avenues of worshipping (so many neighbors have thanked us for our worship, which they listen to!).

Third, I thank the Church Council and Worship & Music Committee. In his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul writes that we are to be of one mind in Christ. Fortunately, Paul did not write that we are to be of the same *opinion* (something almost impossible when it comes to how to respond to the myriad challenges of 2020). Being of the same *mind* means we can disagree, but we trust each other and seek to serve the whole community of disciples. St. Paul leaders have been willing to set aside their personal preferences to craft plans that benefit the whole congregation. We can all praise God for their spiritual maturity.

Lastly, we thank God for strength, patience, and each other during this time. As Saint Paul also writes, "For it is God who is at work in you all, enabling you all both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (2:13)

Thank you!

~Pastor Rob Myallis, October 2020

## The Plan for November and December 2020

8:15 AM

### Online and In-Person

- The service will follow the Lutheran liturgy of the Word (confession, creed, Lord's Prayer).
- We hope to resume weekly Holy Communion.
- This service will be available for those at home through call-in and YouTube.
- Those who attend in-person will be required to wear masks. If masks are not worn correctly, the worship service will be paused to give people an opportunity to fix their masks. If a person refuses to comply, the entire worship service will be stopped.
  - *Why? Because masks slow the spread of the disease. Everyone is putting tremendous efforts into providing safe worship indoors. If wearing a mask is not in your comfort zone, you may continue to worship at home or in your car until more medical advances allow us to change this policy. Extra masks will be available in the church.*
- This service will not include: congregational singing, passing of the peace, nor passing of offering plates.
  - *Why? Because all of these are activities that increase the risk of spreading the virus, sadly, including singing indoors.*
- For music, we will have a cantor standing behind a plexiglass shield who will sing liturgical pieces (Kyrie, e.g.) and a verse of hymns. Most of the music offered will be played by piano, organ or other instrumental ensembles, such as handbells/chimes.
- This service will be initially capped at 50 people.
  - *Why? We want to spread out worshippers in the pews as far as possible. And, we would rather increase the number of people in the Sanctuary moving ahead rather than realize we had too many.*
  - *Most churches have less than 1/3 of their previous attendance when they resume in-person worship. This would translate into a max of 30-40 people per Sunday, well below 50.*
- At least for the first few weeks, we will require signing-up online.
  - *Why? We want to know how many people are coming to ensure we have space. Moreover, this will also help us later in the event we need to do contact tracing.*
  - You can sign-up on the church website. Don't have access to the internet? Call up a friend and kindly ask them to sign you up!
- Each household will have a specific location where they are seated.
  - *Why? We want to maintain distance between households. We also want to minimize the amount of cleaning that must be done in between worship services. Some churches are discovering, for example, their wood varnish coming off from sanitizing furniture!*

10:45 AM  
Sing-Out; Pray-In

- This service will have two parts. We realize this is out of the box, but we wanted a way to safely provide for congregational singing in Advent.
- The first part, sing-out, will occur outside. It will last approximately 15 minutes and will include the singing of parts of the liturgy and hymns. In Advent, for example, this could include an Advent wreath lighting. This will take place in the back of the church so that people who are planning to stay in their cars can park in the Walnut St. lot.
- The second part, pray-in, will occur inside - inside the sanctuary, inside the social hall, inside a person's car or even inside a person's home! Inside will have some instrumental music, but will primarily be spoken: Scripture readings, Children's Sermon, Sermon, Prayer, Creed, etc.
- We anticipate it will take 5-10 minutes for people to get settled inside the building (sanctuary and social hall).
- As with the 8:15, for the 10:45 inside-portion of worship we will:
  - Absolutely require masks
  - Limit seating to certain areas
  - Require online sign-ups ahead of time for worship
  - Reduce activities such as passing of the peace and passing offering plates. (See the 8:15 service for more explanation of these rules).
- Pray-in, Sanctuary: We will cap the sanctuary seating at 50; we will have another 25 seated in the social hall.
  - *Why? We anticipate that 75 is the high end in terms of the number of people that want indoor worship. We also know that some people will not feel comfortable in a crowd of 50, but may in a group of 25.*
  - When we get to the point of having more than 75 wanting indoor worship consistently, we will assess capacity in the sanctuary as well as possibly create more space in church for people to worship (Sunday School rooms and/or choir room).
- Pray-in, Social Hall: We will have a live-stream set up in the Social Hall, with chairs spread out. While the plan is for the sermon to be delivered in the sanctuary, a staff member (for example, Deacon Emily), will lead the prayers, Creed and announcements in the Social Hall while this is concurrently happening in the Sanctuary.
- Pray-in, your car: The service will be available via FM transmitter in the Walnut St. lot
- Pray-in, your home: The inside portion will be live-streamed through YouTube.
- We plan to resume weekly Holy Communion and distribute to people in the sanctuary, social hall, and in their cars.
- How and when music ensembles play within the format is still to be determined.

## Some likely questions

- Is this the new-norm?? There continue to be medical advances in treating COVID. No one can accurately predict the future, but our hope is that we can successfully resume in-person worship and over time reduce the number of restrictions.
- Does the sanctuary have an air sanitizer? Both the sanctuary and social hall have a COVID-killing filtration system that has been recently installed. It takes about an hour for both rooms to have air that is 99.9% COVID-free. This will mean that even in the winter, the fans will be running, producing a slightly cooler temperature. The social hall system was donated to us by Top Product Innovations. The sanctuary system was paid for by extra gifts to the church – as soon as I announced this was a need, people stepped up!
- What other precautions will be taken? We will have hand sanitizer available outside of the sanctuary. We are looking into the purchase of a fogger for sanitizing spaces; for now, we will ask people to sit in different spots at both worship services.
- What about Christmas? Sigh. Again, sigh. We are hoping to learn how we can worship indoors, outside and online in November so that we can create an effective worship plan for Christmas.
- Will Rail-Trail church continue? A handful of St. Paul folks have attended Rail Trail church. That will continue through at least December.
- What if COVID cases continue to rise? If the county level reached 100/100,000 per week, Council would strongly consider ending indoor worship. However, that one number may not be helpful in that an outbreak at a college or prison, as tragic as this might be, would unlikely bring a significant risk to Lititz. We will monitor hospitalizations, cases and emerging treatment options to determine the best policy.
- What if I think this is all wrong? That is understandable. No one likes the situation we are enduring! There is a lot of grief, frustration and politicization within the situation. We took a quick survey of Council, Worship & Music, and Committee chairs at St. Paul. Of this group, 13 said they wanted to worship online, 14 said they wanted to worship in-person and 12 said they wanted to worship outside, with 6 preferring to get out of their cars and 6 preferring to stay in their cars. In short, we have a full spectrum of people at St. Paul, those who are not comfortable returning inside for some time and those who feel comfortable with few, if any restrictions. We also know that many people have truly found the summer's pattern incredibly meaningful and want their online and outdoor options to continue. While we lament that this plan will not work for everyone, we believe the path we are pursuing will allow the most people to continue to worship in, with and through St. Paul in the next season.