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Click on link to go to our Website: <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org>  
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<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmontrose>

Mission Statement for St. Paul's: To proclaim God's love by word and example and to seek Christ in one another.

### May 31 – June 6, 2020

**Our county** finally moved from phase red to yellow this past Friday through the staged reopening under Governor Wolf's economic restarting structure. The past couple months have been somewhat of a surreal nightmare unfolding. Beginning with a rather false sense of security of our life here on this planet with that the thought that COVID-19 is foreign and can't touch us, we transitioned to the real, almost Darwinian fight against nature and survival of the fittest. This week, news agencies reported that nearly 100,000 people in the U. S. alone have succumbed to this grim disease. But, within our utopian area of Susquehanna County, we only have had 98 cases, according to Pennsylvania Department of Health. Most of those, I gather, were from one specific location in the far southeastern portion of the county, although sadly a couple within our parish that may have been counted in neighboring counties' statistics.

Now, enough gloom. With the institution of stay at home orders and proper social distancing, as well as other measures, this pandemic has provided us a lot of time for contemplation and self reflection. Too much of anything is not always healthy, but I think in this fast paced, high pressured society, this was just the right prescription for our mental and spiritual well-being. We have been able to slow down and take stock of our lives and current predicaments, to see what is important in our lives other than paying for living costs like food and housing.

Our flexibility as a community during this difficult time is demonstrated, not only by our relegation to streaming worship service, but

also while standing by as our own clergy takes the time to heal from this virus. I had the pleasure of listening to the sermon this past Sunday from the priest of Church of the Redeemer, Mother Melinda Artman, who was very welcoming of the Episcopal Parishes of Upper Susquehanna County. She even included hymns, although it felt a bit awkward participating in my own living room, the gesture was well taken and a nice addition to the live streaming service. Mother Melinda's sermon was very timely. What an apt moment we are in, with the liturgical calendar dealing with the ascension of Christ as we hopefully ourselves are ascending out of this dark period in our history.

Hopefully you have all been able to find some support system to aid you in being able to lean on somebody as well as supporting those in your circle of need themselves. This person of support doesn't necessarily always have to be a mother or father figure, but could be a good friend, your church community, or a neighbor. In this sense, I have been blessed with excellent neighbors. While keeping distance, they somehow know when to step in and guide or just be there for emotional support. Now we are on the cusp of being able to move forward and regain some stability in our lives and recoup some sense of normalcy.

Respectfully, John Warriner

**Now that Susquehanna Co. has entered the yellow phase** as set forth by Gov. Wolfe, it would be wonderful to be able to throw open the doors of the church and get back to "normal". But, in consideration of the health and well-being of each and every one of our parishioners, we must move forward in a

carefully, well planned fashion. Please read the attached Diocesan guidelines that have been included for us to digest and work with.

Our Junior Warden, Vickie, and I attended a Zoom meeting with Diocesan staff and the other churches in Convocation 1. We were offered the opportunity to ask questions about Phase II guidelines. I was appreciative of others' questions also, as input from numerous sources is helpful. Each individual parish must develop a detailed plan for re-opening and have it approved by Bishop Kevin before we can gather again. This will take some time, but will benefit all of us in the long run.

So, good souls, as anxious as we are to be together again, we must take the time to be sure we are prepared in every way possible to ensure our health and safety. In the very near future, the Vestry will convene a task force to develop our plan for opening St. Paul's doors. We will follow best practices as laid out by the Diocese through their collaboration with health officials. We love each other too much to take chances, so we will do this the right way, as long as it takes. Thank you for your patience.

Lynne

**From The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri's Facebook page**  
**A Message from Bishop-elect Deon Johnson**

The work of the church is essential.  
The work of caring for the lonely, the marginalized, and the oppressed is essential.  
The work of speaking truth to power and seeking justice is essential.  
The work of being a loving, liberating, and life giving presence in the world is essential.  
The work of welcoming the stranger, the refugee and the undocumented is essential.  
The work of reconciliation and healing and caring is essential.  
The church does not need to "open" because the church never "closed".  
We who make up the Body of Christ, the church, love God and our neighbors and ourselves so much that we will stay away from our buildings until it is safe.  
We are the church.

**We have received a kind invitation from Mother Melinda Artman**, priest at Church of the Redeemer in Sayre. Redeemer is one of the seven parishes in Convocation 1 to which St. Paul's was assigned. Redeemer has a Wednesday service at 12:05 which may be viewed on Facebook as well as the two weekend services listed below in Mo. Melinda's invitation:

Please join us this Saturday at 5:15 p.m. or Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

We can be viewed at [www.redeemersayre.org](http://www.redeemersayre.org). Right on our homepage, on the right is a feed to our Facebook page. Sometimes, as soon as the live feed starts, you have to refresh the page. Of course, one can always friend our Facebook page as well. (However, one needn't be a member of Facebook to view us.)

Please contact me (Lynne at 570-934-1160-home, or 570-396-7612-cell, or [Lbgraham52@gmail.com](mailto:Lbgraham52@gmail.com)) if you have any questions or need some help accessing the site. I'm not techy, but I managed to get on to view last weekend with no trouble.

**I've been thinking** about the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention. In this time of physical distancing, I'm amazed at the number of clever ways that people have "invented" to stay in touch. I've seen videos of teachers leading car parades through their school's neighborhoods, waving to their students. Now *that* requires some planning and dedication. How much easier is it for us to pick up the phone and check on someone in our parish family? Or you could text, or email, or send a card. The point is to stay connected, until such time as we can gather again. So unless someone wants to plan a car parade, let's do it the easy way!

Lynne

**For those who are ill or have requested our prayers:** Margaret Burgh, Kathy Warriner, Naomi Bennett, Justin, Rita Leigh, Fr. John Wagner, Eric, Fr. Arthur & Mo. Jenny.

## **Dear Fellow Parishioners,**

I realize that most of us are stuck at home with concerns about family and finances. That's the bad news, but if there were to be an upside it is this: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.

" Apparently, neither has the Corona Virus prevented the USPS from delivering mail. That means that we still receive bills on a regular basis and we have payroll to make.

If it is at all possible under our current conditions, please send your tithes and pledges to the church office at 276 Church St., Montrose, PA 18801. Another option would

be to slip your pledge under the office door if you happen to be going by church.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

We will just continue to do the best we can with what we have. God's peace, Lynne

## **Pastoral Emergency or Non-Emergency**

**Contact:** you can call the parish office during office hours. After hours call Lynne Graham 570-934-1160.

## **7 Photos this week.**

**Guidance for Churches Entering Phase II** "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." -Joshua 1:9

This document was developed with consultation and input from the wider Episcopal Church; the CDC, as well as local medical experts; other Episcopal Dioceses; other Denominations; and in consultation with the Diocesan Council and the Standing Committee, who affirmed these guidelines on May 14, 2020.

Gathering together in-person as a worship community is a vital part of our faith lives. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also carries great risks. Being in enclosed spaces with a large group of people; singing, talking, and sharing hugs and handshakes; consuming food and drink while in contact with others; touching common surfaces such as door handles and prayer books; these are all examples of high-risk circumstances and behaviors that we must develop plans to guard against so that we can gather together as safely as possible.

Though your county may transition into the Yellow Phase by order of the Governor, the gradual reopening of our congregations will depend on whether church leaders feel that they are ready and have strong protocols in place for ensuring the well-being and safety of all parishioners, which may be any time after your county has received the Yellow designation. This document provides best practices as well as questions to help guide your planning process. Additionally, regional Zoom calls (utilizing our new Convocation structure) will begin May 26th to assist you in this effort. All clergy and Senior Wardens serving a parish, as well as one additional person from each parish are invited to attend.

The following are best practices to keep your community, especially the most vulnerable, safe and healthy while gathering in-person. Keep in mind that these best practices also apply to outside organizations that use your church space.

- The Eucharist is strongly discouraged at this time. Increasingly, the advice of health experts points to concern over whether the Eucharist can be celebrated safely. Consuming the Eucharist requires lowering/touching masks, which can lead to spreading or being exposed to the virus. Morning or Evening prayer is recommended.

- Congregational or choir singing is strongly discouraged at this time. Evidence shows that singing is more likely to spread the virus than speaking. A Cantor/Soloist may be considered if they are wearing a facial covering at all times, with physical distancing in place. Instrumental music is recommended.

- In-person gatherings must be limited to 25 people, per the Governor's orders, and must be held in spaces large enough for proper physical distancing. Please note that outdoor gatherings may be safer than indoor gatherings at this time—it can allow for more space for physical distancing, and avoids the issue of breathing recirculated air, which can increase the risk of catching the virus.

- o A plan to ensure that no more than 25 people attend each in-person gathering, as well as a pastoral response to handle any visitors, should be developed.

- o A log of who attends each in-person gathering should be kept for the purpose of contact tracing.

- o All in attendance must maintain 6 feet distance from other people at all times. Members of a household may sit together, but must maintain 6 feet distance from others.

- o Designate one entrance to the building and one exit to avoid crowding and facilitate physical distancing at all times

- All in attendance must wear masks at all times (teach proper protocols—See CDC guidelines). A supply of masks should be available to hand out if needed.

- Designated individuals (e.g. ushers, etc.) should be identified and trained to help ensure parishioners and visitors adhere to all parish protocols during in-person gatherings.

- Proper cleaning and sanitizing protocol should be followed in meeting spaces (See CDC guidelines). Sanitizer and disinfecting wipes must be available for use. Churches should consider the extra costs associated with these measures.

- Books of Common Prayer and hymnals can act as vectors to spread the virus—they should be removed and alternative options such as single-use bulletins or screens must be used.
- On-line worship offerings should be instituted or continued.

We recommend your church leadership consider the following questions as you create your plan to hold in person worship safely:

1. How will you prepare your facility and your congregation for reopening?
  - a. Where will you meet?
  - b. Who will help reinforce your guidelines when you gather?
2. How will you communicate your policies to your parishioners and potential visitors prior to and throughout the process of reopening?
3. What alternatives will you provide for parishioners who cannot or choose not to attend in person?
4. How will you keep your facilities clean and encourage appropriate hygiene practices?
5. How will you manage the numbers in attendance so that physical distance can be maintained?
6. How will you assist congregants to maintain physical distancing and in other ways reduce the risk of spreading the virus?
  - a. How will you continue to accept pledges? (Plates should not be passed at this time).
7. How will you apply your policies to parish activities other than public worship and to outside groups that use your building?

Once your leadership has developed a plan for re-gathering, please contact Sandy Milien to schedule a meeting to consult with Bishop Kevin.

## **Easter 7**

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

Alleluia! sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne;  
Alleluia! his the triumph, His the victory alone;  
Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood;  
Jesus out of ev'ry nation , Has redeemed us by his blood.

## Memorial Day 2020



At the Rising and Going down of the Sun, we will remember them!---On this day, we Americans, pause, stop, reflect and remember our 'Fallen' in every conflict and every war. Lord let our pray rise to you.

From the Revolutionary War of 1776 till the present; through Spanish War, World Wars I & II and Korea & Vietnam to the Great Gulf Wars our hearts and prayers are for the men and women who died beneath a Star Spangled banner far from home. Lord, it is always 'far from home'---may our boys and girls rest in peace on this Memorial Day.

No 'Taps' will sound, nor volley echo across the valley this day. No parade of heroes, march to pipes and drums. No flowers beneath the town monument-----only silent prayer in the hearts of family that remembers, today is Memorial Day.

A picture hanging on the wall; a medal hanging on a cross, the cheerful smile of long lost years, a communion, graduation an engagement---only memories of a boy or girl, in uniform shining proud and bright. No age shall ever touch them; no silver among the gold, no Mom or dad to call them, no cuddles from little grandchildren.

For sacrifice means everything, everything they were, all that they could have been lies in a grave, stark and bare. They did not fight for politics, they have no affiliation, from every State and small town and village across a nation. Carve their name with pride upon every bench and tree and beneath it carve but one more word for they died for you and me: "AMERICAN" is all they need, and when we carve that word, promise that we too will honor it and love each other more.

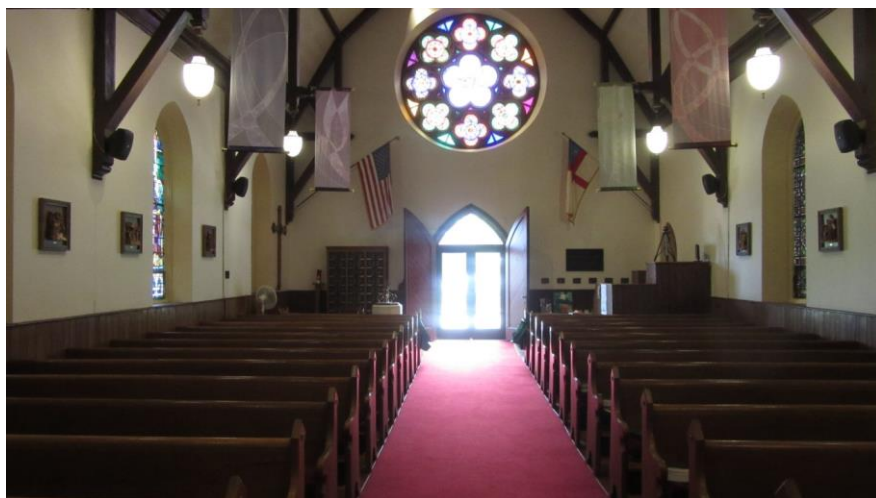
Lord we kneel on this day, our tears fall to the ground--- for we remember the sound of children, skipping, playing all around. Our prayer is for the future, least they died in vain. Plant in our hearts love of God, and flag and country. Lift us Lord above the greed and evil of this world, that we like them may seek in thee, the grace to live, the freedom, they earned on the Altar of Liberty. Amen

Fr. William McGinty, Christ Church, Forrest City

### **St. Paul's, Sunday, May 29, 2016**



### **St. Paul's, Sunday, May 24, 2020**



## St. Paul's Essential Workers



Essential Workers. They are the people working in hospitals and grocery stores, on farms and in meatpacking plants. They are keeping public transit, shipping and utilities running. And St. Paul's has several of them. Say thank you if you get a chance. Can you figure out who they are?





## It's Spring at St. Paul's



St. Paul's Robin is back and put her nest in the same spot as last year! The babies hatched after this picture was taken. She had four last year.