Information regarding re-opening of St. Paul Church

At long last, the public celebration of Mass will resume Monday June 8th with our usual 7am and 5pm Masses. We will be so happy to welcome you back to your parish home!! Two days after Archbishop Blair announced that public Masses could resume with 50 people present the governor increased the number of people for religious services to 100 or 25% of capacity whichever is lower. So on Monday, June 1 Archbishop Blair followed suit. Given that our capacity is 744 at 25% that would be 186 for us, but we are capped at 100 people per Mass. No date has been given for the resumption of Sunday Masses, but it could happen by the last weekend of June. All of the following information applies to St. Paul Church and in a general way to Sacred Heart as well. The specifics for Sacred Heart Church will follow when weekend Masses resume.

When coming to church the following points are to be kept in mind:

1. If you or anyone in your household is ill, especially with fever or flu-like symptoms or conjunctivitis, do not come to church.
2. The decision regarding whether to attend Mass in person is left to each individual.
3. The obligation to attend Mass is suspended through September 6. Therefore, the elderly, those with pre-existing conditions, those who are fearful or anxious, and those who are taking care of a sick or homebound person need not be concerned if they miss Mass. Our live streaming of Masses will continue.
4. You must wear a mask or face covering at all times when in the church except at the moment you receive Communion.
5. Maintain social distancing, keeping six feet apart, at all times to the best you can. Those in the same family are not obliged by this when together amongst themselves.
6. Bring your own bottle of hand sanitizer if you can and use it before entering the church. We will have some available, but due to limited availability we need your help to bring your own.
7. Do not shake hands or otherwise make physical contact with others.
8. Do not congregate to socialize before or after Mass.
In addition to the above noted points the following are important as you come to Mass here at St. Paul’s. Things will be different so please carefully read what follows and do your best to follow these procedures.

- You may only sit in every other row in either side of the church. The rows that you cannot sit in are roped off.
- Members of the same household can be seated in the same pew regardless of how many are in the row.
- If the people are unrelated three (3) people can be seated in a pew. The pews are naturally divided into thirds so sit in one of the sections. Move to the center of the pew to allow others to more easily enter the pew. If a couple is in the pew sitting next to each other then one or two more people could sit in that pew if they are properly spaced.
- All of the worship aides have been removed. If you want to follow the readings using your iPhone or other devise you may do so. Each day’s readings can be found at www.usccb.org/bible/readings. If you have a subscription to Magnificat or Daily Word feel free to bring them with you for the readings.
- You should bring your own mask and hand sanitizer. Put your mask on before you leave the car. Use the sanitizer before entering the church. Should you not have hand sanitizer it will be available in sanitizer stands at each entrance.
- Our procedures for the reception of Communion:
  1. You will come up for Communion using the SIDE AISLES so that you are not in a double line next to others in the center aisle. Stay six feet apart which is the length of two (2) pews. So keep at least one pew between you and the person in front of you.
  2. You must have your mask on the entire time when approaching the priest/deacon/Eucharistic Minister from here on simply referred to as “the minister.”
  3. Communion will only be given in the hand.
  4. As you approach the minister extend your hands out, one hand UNDER the other, (if you are right handed have your right hand underneath your left hand, the opposite if your are left handed) the minister will say “The Body of Christ” and you will say Amen. Step to the side to where an X will be on the floor, take the Host using the underneath hand, and then pull down or remove your mask with your other hand and then consume the Host. You should bless yourself and
then reposition your mask and then return to your seat using the center aisle staying six feet apart which is the length of two pews.

5. If you need to receive a low gluten host a designated minister will be distributing in the sanctuary near the corner where the two wings meet. Follow the same procedure as in #4 above.

- Other Liturgical Considerations:
  1. There will be music, but singing by the congregation is not encouraged at this time.
  2. There will be no offertory procession.
  3. There will be no formal Entrance or Recessional Procession. Instead the priest (and deacon) will simply enter from the sacristy and depart to the sacristy.
  4. Altar Servers are not allowed.
  5. One Reader per weekend Mass only.
  6. Eucharistic Ministers (EM), as they always have, will sanitize their hands immediately before distributing Communion. They have all received directives that are two pages long as to how to go about distributing Communion in a holy and safe manner.
  7. The ushers likewise are being trained this week for their duties and responsibilities on Wednesday, June 10th in the church at 6:30pm. If you are interested in helping out as an usher please contact Deacon Don at deacondon@stpaulkensington.org.
  8. We will observe how things progress with the daily Masses and then make decisions about other options for Mass in additional worship spaces including the gym or live streaming in the Church Hall the Mass that is going on upstairs should the Mass reach its capacity. Outdoor Masses are highly dependent on the weather, but it is also an option still under consideration if needed or desired.

- Cleaning Protocols
  1. As I mentioned in previous bulletins, while we were closed the church was thoroughly cleaned including the carpeting.
  2. Holy Water fonts will remain empty of Holy Water. Holy water is available in the area between the two wings to take home.
  3. The church is being wiped down every day and when Masses resume, all common areas will be wiped down after EVERY Mass. This includes the pews, door handles, railings and all high contact parts of the church.
4. Our HVAC systems have been maintained and filters updated. A short video is also posted on the website that goes over all of this information. Everyone’s help and cooperation will allow us to come together as a worshiping family and benefit from receiving the gift of Jesus in Holy Communion. By cooperating with these procedures you not only help keep yourself safe, but also keep others safe and lessen some of their own fears and anxieties. Hopefully, we can do all of this with respect and appreciation for each other.

It is important to say one more time that if for whatever reason you are not ready to return for Mass, that is okay and you should follow what you think is best for you and your family. So while I look forward to seeing all of you I will understand if you are not yet ready to be here.

With the resumption of weekday Masses, St. Paul Church will now be open Monday to Friday from 6am to 6pm. On Saturday it will be open from 8am to 6pm and on Sunday from 10am to 6pm. Sacred Heart Church will continue to be open Sunday from 10am to 3pm and Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30pm.