

December 6, 2020

SUNDAY EVENING NEWS

“Be vigilant at all times and pray ...”
(Luke 21:36)



Light Up St. Paul
Advent Prayer Service
<https://spchs.com/lightupstpaul/>

Peace & Greetings,

EVENING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Advent is a time of watching and waiting. We wait for many things in life – perhaps we spend too much time waiting. Maybe we spend too much time waiting for things or events that we don’t even need.

As we go through the Advent season we do not need to wait to pray more, to love more, and be more generous with others. What we should await and watch for is the amazing miracles that happen when we live ourselves with Christ on a daily basis. Let’s not turn our watchful waiting into spiritual stagnation, but on the contrary, turn it into an incredible experience of living a life with Christ and seeing what blessings and gifts are really all about.

Let us pray,

Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Have a great week.

Fr. Glen, Chaplain

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Trust this finds your family well but be assured to all those in our St. Paul community who are suffering from the ill effects of COVID-19 that you are in our thoughts and prayers for a speedy and full recovery.

From the beginning of the 2020 – 2021 academic year, our top priority or guiding principle has been the health and safety of our entire school community with any instructional decisions made during COVID-19 based upon the available public health data, while safeguarding the importance of access to in-person schooling for our students' education, social-emotional and physical well-being.

In our *Reopening Plan – Fall 2020* document, we defined the three phases or models within our Return to In-Person Strategy (RIIS) Plan depending on the local/regional external situation of the virus or changing internal circumstances within our school. As indicated previously, these three phases (i.e. In-Person Learning Phase, Hybrid/Blended Learning Phase, and Remote Learning Phase) will be fluid, possibly moving from one to the other, as necessary.

We have been extremely fortunate the first three months of this school year but recognize that this virus does not discriminate against anyone. Unfortunately, recent COVID-19 positive cases are rising in our country, state, communities and households. As you know, prior to Thanksgiving we had a few cases of internal members of our school community test positive for COVID-19 resulting in many students and faculty members being required to quarantine by the Bristol-Burlington Health District (BBHD).

As we have learned, when an internal member of our school community tests positive for COVID-19, each "in-person" class at St. Paul is considered a cohort by the BBHD and therefore requires the entire cohort (i.e. students and teacher) in the affected person's classes to quarantine.

As a leadership team we have been thinking about our experience prior to the Thanksgiving break. I have been in communication since Thanksgiving weekend with Marco Palmeri, Director of Health, BBHD and Val Mara, Adjunct to the Vicar for Education, Research & Policy, Office of Education, Evangelization & Catechesis (OEEC) at the Archdiocese discussing our December calendar options.

We continue to believe that our mitigation strategies at St. Paul are effective and that one of the safest places can be, from our perspective, for students to remain in school when there are no adverse household circumstances to consider. The BBHD has not identified an instance where the virus was transmitted in schools in their district. That said, however, the reality is that for each positive case possibly exposed in our school, we are required to quarantine a significant number of students and faculty (i.e. possibly 75+) through class cohorts and contact tracing. In the few cases that occurred prior to Thanksgiving, this meant we had over 100 students and faculty who had to quarantine during the holiday. We want to avoid a similar situation for the Christmas holiday.

We waited to finalize our decision depending on the anticipated CDC revised guidelines, based on extensive modeling not just by the CDC but other agencies and partners. That decision was announced last Wednesday, December 2. Instead of the standard 14-day quarantine it had been recommending, although it remains the safest option, the CDC says, "that potential exposure warrants a quarantine of 10 or seven days, depending on one's test results or symptoms. If individuals do not develop symptoms, they need quarantine for only 10 days; if they test negative, that period can be reduced to just one week."

The BBHD adopted these guidelines on Thursday, December 3. They will continue to investigate each individual case and advise the affected person and close contacts when it is safe to return to St. Paul.

Therefore, in order to avoid the possibility of any school-based quarantines affecting a significant number of students and faculty over the Christmas holiday, we have decided to transition to full remote learning starting Monday, December 14 through Tuesday, December 22. Wednesday, December 23 was originally scheduled to be a noon dismissal and will now become a non-instructional day and part of the Christmas break. We intend to return to in-person learning, with an alternative remote option, on Monday, January 4, 2021.

It's important to understand that this decision is not so much a transmission concern but instead a quarantine reality. Simply, this decision is an attempt to "protect" the Christmas holiday, at least from a school perspective, for all our families, faculty and staff.

I greatly appreciate your understanding regarding this decision.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Week of December 7 – 11

Monday (Day 3), Tuesday (Day 1), Wednesday (Day 2), Thursday (Day 3), Friday (Day 1)

Rotation

	Day 1 Drop G & H	Day 2 Drop E & F	Day 3 Drop C & D
7:45-8:26	A	A	A
8:34-9:10	B	B	B
9:28-10:22	C	G	F
10:30-11:54	D	C	H
12:02-12:56	E	D	G
1:14-2:08	F	H	E

This Friday, December 11 will be the last in-person learning day until we return from the Christmas holiday on Monday, January 4, 2021. Beginning Monday, December 14 to Tuesday, December 22 we will be in a remote learning mode for everyone.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING

- **Every student, faculty and staff member MUST submit the mandatory online BBHD Daily Morning Health Self-Assessment before arriving at school.** Students who do not complete the daily health survey will lose in-school privileges. Remote learners do not need to complete the daily survey.
- If you have symptoms associated with COVID-19 including fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat, unexplained loss of taste and smell or headache, please stay home and contact your healthcare provider. You should not return to school until your symptoms have improved or you submit a doctor's note indicating that your symptoms are not COVID-19 related.
- If you, a family member or a "close contact" test positive for COVID-19 you **MUST** stay home from school and notify the St. Paul health room, Elizabeth McGuire, elizabethmcguire@bristolct.gov or Ann Marie Pahl, apahl@spchs.com or Mr. Dupont, cdupont@spchs.com immediately.

WEEKDAY MASS (DATE CHANGE)

Our weekday Mass this week will be held on Tuesday, December 8 at 7:15 am to celebrate the **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**. It is also our national patronal feast day, as Mary under the title of Immaculate Conception is patroness of the United States of America. Given recent schedule changes, we will be combining Cheerleading, Galatians House, and Student Government in roles at Mass and praying for our entire school community and our nation. All students and faculty/staff are invited. Please enter St. Gregory the Great Church by the side parking lot entrance.

ADMISSIONS NEWS



Our next **Placement Exam (by appointment only)** is this **Saturday, December 12 at 8:00 am**. We appreciate your partnership in recommending St. Paul Catholic High School to your family, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances. For further information contact Mr. Crowley, mcrowley@spchs.com or Ms. Mone, cmone@spchs.com.

GUIDANCE NEWS

January 1 College Deadline

Seniors, please remember if you have a January 1 college deadline you need to fill out the transcript request form by December 18 at the latest. This is to ensure we can send all of your materials out by the time we leave for Christmas break!

Junior College Night

Juniors and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend the Virtual Junior College Night to begin their college search process.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL
Informational Panel of Admissions Counselors
to kick off the College Process
Tuesday December 15th
6:30-8:00pm
Zoom link to follow

College Acceptances

CONGRATULATIONS to the following seniors on their recent college acceptances:

Young Dinh	SUNY Buffalo & Mississippi State University
Danika Karelus	University of New Haven & Coastal Carolina University
Thomas Lorenzetti	Western New England University
Alex Partyka	Western New England University & Merrimack College
Josh Silva	US Coast Guard Academy

Seniors are reminded to notify their school counselor if they want their college acceptances to be acknowledged.

PERFORMING ARTS

The Show Must Go On-Line This Fall

The St. Paul Catholic High School Performing Arts program has been strong for many years and this year is no exception. Under the direction of Mark Mazzarella, the students of the SP Drama Club have risen to the occasion to mount a full stage production under the most challenging of times. They are proud to announce their production of an original virtual performance entitled **Monologue Mashup**.

The show will be featuring St. Paul's talented actors from newcomers to veterans of the stage, in an evening of scenes and monologues complete with music, costumes and a few special innovative virtual sets. Students have been rehearsing since September with carefully scheduled one-on-one rehearsals with the director as well as costume fittings with Joanne Nyerick, St. Paul's long-time costumer. And in the last few weeks, students have prepared and performed their monologues live for the cameras in an effort to stream their production for family, friends and the St. Paul community.

Monologue Mashup will be highlighting dramatic classic shows like Our Town, St. Joan, The Crucible and the heartfelt masterpiece, The Diary of Anne Frank. The drama club will also feature theatrical gems like Charlie Brown, Anne of Green Gables and Brighton Beach Memoirs and a host of others.

We encourage everyone to join us in this wonderful stage production. The performance will take place on YouTube. A special premier release is scheduled for this Thursday, December 10 at 7:30 pm for drama student's families. A link to the performance for the entire St. Paul community will be available soon.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student Government will be sponsoring the **United Way of West Central Connecticut Toy Drive** on Monday December 7. Please bring in a new unwrapped toy or gift for boys and girls, ages 1 – 14. All toys collected go directly to the United Way to be distributed throughout our local communities to children in need. Students who bring in a toy/gift can dress down on December 7. A large box has been placed under the front portico as a drop-off for any remote learners interested in contributing to the toy drive. **THANK YOU!**

On Tuesday, December 8 and Wednesday, December 9, Student Government will be promoting **Macy's Make-A-Wish Santa Letter** event during all lunch waves. For every Santa letter written, Macy's will donate \$1 up to a million dollars to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

COMFY SWEATPANTS DAY FOR KIDS

This Friday, December 11, St. Paul will join other schools across Connecticut to raise funds this holiday season in honor of the courageous kids at **Connecticut Children's**. All funds raised will be in support of their cancer and blood disorder patients. For \$3.00 or more, you will be allowed to dress down in your favorite comfy sweat pants (no pajamas) on that day. Recognition goes to Olivia Belfonti for organizing this event.

ST. PAUL SWORD

Read this week's update of the student newspaper at: <https://stpaulsword.weebly.com/>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY (December 6 – 13)

Happy Birthday wishes go to: Erik Atkinson, Owen Davis, Sydney Kallaugher, Bella Peterson, Tyson Raymond, Mallory Sefcik, Hannah Stanford and Catherine Wooten.

FINAL WORD



IT TAKES ALL OF US!

My special thanks to everyone involved in the virtual Light Up St. Paul Advent Prayer Service last Friday evening: to all the donors for the hundreds of votive candles adorning the altar; Sr. Marie Benedict, Sr. Mary Mercy, Mr. Wallace, Sammi Bray, Barbara Retartha, Josh Silva and Ben Speaker for leading the program; Mr. Junko, Sophia Gerst and Brianna Wood for the musical accompaniment and to Melisa Lindquist, Shelley Mendoza and Chelsea Mone in our Advancement office for coordinating the event. Also, thanks to Mr. Sheedy for lighting our outside campus. The *YouTube* video link to the prayer service can be accessed at the beginning on this Sunday Evening News.

Make it a great week!

Stay well ... take care of yourself and take care of each other.

St. Paul, pray for us!

Cary M. Dupont '72
President/Chief Administrator