

Dear SPP Families,

We hope this communication finds you well and in good health, but we have difficult news: St. Paul's Preschool will remain closed at the start of the 2020/2021 school year.

Since the preschool's closure in March, we have been eager for a safe return to in-person operations and steadfast in developing carefully thought out policies based on recommendations and guidelines from professionals. Our decision-making process has always been dependent on ensuring the well-being of the amazing children and faculty that make up the SPP community. This has meant following the advice of medical professionals, guidelines from the Episcopal Diocese of NC, and monitoring the decisions of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

The Episcopal Diocese of NC, which has been providing guidelines for reopening, uses specific data to determine what phase of reopening we can safely be in. To return to in-person gatherings of any kind in our church buildings, we would need to see two weeks of declining numbers in three major public health indicators (numbers of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths). Unfortunately, we are not there yet. Therefore, based on these Diocesan directives, the decisions of the WSFC schools, and the current state of the virus in Winston-Salem, it is clear that we need to remain closed for the time being.

We realize that this decision will make an already difficult time even more difficult for you. We had hoped to resume operation this Fall, and we had been holding out for the circumstances that would allow for it. Sadly, they are not yet here.

We will be refunding all tuition that has been paid for the 2020/21 school year. Those who are set up on auto draft will receive a credit in your bank account, and everyone else will receive a check in the mail. We will be processing these refunds over the next two weeks.

When we are able to open again, it is important to note that we are planning a staggered start. The exact details are still to be determined, but we will not be able to include infants and toddler classes. We feel that it is not safe to bring this youngest group into school, even when it has been deemed safe to bring older children in. They cannot wear masks and need constant hands on care, and several of our infant and toddler teachers are at high risk for COVID.

St Paul's Preschool is known for being a community school founded on building caring relationships with children, families, staff, and our extended community. Our philosophy, mission, classroom practices, and curriculum are rooted in faith, knowledge, meaningful experiences, and a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere. We are grieved to be unable to see you in person this Fall, and do not know for how long we will need to remain closed. However, when we are able, we intend to return to in-person operations as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Norris (knorris@stpauls-ws.org) or Robin Fulk (rfulk24@gmail.com).

Blessings,

The Rev. D. Dixon Kinser, *Rector*
Karen Norris, *Director of St. Paul's Preschool*
Robin Fulk, *Asst. Director of St. Paul's Preschool*