



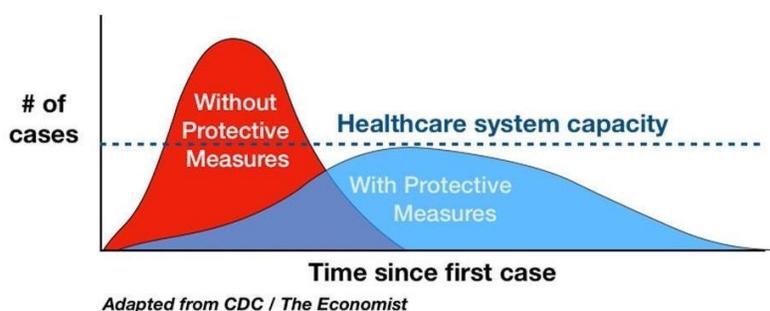
Friday, March 13th, 2020

Beloved people of St. John's,

I am writing to let you know about the stronger mitigation measures we have now put in place to protect this community and our neighbors from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an anxious time for us all, but we have faith that God is good. We can be steadfast in our hope that love is stronger than any force on earth, and continue to live our lives on that basis. We can focus on what is truly important, which is to be even more generous, loving, and free than ever, with God's help—for ourselves, our families, workplaces, neighborhoods and the world. There is no better time than now to live our faith in practice for the world God so loves.

Beginning immediately, **we are suspending all St. John's activities of every kind that happen within the St. John's building, including Sunday services, at least until April 1, until further notice.** These measures are being taken based on recommendations from the [Episcopal Church in Minnesota](#), the [CDC](#), [Minnesota Department of Health](#), and other experts. Although these may seem extreme, we truly believe that social distancing is the best way to protect, not only the most vulnerable within our own congregation family, but also the the greater whole. Here is what ECMN has said about this:

*Although for most people the illness poses low risk, for the elderly, immunocompromised, and vulnerable, it can be deadly. We owe it to our congregations and neighbors to take precautions to protect the vulnerable among us, and to "flatten the curve": to slow the spread of this infection so as not to overwhelm our health care systems.*



Given these needs, staff will be working from home, which means that the building will not be open during regular business hours or otherwise. I and all staff will remain accessible via email; please continue to contact us in whatever ways that you need. Our Daycare tenant is owned and operated independently, and will continue to be open, but cannot be available for St. John's parishioners to permit access to the building. They are governed by state and local laws and will make their own decisions about quarantines.

Although these measures will create physical distance between us, as the Beloved Community we can remain connected in many ways, which we will be exploring throughout the remainder of lent and into Easter.

Having said what we will not do, here are things we can do:

- We will be conducting a Sunday service that will be streamed or made available to you via the internet in a format to be disclosed shortly. We will post instructions about how to participate in our worship service on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.
- Many small groups, including our Lenten “turn” groups, will be conducted remotely via Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, or other internet platform. The individual ministry leaders of each of these groups will provide you information about how to connect in these ways, and we will also post this information as much as possible on our website.

In addition to these structured ways we will remain connected, we will also be determining how we can best and most easily communicate with each other about (1) our own community’s pastoral care needs, when any of us becomes sick, needs groceries or other support or help; (2) creative ways you develop yourselves about staying connected with Jesus’ Way of Love, including perhaps some of you leading morning prayer groups on Skype, creating Google Chat rooms for sharing our experiences with one another, and the like; (3) and determining how we can support our most marginalized neighbors who will likely be impacted by this pandemic most severely. If you are interested in helping with any of these three areas, please email our Rector Lisa Wiens Heinsohn at [lisa@stjohns-mpls.org](mailto:lisa@stjohns-mpls.org), Deacon Rex McKee at [rex.mckee@gmail.com](mailto:rex.mckee@gmail.com), Senior Warden Allen Gooch at [gooch002@umn.edu](mailto:gooch002@umn.edu), or Junior Warden Stacy Walters at [stacy@jmns.com](mailto:stacy@jmns.com).

Finally, you can do wonderful things like the following:

- write a thank you note or kind email to someone you know is struggling
- pick up the phone and call someone for no reason but to ask how they are doing
- drop a meal off for someone you know is sick
- pray and study the scriptures, seeking creative new ways to express the good news that God is love
- figure out how to use Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, FaceTime, or any of the other technology platforms that are available
- use social media for something positive: try complimenting someone you normally disagree with
- use any extra time you have at home to clean out your closets and figure out how to support people who have less than you do

I invite you all to post on St. John’s [Facebook](#) page about all the new ways you are learning to “connect” with each other despite spending more time than usual at home.

God is with us, and God is good.

With love and joy,

[Lisa](#)

The Rev. Lisa Wiens Heinsohn, Rector  
St. John's Episcopal Church