



Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Beloved St. John's community,

On Monday May 18, Minnesota's Stay-at-Home order ended, and a new set of guidelines called [Stay Safe Minnesota](#) was put in place. Governor Walz indicated certain businesses could open up, including the possibility of faith communities worshipping in groups of 10 with social distancing. However, based on CDC guidance, Bishop Brian N. Prior and Bishop-Elect Craig Loya have stated that Episcopal Churches in Minnesota are now in [Phase 1.5](#)—meaning that while essential staff may, if they choose, record services in the building, we will not have any small gatherings until Minnesota has seen a two-week decline in cases. This means that for now, staff will continue to work primarily from home, the building will remain closed, and St. John's will host no gatherings of any size. For a variety of good practical and medical reasons, we will also continue to record services primarily outside the St. John's building for now as well. I have also convened a team that is working on what [Phase 2](#) will look like, when we can gather in small groups again.

I and your vestry believe this is the wisest and most loving course for St. John's. It's based on guidance from the [CDC](#) and [MDH](#). Many of our members are medically vulnerable to COVID-19. We continue to have an operating daycare that uses both the basement and also parts of the main church level, including the parish hall and kitchen. And we are people of Jesus' Way of Love, which for millennia has involved sacrificial giving and courage.

Friends, many of us are connecting more deeply now than we ever have. Zoom may be an odd substitute for stained glass and pipe organ, but neither zoom nor the building are a required part of our community. Instead, our living connection with God and each other is what is sustaining us. It is still Christ who invites us to meet him—in prayer, scripture, and each other.

If you haven't yet, please explore [what we are doing together](#). It is manna in the wilderness: just enough for each day. The Holy Spirit is active, new life is popping up all over the place, and we will get through this.

If you have questions or concern, please email us—[myself](#) or your wardens [Allen Gooch](#) or [Stacy Walters](#). While our red doors remain closed, our virtual doors are always open.

Faithfully,

[Lisa](#)

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