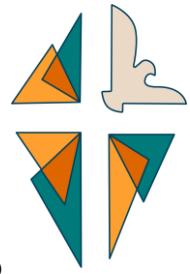


January 13, 2022



Friends and Family of St. Mark,

We hope this letter finds you well and that everyone has had a good start to the new year. Unfortunately, our Covid team had an impromptu meeting this week to discuss the rising numbers in Covid cases and how it is affecting many areas of the Minnesota community. With a number of schools moving to virtual due to numerous cases of Covid in staff and teachers, twin cities restaurants requiring vaccination cards or Covid testing in order to dine, and hospitals being at max capacity, we couldn't ignore what this means for St. Mark.

The Covid team made a recommendation that was approved by council that St. Mark will be moving to virtual for all meetings and Sunday morning worship beginning Sunday, January 16th 2022. This change will be in place through the remainder of January. The Covid team will assess numbers and Covid conditions on a weekly basis and update as needed.

**This decision was not made lightly and was talked about in great detail.**

- The safety of our staff and church members is kept as our top priority. We don't want to risk our health and safety if we know we have safer protocols in place that can be used.
- Vaccinations provide our best line of defense from having serious health complications due to Covid. We know, however, that fully vaccinated individuals can still contract Covid as well as spread it to others, especially those not vaccinated.
- Hospitals are at max capacity
- Companies are sending employees to work from home again.
- We have enough knowledge of the last 20 months that we can use to make educated yet tough decisions.

**What will this look like?**

- All meetings will meet via zoom. No gathering in person.
- Worship will still **live** stream on Sunday mornings (only musicians, pastor, and Jenny will be in worship space), and the video will be saved for people to watch at a later date/time if they don't wish to tune in live.
  - Find our Facebook page – St Mark Lutheran Church CP
  - Live stream will happen on Facebook and then be uploaded to our YouTube channel (*Saint Mark Lutheran Church Circle Pines*)
- Town hall meeting (January 16), and Annual meeting (January 30) will be held on Zoom.
  - Town Hall Meeting (January 16) zoom link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7637842558?pwd=cXdqV0lJYWdEU3dydFdqY3ZyK0lEZz09>
    - Meeting ID: 763 784 2558
    - Passcode: 1954
  - Annual Meeting zoom link will be sent out closer to the date.
- Choir will be on hold for now. Only a couple select singers will be asked to help lead hymns on Sunday mornings.

Please know our hearts are hurting but we feel confident we are doing the right thing for our community. We ask that you be gentle and gracious in your response to this decision. The council, Covid team, and staff support team are available to address any questions or concerns you may have. Please email [covidteam@stmarkcp.org](mailto:covidteam@stmarkcp.org)

In hope we pray,  
St. Mark Council  
St. Mark Covid team and Staff Support team