



Dear St. John's Family,

March 5, 2020

As you are aware, flu and cold season are running rampant through our communities right now. In addition, the COVID-19, commonly referred to as the corona virus, is making its way around the country. The Center for Disease Control is inviting communities to "plan not panic" in the event of an outbreak in our area. The clergy and staff at St. John's are working on a plan based off information from the CDC, and in consultation with our diocese, and other churches in the communion.

A few things you should know. We have already switched our chalice and paten back to silver as silver helps to eliminate germs. In addition, Eucharistic Ministers and clergy wash our hands thoroughly before administering communion. At this point, we will not alter the patterns of our worship life though we do ask that everyone refrain from intincting (dipping) the wafer in the chalice. Research tells us that the risk of contamination from fingers is far greater than that of sipping. Between the high alcohol content of fortified wine, the antimicrobial properties of silver, and the wiping of the rim, the risk of infection from sipping is quite low.

If you are uncomfortable sipping from the chalice, please know that the Episcopal Church approves the doctrine of concomitance, that is, the full blessing of the Eucharist is available in only one element, the bread. You are welcome to take only the bread and cross your arms over your chest for the wine.

Most importantly, if you are feeling unwell please stay home and rest and let us know how we can pray for you or assist you. Remember, the best defense against any illness is washing your hands with soap and water. Try reciting the Lord's Prayer while washing – it's the perfect Lenten discipline.

Please keep those living on the margins in your prayers as they will be most affected by these viruses. Several of our outreach ministries – financial ministry, food pantry – serve neighbors whose financial and physical well-being will be most affected by an outbreak of coronavirus. These neighbors live and work in situations where medical leave is not offered, where hourly wages determine whether they can pay bills, or where medical insurance is not a benefit. The St. John's staff will continue to explore ways to ensure the safety of our community as well as serving those in greatest need. If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact me at the church office.

God's peace,

Amanda

GROW IN GOD, ACT IN SERVICE, WITNESS IN LOVE

321 W. Chestnut Street, Lancaster, PA 17603

Telephone: (717) 299 – 1188 + Fax: (717) 399 - 3806

E-mail: info@stjohns-lancaster.org

Website: www.stjohns-lancaster.org