



Dear St. John's Family,

December 10, 2021

I live in a neighborhood of runners. It's fascinating watching them run up and down the street – doesn't matter the weather, the time, the day. These folks lace up their shoes, grab their ear buds, do some quick stretching, and off they go. I've never been a runner, unless something is chasing me of course, but I do appreciate the hard work and determination it takes to be a runner. I also love the imagery running offers to describe our journey of faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 reads, *“So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter.”*

For many, myself included, the past 20 months have felt like a race of sorts as we've wandered our way through pandemic living. At times it felt as if we were sprinting to get to the “end” of this particularly difficult season, but the finish line continues moving further and further away. As this virus mutates, I'm realizing our run is looking more like a steady jog or brisk walk now. In times such as these, it is important to slow down and catch your breath, get your bearings straight, and take a minute to access the path you're traveling. I think we're all beginning to realize that this virus isn't going anywhere. And now, more than ever, we need to remain diligent in our gatherings as a community of faith. We need to throw off the extra baggage (perhaps weariness, disappointment, or frustration) and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

As the Covid cases continue to rise in Lancaster City and with the holiday season upon us, I want to share the safety measures we are taking at St. John's.

- Masks will continue to be required during our worship services and other gatherings indoors. We know masks prevent the spread of this disease.
- During the passing of the peace, I ask you to be aware that not everyone is comfortable with a handshake, first bump, or hug. An air hug, peace sign, or bow go a long way.
- As much as we love coffee hour and parish breakfasts on Sunday mornings, we will be taking a pause from eating together indoors until it is safe to do so again.
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home and rest. Our God who became flesh and dwelt among us understands the need for taking care of yourself. Jesus was human, remember?
- Communal worship will continue in person and on-line. Christmas Eve services will be offered in-person for those who wish to come. The parish hall will be set up for any potential overflow. Our 9:30pm service will be livestreamed for those unable to attend in person.

I am grateful to be “running” (jogging, walking, sometimes even crawling) this race with you. Know of my profound gratitude for each of you as we prepare for the coming of the Christ child in just a few short weeks!

Advent Blessings,
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