



Dear St. John's,

December 28, 2021

I wished for a white Christmas this year, but received a Covid Christmas instead...

Last week, out of an abundance of caution, we made the difficult decision to cancel in-person worship after receiving news of positive Covid cases in our community. It was a wise decision and one I am grateful was possible (what did we ever do before the internet?!?). Unfortunately, Covid cases are increasing at St. John's, as well as across the state, with the staff and clergy being the most recently impacted. Doug, our Music Minister, and Matt, our Associate Rector, have both tested positive for Covid. Others in the community have also received positive results. Because the staff works so closely together (especially during the Holidays), we have all been exposed and will be quarantining until we have negative test results. Everyone is following the CDC guidelines. Those who were in worship on Christmas Eve were protected by distance and masks. I am confident that our safety precautions protected those who gathered. I give thanks for a community of faith that takes this virus seriously.

I would be lying if I didn't tell you how frustrated and disappointed we are by this news. Plans to be with loved ones were canceled (again). My kiddos are stuck indoors away from their family and friends. We're worried about friends and family who are most vulnerable to this virus, and frankly, none of us wanted to end the year or begin a new one without the physical presence of our church family. And yet, we're also incredibly grateful for vaccines that save lives and rapid tests that detect Covid quickly. We're thankful for a caring community of faith that surrounds each other with prayers and compassion. We're grateful for mild symptoms or no symptoms at all! Most of all, we're grateful for the Christmas miracle and the gift of God incarnate. Emmanuel means "God with us." It turns out, we aren't alone in quarantine because God is, indeed, with each of us.

In light of this news, we will **NOT** be gathering in-person for worship this Sunday, January 2. We will livestream worship on our YouTube channel at 9:00 a.m. So, please tune in and celebrate Epiphany with us! In addition, our Wednesday Noonday Healing service will be canceled and will resume Wednesday, January 5, pending negative test results. Our support groups will continue to meet at campus, and our ministries, such as the food pantry, Martha's Ministries, the blessing box ministry, etc. will continue without interruption. Please remember masks are required when gathering on campus.

Friends, know that we are grateful for each of you, and we can't wait to kick off a New Year with you all soon. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us. Be well, get vaccinated, wear your mask, and know you are LOVED.

I remain faithfully yours,  
Amanda+

**GROW IN GOD, ACT IN SERVICE, WITNESS IN LOVE**

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