



Greetings,

Unfortunately, the numbers in the Virginia Beach area for positive COVID tests are climbing! Over the last 8 days, we've watched as the numbers jumped from 7.5% last week to 10.7% Monday and 10.5% yesterday. As I mentioned in an earlier note, the Bishop has ordered that churches close down once these levels are reached, and Emmanuel will comply with that directive. There will no longer be indoor, in-person worship anywhere in the diocese.

All things considered, we've been lucky--we have been open since September 13th (some churches in the diocese never did open) and we have yet to encounter any problems. However, keeping everyone safe is our main concern, and with the fast rise of positive tests we will take the precaution of closing down. But remember--we're still available online! So I hope to "see" you at 10:00 Sunday morning on YouTube.

I know that the biggest question will be: *"But what about Christmas?"* Unfortunately, the chances of the COVID numbers coming down by December 24th are pretty slim, so I'm guessing that Christmas Eve will be entirely virtual. We will live stream at 7:00pm; you can watch it anytime you wish. I understand the disappointment that comes with this decision--I have struggled mightily with the necessity of giving up our usual holiday plans. But we don't gather now so that we are all present to gather later, and my prayer is that we remain healthy in body, mind and spirit in the meantime. In the church we often talk about sacrifice but rarely have to practice it--but this is one of those times where sacrifice is necessary. Not fun--but necessary.

As always, if you have any questions please call, email or text. Know that the clergy, staff and vestry all have your health and well-being in mind as we make these tough decisions, and we wish you peace and comfort during this difficult season.

Faithfully,  
Mimi+

The Rev. Mimi Lacy  
Rector  
Emmanuel Episcopal Church  
5181 Singleton Way  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
757-499-1271  
[mimilacy@gmail.com](mailto:mimilacy@gmail.com)