

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday, January 23: Sunday School for
all Adults & Children, 9 am**

Sunday, January 23: Live Worship in the Sanctuary, 10 am

**Sunday, January 23: Livestream Worship on
Youtube Channel, 10 am**

Wednesday, January 26: Pastor Mark's Bible Study on Zoom, 11 am

Hi friends,

Last week I gave us an update on our church's response to the rising Covid numbers due to the Omicron Variant. Since last week's email our community has seen a record of over 1,000 new cases reported. I told you that Our Emergency Planning Team (EPT) was meeting, and I wanted to let you know what we discussed.

As you know, when we made the decision to return to in-person worship gatherings, we did so with some protocols in place that would help us do all that we can to make sure gathering was as safe as possible. I have a list at the end of this note of what we expect each of us to do to help keep us as safe as we can when we gather. After a discussion and looking at statistics and trends the EPT looked at our protocols and decided that with the addition of suspending congregational singing at our worship services, we will continue to operate with those protocols in place. We were in consensus that we want to highly encourage each of us to evaluate our own personal situations and make wise decisions regarding whether joining us in-person is the best choice for you as our community moves through this most recent spike, and remind us all that if we are not feeling well or someone in our households or that we have close contact with has had the virus, to please join us online rather than in person for Worship.

Here is a list of the protocols we have in place at Kennewick First. They are a combination of things that we will do at the church, and actions and behaviors that we expect people to practice while they are inside our facilities.

1) Regardless of your vaccination status, we are asking that everyone who enters our facility wear a mask.

- 2) We will have sanitizing stations at the entrance of the sanctuary, and we ask that everyone sanitize their hands before entering to worship.
- 3) We ask that we maintain a safe social distance from our neighbors while in the building [3-6 feet between family groups/households.]
- 4) Limit the amount of time we are gathered in enclosed places together.
- 5) After each Sunday Worship Service, we will “fog” the sanctuary with sanitizer when we leave.
- 6) Continue to make our worship services available via a live stream so that you can participate from the safety of your home.
- 7) **Temporarily** suspend congregational singing during worship services.
- 8) Encourage everyone to stay home if you are feeling sick, have a fever, or are showing symptoms of the virus or have been in close contact with someone who has the virus.

If you come to the decision that meeting in person is not the best choice for you, know that you can tune in on Sunday mornings (or at any other time for that matter) and participate in our times of worship via our YouTube Live Stream. You can find the live stream at <https://www.youtube.com/PiratesoftheColumbia> Sunday mornings at 10 am.

Thank you for helping us continue to be a congregation that works to bring about the Kingdom of God while being committed to doing no harm!

Thanks friends... now go wash your hands

Pastor Mark

Taking Down the Advent/Christmas Decorations

We have kept the Christmas decorations up a bit longer than in years past to foster a sense of Joy during the entire month of January. During the first week of February, we will be having volunteers come in and remove some of the bigger displays as a way of limiting the amount of people and time we spend together in enclosed spaces together. On Sunday January 30th if you would like to stay after Worship to spend some limited time taking down some of the smaller decorations and packing them, up feel free to join us as we make quick work of taking down the greens.

Special Worship Service

Elements This Week

Whether you join us in person or online, we want to encourage you to join us as we share some special things during worship. *We will be presenting and offering a blessing for the Prayer Shawls* that have been created in the last year, and hear about this very special and meaningful ministry that our church has done over the years. Later in the service we *will be recognizing and celebrating those members of our congregation that have been part of this wonderful church for decades.* And finally, *Pastor Mark will be returning from his Study Leave, and will be sharing with us the direction he plans on leading the congregation in the year ahead.* We hope you can join us, either in person or online, for this very special Sunday Worship gathering.

Thank You for Christmas Eve Offering

For those of you that participated in the Special Offering we took during our Christmas Eve Service, you know that the offering was split between The church's New Ministry Fund and the Chaplin Services Network (CSN). We received a note from CSN this week that we wanted to share with you all this week! Thank you for your generosity!