

From the Synod COVID Smart Team,

Minnesota is experiencing the worst case levels of COVID-19 for 2021. In fact, we were the worst COVID hotspot in the United States, for several days. Our hospitals are currently stressed and there are limited ICU beds available and none in some areas. This is causing routine medical procedures to be delayed.

This is a difficult place to be in with the pandemic as we approach our Advent and Christmas celebrations. With this in mind, it is imperative that all congregations embrace the public health protocols of mask wearing and social distancing. We can reduce the risks and still enjoy our celebrations by:

1. Wearing a well-fitting mask over your nose and mouth in all indoor settings including our sanctuaries,
2. Practicing physical distancing by remaining six feet apart between family groups,
3. Not having coffee fellowship and similar events (where there is food, drink and conversation with unmasked people in close proximity to each other) until the risk of transmission has returned to a safe level, and
4. If you are experiencing any COVID symptoms or you have been exposed to someone with COVID, whether you are or are not vaccinated, get tested. Stay away from others until you obtain a negative PCR test.



**COVID-19
PREPAREDNESS**