

March 14th, 2020

Dear friends,

I am writing today to share with you that two of our parishioners have informed us that they have tested positive for COVID-19. I spoke with them both earlier today – even as they recover (they are doing well, happily), their first concern was for others' well-being and making sure that any potential contacts were notified. I want to publicly thank them for their proactive care in reaching out so quickly. Please join me in praying for their continued recovery.

We have determined that the virus was most likely present at our parish and school buildings. For this reason, we are taking steps to respond accordingly, starting with this message to you all.

Next steps – what you can do

Foremost, may we together stay rooted in our trust in God and care for each other.

Renewed prayers and practical safeguards are our best response. Due to the nature of this virus, it is not possible to know if it started here or if it was passed on, but we are responding with best practices of personal hygiene and facility cleaning.

Members of the school community (student families, employees & volunteers), please read our principal's letter information on implementing self-quarantine as required by King county public health. *The requirement for self-quarantine only applies to those who are members of the school community.*

Individually, we each should monitor our own health by familiarizing ourselves with the symptoms of the coronavirus (available at the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>). If symptoms appear, seek treatment and isolate yourself for 14 days or until symptoms subside for 72 hours. If you test positive for the virus, inform King county public health ((206)477-3977, 8am-7pm) and those with whom you have had contact for 10 consecutive minutes or more within six feet so that they can take their own precautions.

Each of us probably knows a friend, family member, or fellow parishioner who does not have internet access or is homebound. Now is a wonderful time to check in, share the latest news, and most importantly, to pray with & support them. Gatherings may not be prudent or possible, but we can maintain and strengthen our relationships with regular communication & support even from afar.

Next steps – what we are doing

Our response is also rooted in the guidelines of the CDC, King county public health and the leadership of the archdiocese. We will be completely closing our parish facilities while the church and school undergo cleaning. The archdiocese is guiding us in how to do so properly and effectively. When that has been accomplished, we will discern if and how to offer opportunities for access to the church.

Despite being closed to the public, Mass will continue to be offered daily. Masses are streamed live on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SaintMarkShoreline/>). I would also like to invite you to visit me on Twitter (<https://www.twitter.com/fathermaurer>) or at my personal blog (<https://www.fathermaurer.com>) to stay in touch.

Our offices will continue to be accessible via phone and e-mail. We remain committed to serving you throughout this time and are thankful for your patience as we get back to you. May we continue forward with a spirit of confidence and trust in the Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Father Maurer

P.S. Please continue in your financial support of Saint Mark parish and school as well as Saint Vincent de Paul outreach. Even during this time of limited gathering, our parish employees, teachers & school staff, and outreach volunteers continue to work. Our ministry is only possible due to your generosity, for which I am very grateful.

If you have not done so already, **please consider enrolling in online giving or giving by text**. It is easy to do and minimizes the person-to-person contact that occurs when handling checks & cash. For more information, visit our online giving page at <https://www.osvonlinegiving.com/149>