

## Rector's Report- December 17- January 20, 2022

### Worship Online and In Person

In person/views		
Dec 19	46/120	Advent 4
Dec 26	18/155	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas; Morning Prayer service (traditionally a low Sunday) (505 on hiatus for Christmas night)
Jan 2	35/135	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas (505 on hiatus for New Year's night)
Jan 8/9	38/124	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent
Jan 16	10/153	Moved back to online worship online with no 505 Omicron spike

### Other worship/offices:

December 21: Out of Darkness Blue Christmas service—25 in person, 80 online

December 24: Christmas Eve—95 in person

December 25: Christmas Day—30 in person, 80 online

### DAILY OFFICE (Compline)

Moving back to two services of compline a week in October—looking for more volunteers who are willing to support this lovely, brief service.

	Views	Celebrant
Jan 15	24	GS
Jan 12	109	LS
Jan 8	105	GS
Jan 5	59	LG
Dec 22	32	LG
Dec 18	34	GS

**OVERVIEW:** Christmas at St. Martin's was lovely. And then, we had to confront the reality. COVID has struck again, and we have had several members let me know that they were ill or had tested positive with breakthrough cases, including some being at worship before coming down sick. We had returned to some precautions with the Regathering Committee on January 4 after which I sent out a special Beacon, with the rector reserving the right to move to online only if warranted. At that meeting we had already determined to do the Annual meeting in an all online format, with worship broadcast as usual and the business meeting on Zoom for purposes of voting. The peak for hospitalizations in St. Louis County was, ironically, January 9—and hospitalizations still remain dangerously high. The increasing reports of our people sick, including choir members, warranted exactly that. Two hours after I informed the parish through email, website, and Facebook, the diocese sent out new guidelines urging online-only worship through the end of January at the priest's discretion.

Mary Mathai, mother of Rina Chittooran, passed away January 3, after a relatively precipitous decline.

Rich Hebenstreit passed away somewhat unexpectedly January 4.

Both were surrounded by family, and Mary had received the ministration at the time of death in the ICU thanks to the kindness of the nursing staff who allowed me in. I stayed with the Hebenstreits immediately after having received word that he had passed and prayed with them as we

awaited the funeral home. Both funerals will be held no earlier than mid-March for safety's sake due to COVID.

### **Worship:**

When we return to in-person worship, I urge everyone who can to register ahead of time on the website so that we can safely anticipate numbers of persons present.

Christmas at St. Martin's was beautiful.

- Sun., Dec 19, 11:45 am—the Greening of the Church—thanks to all the volunteers who made everything perfect!
- Tues., Dec 21, 7:00 pm—Out of Darkness “Blue Christmas” service, acknowledging complex emotions and grief ties to holidays—or just the need for quiet. Thanks to Denise and the choir for being willing to add some beautiful music to this new service. It was publicized in the Diocesan iSeek this week.
- Fri., Dec 24, 7:00 pm: Christmas Eve Choral Eucharist, complete with strings, handbells, and choir—amazing music, and the most people we have had in the building since July (high frankly was also a bit nerve-racking) Ushers did a fantastic job trying to maintain space between pods which some challenging geometry.
- Sat., Dec. 25, 10:30 am: Christmas Day Holy Eucharist
- Sun., Dec. 26: Morning Prayer service for the First Sunday after Christmas—Rev, Shug presided so I could have some time off.

Looking ahead to the rest of the season after Epiphany and Lent. Ash Wednesday is March 2.

### **Administrative/ Programming:**

I ordered 250 KN-95 masks to be distributed to parishioners for use in worship and to be taken home to use when venturing out. I will absolutely order more when needed. These are the current recommended minimal standard against Omicron, and are meant to help prevent the wearer infecting others.

Communications: Need reports from ministry leaders to be posted on the website on a members-only page accessible via password as we did last year. Scott continues to try to

#### **STEWARDSHIP\*/ ANNUAL GIVING**

Annual Giving campaign began on Sunday, October 24 and still trying to urge people to get their paperwork in (lots of good intentions reported, getting derailed due to ongoing life in COVID-19. Thank you SO MUCH to all of you who have reached out to parishioners who had yet to return their giving estimate cards. If any of you are concerned about not being able to reach people using your cell phones, please feel free to use a phone here at St. Martin's. If several of you would like to gather and make calls from the offices, I would be happy to spring for refreshments! Let me know.

Paychex has been extremely non-responsive the last few pay period, and the penultimate was its failure to cut our checks on time on January 15. Janet repeatedly tried to contact them, including on her days off, which should NEVER be necessary, EVER. She finally got someone to get checks written and deposited Wednesday night. We will be moving our payroll to a company used by the diocese. This cannot be repeated.

Moving to a new mass email service after the annual meeting. After being in consultation with colleagues who have excellent systems, I am going to try to move to Mail Chimp.

### **Formation:**

Adult Forum resumed on January 9, we are in the midst of a four week series on grief and trauma. Guest speakers are the Rev. Dale Kuhn of Care and Counseling and the Rev. Isaiah Brokenleg. We have been using Zoom since Dale was exposed to COVID, and for the rest of the month the offerings will continue with parishioners joining via Zoom due to our COVID plan for January precluding in-person gatherings.

Monday morning adult Bible study went on hiatus in-person again due to COVID. We also had to postpone the Men's group breakfast for January and February, which is prudent but I know also disappointing.

Loretta Go is continuing in her discernment path by being placed at Holy Communion, my sending parish, for the next many months. Very excited about that!

### **Outreach/ Garden/ etc:**

Fifth Laundry Love was January 11. So grateful for all who volunteer and contribute, and for Anne Fischer's leadership along side the Outreach Committee! Each session costs about \$100 but makes such a difference for those who join us.

### **Pastoral Care:**

Had two deaths in the parish at the start of January.

Have one member in hospice.

Flu season has begun, omicron has NOT skipped over us, and we have several members who are dealing with surgeries, recoveries and long-term illnesses. Please encourage everyone to get their shingles and flu shots as well as their boosters.

### **Self-Care:**

I tried to take the week off after Christmas. Ended up not using my retreat time and cut short that week due to a parishioner who was in the end of life. The time I did have off was much needed.

### **Diocesan:**

The Rev. Shug and I will be installed as Missioners with a liturgy on February 13, 2022 at 4 pm at Christ Church Cathedral.

### **Building and Grounds:**

The Fire Alarm panel has been troublesome again. See Lincoln's report.

### **Appreciation:**

Thank you to all who are helping us prepare for annual meeting and who have helped with Annual Giving and getting vestry nominees.

Thank you to Gina for her excellent taking of minutes!

Thank you to Page for her expertise as treasurer!

Thank you to Mike Kelly and all who have stepped for the annual giving campaign (see above).

Thank you to the Rev. Shug for putting together the adult formation series on grief and trauma.

**Thank you to all those rotating off vestry: Terence Bostic, Paige Bostic, Chiazor Omeni, Ray Harbert, and Laura Limbaugh. God bless you for your service!**