

March 15, 2020

Beloved of God:

We are developing a way for our entire parish to remain connected in a new way, called a Conversation Tree (A kind of modified telephone tree). We are working to help each person have a few people to contact each week to check-in with and see how each other is doing and to get to know each other better over the coming weeks. We would like for people to have one or two households that they know on their Conversation Tree and perhaps someone they do not yet know.

We are just beginning and hope to expand St. Mark's Conversation Tree to everyone who wants to be involved. This opportunity is open to our youth as well if they would like to be part of this endeavor.

If you are not yet involved in the Conversation Tree or need more clarification or direction, please text Fr. Christopher at 331 4638 or [email him](#).

This is intended to be a phone conversation and check-in though it is not necessarily limited to that. Emails or texts could also be part of the Conversation Tree. However, in this time of isolation it is important to hear people's voices and to feel the connection to other members of our faith community. So, we're encouraging people to call each person in their conversation tree at least once a week to reach out and check-in.

Here are some suggestions for how this might work:

- Call and introduce yourself and let the person know that you are a member of St. Mark's and that they are part of your Conversation Tree.
- Ask people how they are doing and how you can pray for them and support them?
- You might want to send a picture so people know who you are, not everyone is equally familiar with the whole congregation.
- If there are needs that you can and want to help with please feel free to help in ways that keep everyone safe.
- If there is pastoral need that you become aware of, ask if the clergy of St. Mark's is aware of the need or if you can share it with them.
- Enjoy the time getting to know new folks and making deeper connections.
- If you discover someone who would also like to be included in the Conversation Tree, add them to your list or let Fr. Christopher know of the opportunity to expand the circle of loving care for one another.
- Don't be afraid to be creative and generous toward those you are keeping in contact with from our faith community. For example, you might want to set up a zoom meeting once in a while or share a poem or a prayer or a story that has been helpful or inspiring to you.
- Encourage people to tune into St. Mark's Online offerings through Zoom and Facebook live and other opportunities found at <https://www.mothersylvia.com/stmarksonline.html>
- If people are needing technical help to get connected online, do what you can to help and if needed reach out to the St. Mark's staff.

Finally, this is about showing our loving care for one another, staying connected, encouraging each other and maintaining a strong faith community at St. Mark's.

I encourage you to take the opportunity that this health crisis places in front of us to deepen our community life in new ways, to hold each other up in prayer and to care for one another in the love of Christ.

*Fr. Christopher McLaren*