

The St. Matthew Messenger



St. Matthew Lutheran Church

April 2020

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From the Desk of Pastor David :

Dear St. Matthew Family,

There is a lot going on in our world these days! Much uncertainty and unrest. One could even say there is panic in the streets as people struggle to stock up on the “basic” life essentials like food, sanitizers and toilet paper. Every day we turn on the news and it is filled with stories of the Coronavirus and how it is spreading, despite our best efforts. We hear words like “self-containment,” and “social distancing.” Schools, stores, restaurants and even churches are closing, hoping to stop its spread. A national quarantine seems eminent.

I am writing this newsletter article while I am sitting at my kitchen table at home and missing all of you! These past few days of being separated from you and not being able to worship with you, I keep hearing a mantra in my head. The words of John 14:1 keep repeating themselves to me. *“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.”*

“Let not your hearts be troubled.” That is easier said than done but I believe it is possible. I believe this mantra has come to me through the Spirit of God reminding me I am a child of God. I am loved and God has me in the palm of God’s hand. I believe God is beside me and will not let me go, ever! No matter what happens, God will be there for me!

Dear People of God.... the same is true for you! You have been claimed by the living God in your baptism and God has promised to be with you always and in all things. God is bigger than this Coronavirus. God will see us through it. Therefore, don’t let your hearts be troubled!

If there is one thing I have learned in my lifetime with regards to my faith, it is that my ultimate security rests not in my pension or a political leader or any governmental program. It rests solely in God! All else will pass away but the love and faithfulness of God will last through eternity!

Take precautions. Be safe. Do “social distancing.” But also remember God has you. This will pass but the love and faithfulness of God will remain constant forever.

In closing, I found an exercise (prayer), that might be helpful. When you are feeling stress, take a few quiet moments and reflect on these words. Don’t rush it. Take time between each breath.

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From Pastor David: *(Continued from page 1)*

Breathe. And feel the Spirit filling your whole body.

Breathe. And give thanks; it is a marvelous gift every single time.

Breathe. And acknowledge the grief of your plans changing, the fear of uncertain things looming too large to bear alone.

Breathe. And consider how well Christ knows you, how fiercely God cares.

Breathe. And lift up your neighbor more vulnerable than yourself.

Breathe. And believe we are in this together and God has us all.

Breathe. And remember God is with you and won't let go.

Breathe. And remember you are a child of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ, forever. Breathe. Amen.

OUR APRIL 19, 2020, ORGAN

CONCERT has been cancelled. We have rescheduled with Organist Jelani Eddington for April 11, 2021. We hope to reschedule with Elizabeth and Richard Chenault when possible. Watch our website at www.stmattlutheran.org for information on our future concerts.



To all the members and friends of St. Matthew Lutheran Church:

May the peace of Christ and the hope of the Resurrection sustain you in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past few days all non-essential businesses have closed, we have been placed on stay-at-home order and the suspension of all public gatherings have been extended to at least April 30th.

As you read this Messenger, you see that the ministry continues. During this time our priority is to make connections with you, serve others in need and create new opportunities to reach out to the community with the good news of Jesus Christ. Your financial support is truly appreciated and needed through this time. Offerings may be mailed to the church or dropped in the mailbox slot of the education building. There are online opportunities to give with information on our website.

This is Holy Week and in these dark days we anticipate Easter and the celebration of the risen Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman
pastorkathy@stmattlutheran.org
717-637-7101 ext. 231

**A Letter from
Homewood at
Plum Creek:**

Many of our residents are unable to Facetime with their families because of the very few I-pads we have on campus. Like many things, this has not been an issue or priority for us before, but it is now. Many family members are at a distance and are unable to get here for even a brief visit. I am asking if your church has any benefactors that might be interested and willing to sponsor one or more I-pads for our residents to use during this difficult time.

In the Spirit,
Rev. Dr. Joel B. Hummel, Director of Pastoral Care
Homewood at Plum Creek, 425 Westminster Avenue

DEACON JAN DAVIS, Minister of Christian Education, has been posting ideas for sharing faith at home on our Facebook page and on our website. She is sending e-mails and making videos for our confirmation and high school youth. Discover God time with our Discovery Place Preschool will also be available on video. The videos will also be posted on our FB page and website. Our Disciple Training Camp teachers are encouraged to contact all the children in their cabins. Opportunities for on-line and e-mail Bible studies are being developed.

JOIN THE ST. MATTHEW FACEBOOK COMMUNITY! If you are on Facebook, "Like" St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Hanover, to connect with other members, receive announcements and read other interesting posts. It is a great way to stay connected during this shelter-in-place time!



Resurrection Garden! Members and friends who wish to honor or memorialize a loved one by providing a flower for the Resurrection Garden (created when we return to church) are asked to complete and return the form below with **\$10** per listing to the church office. After the cost of the plants, the balance of the memorials/honorariums will be given to Hanover

Area Council of Churches for their many community programs such as Meals-on-Wheels, Provide-A-Lunch (which serves a meal from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 365 days-a-year, a cold breakfast is provided on Tuesdays & a hot breakfast on Thursdays,) the clothing bank, the overnight shelter for those who need a place to sleep, and many more programs.

I would like to sponsor a flower in the church.

In honor of _____ In memory of _____

Name(s) being honored or memorialized (Please print clearly):

Given by: _____

Envelope Number _____ Amount Given \$ _____

Please include \$10 per listing. Make checks payable to **St. Matthew Lutheran Church**, with "Resurrection Garden" in the memo line.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE a CD of the services which are put on the website, please let us know. We can have them sent out to you during this time when we cannot meet in church. Call the church office at 717-637-7101.



IN ORDER TO KEEP YOU IN THE LOOP, let us know of any changes -- address, phone numbers or email addresses. You can email the office at info@stmattlutheran.org or call us, 717-637-7101. Thank you!



CRITICAL BLOOD SHORTAGE - Please Donate on April 30, 12:00-5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Thousands of blood drives across the country were cancelled in mid March when covid-19 forced the closures of colleges, schools and work places. Blood supplies are now critically low, so it's more important than ever for healthy, eligible adults to donate. The Red Cross is taking extra precautions, including increased screening, social distancing, and stepped up sanitation between donors to ensure a safe donation experience and safe blood supply. Schedule your appointment online at www.redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

COUNCIL UPDATE

Having been a member of St. Matthew for over 70 years, I can honestly say we have never had times such as these: Times of not being able to be physically in attendance at worship, so we video the services; times of literally having the church doors locked, so we had our Church Council meeting by Zoom; times of not being able to speak to members of our church family in person, so we make phone calls. Times of genuine Christian caring have come about in many ways. Volunteers have risen to the occasion by delivering meals, by shopping for shut-ins and numerous other ways.

Pastor Kathy and Pastor David have been leading us and guiding us with prayer. How blessed we are to have them. They have been there with phone calls, videos and encouragement to members as we go about our changes in daily life.

We grew up in the church hearing "the church is not a building." During this time, I realize what that really means. Brothers and sisters in Christ, **YOU** are the church. We sang "I am the church. You are the church. We are the church together." Those words ring true as we face each day and the changes we adjust to.

Remember the last time you attended church and passed the peace? I can't help but think how wonderful that will be when we once again gather and worship as a congregation.

Remembering our congregation in prayer,

Vicki Wildasin, Congregational Council President

KEEPING IN DIGITAL TOUCH

During this challenging time of "social distancing," we are all looking for ways to keep in touch and remain connected to the church and to each other. Currently, St. Matthew is offering three electronic methods we would like to invite you to try: 1) the St. Matthew website, 2) our Facebook Group and 3) our YouTube Channel.

Here is what you need to do to use each:

Website: Open a web browser of your choice on your mobile phone, computer or tablet and type *stmattlutheran.org* in the search bar. This should take you to our home page. You will find the most recent video there and other information. To see and hear older sermons, select "Worship" in the blue navigation bar near the top of the page and choose "Recent Sermons" in the drop down menu bar.

Facebook: If you are on a computer, launch your browser and visit *facebook.com*. From a mobile device, download the Facebook application. If you do not have an account, create one by following the prompts and then login. In the search bar, type "St. Matthew Lutheran Church Hanover PA." On the next screen, answer two simple questions and submit your request to join the St. Matthew Group. Once your request to join is approved, you can enjoy videos, posts from other members of the group and post messages yourself. (If you are already a member of the Group, you can go directly to the group page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/174985537269/>.)

YouTube Channel: If you are on a computer, launch your browser and visit *youtube.com*. From a mobile device, download the YouTube application. In the search bar (on the mobile application, select the magnifying glass to search), type "St. Matthew Lutheran Church Hanover PA." Click on the circular picture of St. Matthew and you will see a number of service videos and more, including a link to Jan Davis' wonderful Confirmation Class clips, which you can then select to watch.

Choose the method that works best for you, but don't be intimidated and don't stay away. We would miss you.

So there you have it. See you in church — electronically for now until we are all able to gather again in our beautiful Nave.

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