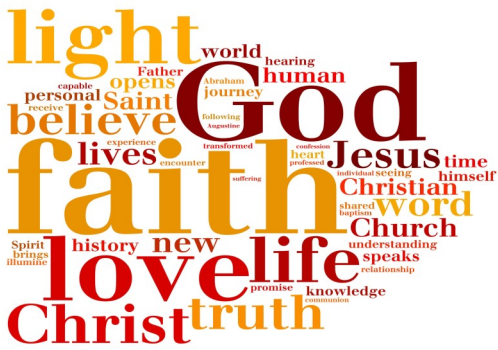


St. James-St. Matthew's Lutheran Church  
119-15 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
South Ozone Park, NY 11420

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We Worship Every Sunday at 10:00 am  
Visit us at [SouthOzoneParkChurch.org](http://SouthOzoneParkChurch.org)



Greetings Church family:

I pray that this note reaches you well, especially in the wake of some uncertain times!

With the outbreak and potential devastation of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York City, we as a congregation were forced to put “in-person” worship services on hold since March 15, 2020.

Sadly, during these past months, some among our Church family have lost loved ones, livelihoods, independence, and a lot of freedoms taken for granted. As a people of God, we continue to grieve these losses but pray for healing and growth as we continue to live in the resurrection hope.

Thanks to modern technology, we were able to record and broadcast worship services and stay in touch with each other. However, experiencing worshiping through a screen and unable to partake of the Lord's Supper is not always fulfilling—By the way, we plan to continue having recorded or live-stream Sunday worship...and yes, we will have DVDs for those without internet access.

But there is good news, the number of new cases and subsequent deaths due to COVID-19 in the NYC have declined drastically prompting our Resumption Team to develop some protocols to resume “in-person” worship at St. James-St. Matthew's Lutheran Church.

Congregations are advised to use common sense and intentional action with regard to preventing

## The Messenger

Summer 2020 Edition

the spread of pathogens while gathering around the means of grace – word and sacraments. Therefore, under the guidance of the CDC, New York State and City Department of Health, the ELCA and the Metropolitan New York Synod and knowing that these are simply plans – it is subject to change as the season unfolds:

First of all, do not fear, for God is with us! Our entire building will be cleaned thoroughly prior to each worship service. If you feel sick or in that “**vulnerable**” population (elderly, with pre-existing medical conditions, asthmatic, etc.) please stay at home. You may call the Church office to inform us of your illness or need for Pastoral Care and prayers.

Secondly, in-person Worship Services will be very different when we resume. Here's how:

1. A **face covering** (mask) must be worn anywhere on the Church's premises. If you do not have a face covering, one will be provided for you.
2. Your **body temperature** will be tested prior to entering the Church building. You will NOT be permitted into the building if your temperature is above 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. You will complete a **questionnaire** about yourself strictly for contact and tracing purposes.
4. You will be ushered to an assigned seat (**6-feet apart**) – please stay in your assigned seat throughout the Worship Service. You will find a worship bulletin placed on your seat. Please take your bulletin with you when you leave.
5. There will be **no congregating** in the back of the sanctuary, aisles, restrooms, or fellowship hall either before or after Sunday Worship.
6. The Worship Service will be centered around the **Word and Sacraments**:
  - a) Ushers will be trained by the Resumption Team to ensure the safety of everyone in attendance at Worship. Please listen to them and obey their instructions.

b) You will **remain seated** throughout the Worship Service – which will be adjusted to be under 30 minutes in length.

c) There will be **no singing** or communal responses (e.g. The Lord be with you...And also with you and The Lord's Prayer) by the congregation. Pathogens (droplets) spread the most in this manner.

d) The **passing of the peace** is an integral way that the family of God recognizes the presence of the peace of Christ in its midst. After making eye contact with your sibling in Christ, simply bow to the person with clasped hands and gesture.

e) The **Lord's Supper** will be celebrated and distributed very differently: the elements (wafer and grape juice) will be pre-packed and sealed and each communicant will partake of the meal at home following the removal of their face coverings.

f) There will be an **Offering Box** at the back of the worship space for your envelopes.

7. **Fellowship** of any kind is **discouraged** as we continue to have everyone's safety and wellbeing as our top priority.

In the meantime, please do not let your guard down in the unprecedented times.

Further, it is my sincere hope that we let the old adage be our guide: **"Cleanliness is next to Godliness"** and allow the Holy Spirit of God to inspire us to care for ourselves and each other.

Now, please join the wider church in echoing the following prayer by our presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton:

*God, our peace and our strength, we pray for our nation and the world as we face new uncertainties around coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Guide us as we consider how best to prepare and respond in our families, congregations, workplaces, and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Now, having read and digested the above information, should you have any questions, please contact the Church Office immediately. But, even if you understand every detail of this Newsletter, let us know that you received it and are ready or not able to resume worship with us when that time comes – be it, the early September or later in the fall. Don't worry, you will be the first to know!

In an effort to keep in touch with our church family during this time, we will continue to send out weekly email blasts and posting updates on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St-James-St-Matthews-Lutheran-Church> Email us at [stjstm@aol.com](mailto:stjstm@aol.com) if you do not get our weekly blasts and "like us" on Facebook to get these updates when posted. Video recording of **Sunday Worship** "Service of the Word" are posted on our website for your viewing: [www.SouthOzoneParkChurch.org](http://www.SouthOzoneParkChurch.org)



We would like acknowledge everyone who has continued to contribute their offerings towards the ministry of our Church. For those of you who are wondering how to make your contributions, you may:

1. Mail-in your Offering Envelopes to the Church.
2. Drop off (please, checks only) your Offering Envelopes in our mail slot on the side door or
3. Contribute via your PayPal Accounts... <https://www.paypal.me/StJamesStMatthews>

With the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic and concerns, we continue to take the following measures until further notice:

1. **Remain Closed** for "in-person" Worship Services and Meetings – During this time, you can call the Church office to let us know if you are in need of Pastoral Care or special prayers.
2. **Reach out to our members and friends** – You may join us in connecting with our church family – Let them know that they are loved. We strongly suggest you do so by telephone and avoid person-to-person contact...at the least, pray for everyone.
3. **Going forward** – we will continue to share our **Sunday Worship Services** (Zoom) online and have an audio version available for those who wish to dial-in from their home phones. For Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 am, please dial: **646-558-8656** and enter meeting ID: **394-171-8778 #**.
4. **DVDs** of Sunday Worship Services are now available for those unable to view them via the internet. Please contact the Church office for more details.

### Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

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#### Contact us by Mail:

**St. James—St. Matthew's Lutheran Church**

**119-15 135th Avenue**

**South Ozone Park, NY 11420**

**Office Telephone: 718-845-8770**

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**Website: [SouthOzoneParkChurch.org](http://SouthOzoneParkChurch.org)**

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**Pastor Romeo Dabee**

**718-749-4953 (Pastoral Emergencies)**

**Email: [PastorDabee@gmail.com](mailto:PastorDabee@gmail.com)**