

St. James-St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

119-15 135th Avenue

South Ozone Park, NY 11420

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We Worship Every Sunday at 10:00 am

Visit us at SouthOzoneParkChurch.org

Reality Check !

Greetings Church family,

When I first enrolled in seminary back in 2001, there were 238 congregations in the Metropolitan New York Synod. I was very proud to be a part of such a growing multicultural witness to the gospel in a one-of-kind metropolis.

At the Virtual Synod Assembly held Aug 20-21, it was reported that there were about 190 congregations that currently make up the Synod. So in 20 years, 40-plus houses of worship were closed, merged or simply ceased to exist. That is an average of 2 every year, and we know of 3 such congregations within the Southwest Queens Conference. This is an irreplaceable loss to many, including the communities served by these churches.

Our Church records show that in March 2015, the members of St. James-St. Matthew's voted to staying separate—not to merge with three sister congregations. While other Churches (St. Phillip's, St. Luke's and Christ Lutheran) voted to close and merge into a new ministry site, we voted 35-33 to remain a Church in South Ozone Park.

Over the last six years, a lot has happened, some members have left while others have joined—but the building is still standing; some members have died while others have been newly baptized into the faith—but we kept on gathering for worship, even in the midst of a pandemic.

However, the numbers are alarming – our average attendance has dropped by 70% and Offerings by 66%.

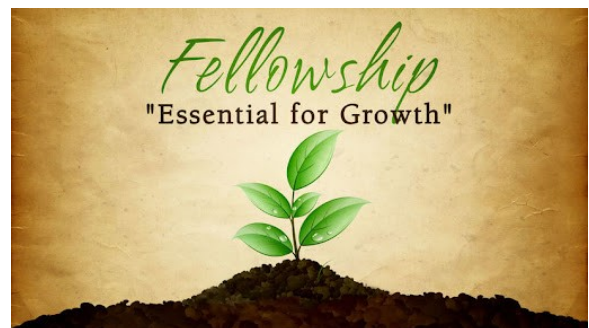
The Messenger

September 2021 Edition

I know that this reality is partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic but I am more concerned about the shortage of volunteer leaders and worship assistants (ushers, assisting ministers and lectors). Worship is what makes us church and not having volunteers to assist in the process is unbecoming of a church – a called out community of believers.

It is nice to have a Church to call your own, but it takes work to keep one. In fact, the word “liturgy” when translated from the Greek literally means “work of the people – public work” and that is what we are called to do at St. James-St. Matthew's in order to continue being the Church in this community.

Come next year, we will mark 95 years of public witness as a congregation. Now, while this is commendable and worth celebrating, I want to invite you to envision the next 5 years perhaps 10 years – what will it look like? Let us look to the future where St. James-St. Matthew's Lutheran Church will be alive, for as the book of wisdom tells us “Where there is no vision, the people perish...” (Prov. 29:18)



Sunday, September 5—following Worship.

Join us for a special fellowship as we bid farewell to Pastor Karen Kuttler who is moving back to her home State of Wisconsin. We give thanks for her being among us during such times—May God bless you Pastor Kuttler !

REGULAR WORSHIP SCHEDULE RESUMES

Yes, we resumed in-person Worship Services at 10 AM every Sunday. We maintain strict COVID-19 safety protocols of safe-distancing from fellow worshippers and require a mask to be worn inside the building. Come, taste and see the glory of worshiping in community!

Email us at stjstm@aol.com or call us if you have questions regarding worship or if you do not get our weekly email blasts. “Like us” on Facebook to get these updates when posted. Video recordings of **Sunday Worship** are posted on our website for your viewing: www.SouthOzoneParkChurch.org



Wanted !

As we resumed in-person worship services, there is a need for **Ushers, Lectors and Assistant Ministers**.

Please contact Pastor Dabee or the Church Office and indicate your willingness to help make worship a welcoming experience for everyone in attendance. Thanks in advance !



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—see a “Special Offering” Envelope enclosed. Our Roof is slated to be replaced in the fall.
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>

“Summertime Compassion”

It is no surprise that there is so much evidence of hurt, pain and anxiety in our world today. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, many among us have lost relationships, jobs, businesses, homes and loved ones – and the emergence of the Delta variant only suggests that the end is nowhere near.

Besides the pandemic, there are the natural disasters of wildfires in the West, flooding in the South, hurricanes in the East and a devastating earthquake in Haiti. Many among us are struggling to find solutions to problems we did not create or foresee – who could have predicted that our world would have been altered so drastically?

Given this reality and for the most part, we are left to our own devices – lost amidst the storms around us. We become just like the masses that followed Jesus. In Mark 6:34, we read, “As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.”

Jesus had “compassion” for the people who were clueless about where they would sleep or from where the next meal was coming. Jesus had empathy, feelings for, literally “co-suffered” with his followers. Jesus was actively seeking a solution to help alleviate the pain, loneliness, broken promises and suffering of the people who left to survive on their own.

I know that none of us possess the divine powers like Jesus but we can help ease the pain by sending a donation to **Lutheran Disaster Response** today. Yes, you can!

Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

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Contact us by Mail:

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