Grace and Peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ!

I hope this newsletter finds you well. I know you are worried about many things, namely the pandemic and the economy.

I and many others are praying for you daily, and for our country, and for the world. God will provide. He has demonstrated His love for us in the death and resurrection of His Son for all people. May He give you peace and hope during these times. It will be OK!

As you know, we have launched our ministry campaign in the midst of this crisis and enclosed in this mailing is the campaign booklet. Like all the plans you had before this, we didn’t plan on this!

A message from Pastor Joel Hess

Children’s Choir sings at worship service during the launch of our ministry campaign.
Therefore, while our leadership and I have put the capital aspect of this campaign on hold, we wanted you to see the booklet and its description of where the ministries at St. James are heading. Our mission statement, “Alive in Christ, Embracing Chicago”, is just as relevant today as it was before the virus. St. James is alive in Christ. Nothing changes that because nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God is still with us! In light of that, we are empowered to embrace our neighbor, our friends, and all of Chicago with our words of hope in Jesus and our works of service in love.

Our four targets of **Community**, **Mind**, **Hands**, and **Heart** are also extremely relevant! Our brothers and sisters in Christ and all of Chicago need community now! They need to be nourished with the Word of God, care for their wellbeing, and the peace and hope of Christ in their hearts more than ever!

While we are planning to bolster and expand many future ministries, we are applying these targets to our current situation. Our school has quickly adapted to online education, providing instruction and community to students at home. We are collecting food for distribution to homeless shelters. Our elders are calling members to see how they are doing. We have multiplied our online presence to make devotions and worship services available and interactive. God will open us to even more ways to strengthen community, serve our neighbor, grow in the knowledge of Christ, and bring the Gospel to the frightful hearts!

- Pastor Joel Hess

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**Ministry Challenge**

**Community** - Call/reach out to your neighbors and/or the elderly of St. James to see how they are doing!

**Mind** - Re-read the Gospel lesson, John 9, pray and think about it then send pastor an email with your thoughts!

**Hands** - Buy some extra food to put in St. James food collection for the shelters.

**Heart** - What does it mean to you that Jesus crosses boundaries and barriers to embrace you? Is there someone in your life that you have assumed was outside of ever believing in Christ? Pray for them.

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This map shows where our community extends not only in Chicago, but across the globe.

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A visual history of St. James was displayed in the Community Center for Inform Sunday.
Dear St. James Community,

A quick update on our school operations. Our teachers have done a great job of adjusting to the current situation. To ensure the education process didn’t stop, teachers launched e-learning for our students within 48 hours! We continue to meet as a faculty (using Zoom) to identify issues, share feedback, and apply improvements as this health crisis continues in our community. I am so proud of our staff and appreciate all of you that have reached out in thanks – it means so much.

A week ago, the Mayor of Chicago announced that CPS schools will not open until April 20th. We continue to assess the situation and plan to remain remote until then, while supporting the students and their e-learning. We will update you as things develop.

Pastor provides much needed support to our staff, students, and families. Whether it is daily religion classes, weekly chapel on Facebook live, or leading Bible studies for our moms on Zoom, he leads us as we try to navigate this while continuing to do God’s work. Our staff is working remotely as much as they can, and we are getting caught up on some much needed updating and organizing. Dot Minogue and Sara Henning continue to be our rocks that keep us all on track. We know God is good and He will bring good from chaos and fear.

- Sheri Meyer

“So do not fear, for I am with you: do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Isaiah 41:10
Campaign Prayer

So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:31-34

Dear Lord, you provide all things. Please give us wisdom to follow your will by effectively using the gifts and blessings you have showered upon us to expand the ministry of St. James. You are alive in Chicago. Please help us to convey that good news to our neighbors who are in need of your light in a dark world. Help us to trust that you will provide what is sufficient for our needs and the resources to meet St. James' challenges for each new day. Thank you for loving us and offering yourself as a sacrifice so that we may live with you forever. Amen