Dear St. James Community,

In Philippians 4:13 we are reminded, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

I cannot think of words that more profoundly exemplify what we, as human beings, are demonstrating at this very moment in our history. The COVID-19 pandemic finds us amidst unchartered waters that are testing our emotional and spiritual stamina every day. But as we stand together in a positive and hopeful way through this, I am confident we will emerge strengthened by God’s generous blessings.

Here at St. James we have been challenged by how to continue ministering to our parish community when physical connection is not allowed. Social distancing has impacted everything we do here. *Everything.* But one of the beautiful results of this time is how we have reacted and remained true to our Lord by our *Be Disciples and Make Disciples* mission statement. Through God’s diving mercy, many redirections have enabled us to engage with you and with each other.

I have compiled a long list of St. James’ good news. Cozy up with a beverage and have a read.

- Daily mass can be found at [www.stjamesah.org](http://www.stjamesah.org). Technology is an almighty gift right now. Thanks go out to our sound techs who are making it possible.

- *“This is the Day the Lord has Made. Let us Rejoice and Be Glad!”* Join us online for Holy Week starting next Thursday, April 9th. How wonderful it is that we can celebrate Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday Vigil, and Easter Sunday from the safety of our own homes.

- Our Director of Music Ministry, Tam Conseur, is praying with his St. James faith family by way of virtual, beautiful song. And people don’t just “like” it, they *love* it! He has set the “share” record on the St. James Facebook page and has over 2300 views with his singing of “*Lord I Need You*” in our church. I hope you are singing
along at home with Tam and your families. We are blessed and thankful as a parish for Tam’s leadership in this personal and emotionally touching manner.

- Flo Trunk, Parish Office Manager, is on top of rescheduling upcoming weddings, memorials, and other important events now and leading into summer. No easy task to say the least, but her grace, flexibility and good humor are an inspiration to all.

- Fr. Ryan and I are conducting Anointings of the Sick. If you have a loved one close to meeting his or her eternal reward, please contact our office at 224-345-7200.

- Christina Hudson has virtual LIFETEEN up and running on Sundays at 4:00 pm CST. Additionally, Christina has provided online material and Bible study opportunities for teens needing to connect with others and with God during this time. She can be reached for more information at chudson@stjamesah.org

- Digital EDGE nights for our middle school families are brought to you by Matthew Lawson. Bring your Bible and join him online! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhGzuz-f-Ao&feature=youtu.be

- St. James Alpha groups will be finishing this session digitally. This past week a WebEX online training was offered for small group hosts to connect virtually.

- Men and Women of St. James small groups are offering to meet virtually to stay connected with one another for prayer and encouragement. Men’s Welcome is also moving forward with the formation process virtually. WOSJ leader, Nina Losch, hosted a virtual check in with over 22 women serving on the steering committee.

- This Wednesday morning starts a family video series on the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit our website starting this Wednesday.
• Religious Education families can join Kevin Byrnes here for the most recent *Alive in Christ* discussion. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_pckMDeelA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_pckMDeelA). Catechists will be updated this week with a go-forward plan to finish out the year strong. At this time Communions and Confirmations are on schedule. Kevin and his team will keep you updated. Questions can be directed to stjamesRE@stjamesah.org

• I could write a novel about the incredible work conducted by our St. James schoolteachers during their spring breaks relative to rewriting lesson plans and curriculums to be taught online in a productive and efficient way for our K-8th grade students. From music, PE, art, band and all academic subjects, it has been a truly unbelievable example of teamwork under pressure and the fast learning of cutting-edge technology. Students will be eLearning at home until at least April 7th. So blessed are we for our Technology gurus, Gina Zebrun, Kevin Dillon, and Principal Mike Kendrick who have taken swiftly to ramping up St. James School for this learning shift. If ever there was a group of leaders who “Find A Way” this is the one. A virtual pep-rally will be offered by Mr. Kendrick this Friday, April 3.
• Nancy Braun and her Ministers of Care are making “check in” phone calls to our nursing home residents and crafting home-made cards to remind them we are thinking of them. Email your own to the Lutheran Home by clicking here: https://www.lutheranhome.org/card?fbclid=IwAR3hNnRGfm_ttytxoYoNWR54TcAwptNN4Xnl_347qQPvCBadLX_QlqzIKNF

• St. James Parish social media is offering daily announcements, videos and encouragement. Upcoming resources will include how to pray the rosary, stations of the cross, and scripture prayers. If you have access please follow St. James on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Thanks go to our marketing department for keeping everybody in the loop and feeling connected! For some good feels and likely a few belly laughs check out the spiritual and motivational fitness videos offered by Yours Truly. https://www.facebook.com/StJamesSchoolAH/videos/869513983568445/UzpfSTEzMzg0Ny1yMzMyNzYwOTyNzk5MzYxNTQzNDQyNzE3/

• Individual parishioners and the organization, Rest in His Arms, have been busy at home sewing masks with donated supplies and fabric from JoAnn’s Fabrics and local area families. Thank you to our St. James seamstresses for offering hospitals, nursing homes and front-line workers this much-needed protection.
• A Herculean effort led by JOURNEYS, the Coughlin Family, Nancy Moroney, and Fr. Ryan to redirect overnight PADS guests is in effect. The weekly guests will be provided meals Mondays and Wednesdays by way of take out from parishioner-owned restaurants, and shelter at area motels. Dozens of parishioners have already donated to this cause and I thank you for your generosity. If you are interested in contributing to our PADS redirection project you may do so at https://membership.faithdirect.net/IL859 and Memo: PADS. Jubilation annually supports PADS and we are very grateful for the generous Jubilation-goers in 2019.

- The Prayer Shawl Ministry is as active as ever in their homes knitting and crocheting away shawls for those needing comfort. If you know someone needing supportive prayers, and a hand-made shawl in a rainbow of colors, please contact the office at 224-345-7200.

- Faith Direct registrations are increasing, thank you. Here is a summary of enrollments a year ago, last month, and as of this past Sunday. This is good news:

  2/28/19 = 423 donors (Good)
  2/29/20 = 503 donors (Better)
  3/29/20 = 560 donors (Best!)

If you have not yet migrated to on-line giving, please consider doing so during this time of virtual mass. Envelopes carry germs, take down trees, and cost more money to process. Your online offertory gifts are a tremendous help.

https://membership.faithdirect.net/IL859.

• Piggybacking on good news of Faith Direct I find our March monthly collections also good news worthy. My hope is for online donations to surpass envelope donations in April. Wouldn’t that be great news?
Stewardship Month of March

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<th>Actual</th>
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<tr>
<td>Envelope Donations</td>
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<td>Total March 2020 Sunday Collections</td>
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- In addition, now available is the Faith Direct option to **Text-to-Give**. Text “Enroll” to 224-313-4345. We believe that our technically-savvy will love this new option to support St. James.

- We **will** have fun again! The annual Jubilation at St. James is November 7th at the newly constructed Chez Hotel in Arlington Heights. Consider joining us at the **Amazing Grace Gala** to honor our country's religious freedom and military heroes, in addition to supporting charities of varying causes that includes PADS, St. Vincent DePaul, and St. James Tuition Assistance.

- “The show must go on!” While the April auditions for our summer musical **Bye Bye Birdie** have been postponed, we are still hopeful for a July production. Stay tuned for more here [https://www.facebook.com/groups/43795529734/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/43795529734/)

- This time has been a blessing for everybody to catch up on home projects. We have all been organizing closets, cleaning out drawers, tossing junk, spring cleaning.

- We are an incredibly blessed community. Among us are doctors, nurses, and hospital workers serving selflessly and saving lives every day. The good news is that most of us CAN stay home, keep our distance, and pray for all of those in the line of duty. God Bless parishioner and ER doctor, Dr. Mike Braun, and the many other healthcare workers getting us past this. Keep smiling and know you will be in our prayers.
In closing I hope you can receive future good news that we are emailing weekly via our virtual bulletin. If you would like to receive our bulletin and future newsletters, please sign up here and we will bring it right to your inbox. 
http://www.stjamesah.org/stay-connected

Let us allow our merciful God near to us and we will be with each other again soon. Remember that struggling with anxious thoughts will never push our heavenly father away. Practice self-care, be gentle with yourself and be patient with others in your home.

You, our front-line workers, and the victims of this illness will remain in my heart, in my thoughts, and in my prayers.

I miss you all and thank you for the inspiration and positivity you continue to bring me through our social channels.
Your Servant in Christ,

Matt McLeer

Fr. Matt