



MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST

Advent / December 1, 2020

From the Desk of Pastor Paul:

What will Christmas have in common with Thanksgiving, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day? It's not the weather, or decorating themes, or retailers starting the seasons too early. The answer is "disruption!" As I write this note, we're facing a-once-in-a-lifetime (I hope!) Advent and Christmas season during a pandemic.

Dr. Shilagh Mirgain, a psychologist with the University of Wisconsin, says it's important for families to talk in advance about how they're going to celebrate. She suggests virtual (smartphone, tablet, or laptop) gatherings, focusing on activities that spark joy. Maybe everyone enjoys a meal together via zoom, skype or facetime while wearing ugly sweaters. You can share stories, Covid-adapted holiday traditions, and swap recipes, especially old family favorites.

Here are a couple of other ideas you may want to consider:

Send Personal Gifts. If you enjoy knitting, candle making, or crafting personal gifts for the holidays, now's the time to get started. Why not write a note to someone sharing a memory or what makes them special to you. If all else fails, there's always online shopping, wrapping, and delivery anywhere in the world.

Make Videos. When our family gathers, music is always involved. This year, why not try video recording a few songs and sending them to family and friends by text or email. If you're not musical, make a song playlist or a holiday video sharing favorite holiday traditions, best and worst gifts you've received, and favorite family stories. The key is to have fun, and let your imagination run free.

Take an After-Dinner Walk. After your holiday meal, go on a virtual walking tour through your respective neighborhoods. You can share your time outdoors and all of the interesting sights along the way.

Whatever you choose to do, I pray you will be safe. While this holiday season will be memorable in ways we never could have imagined, I'm confident we will get the pandemic under control so we can once again give everyone we love a big hug in person. Until then, my family and I wish each of you a wonderful and healthful holiday season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Paul Craig

GUIDELINES FOR YEAR-END GIVING

MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Please keep the following in mind when making contributions.

These requirements must be met for the contributions to be tax deductible for 2020:

1. Your cash or check must be **received** in the Church Office by 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 31, 2020. Your contributions can also be made from a smart phone or device by texting “Matthews” to **73256** and following the link to give. From a desktop, visit give.matthewsumc.org.
2. Your mailed check must be **postmarked** by Thursday, December 31, 2020.
3. Online contributions **must be in transit by** Thursday, December 31, 2020.
4. Contributions that do not meet these guidelines cannot be recorded on a church member’s 2020 giving record. Checks that are received after December 31 cannot be included on a member’s 2020 record even if the check is dated December 31, 2020 (unless it is postmarked December 31, 2020). These are IRS requirements and exceptions cannot be made.
5. Please do not file your 2020 income tax return until you have received your 2020 church contribution record. Some of your contributions may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving your statement. The statements will be mailed out no later than January 29, 2021.

WHAT CAN YOU GIVE?

- **Give Check or Cash** - Both are popular and convenient ways to give by mail or by placing your gifts in the designated lock-box on the Admin Hall door across from the Front Office. Please enter through the front doors by the mailbox, which will be open December 28-31 from 9am-5pm.
- **Give Electronically** - Go to give.matthewsumc.org for our OnRealm platform. You can give by credit/debit card or bank draft. You can text “Matthews” to 73256 and follow the link to give.
- **Give Appreciated Stocks or Property** - Giving appreciated property - such as shares of stock, bonds or mutual funds - gives the donor a charitable income tax deduction and can avoid capital gains taxes. If, however, you own securities that are worth less than you paid, it would be better to sell them, report the capital loss on your tax return, and contribute the proceeds. Gifts of securities take a few days to process, so you need to plan ahead. Please contact the Church Office for assistance with gifting securities or other property.
- **Gifts from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA)** – The IRA charitable rollover allows persons 70 1/2 years or older to contribute up to \$100,000 of their required minimum distribution each year directly from their IRA to the church without paying income tax on the distribution. This can result in a “wash” for tax purposes, with no tax owed on the amount distributed and no contribution deduction received for the donation. Check with your tax advisor to see if this would be a beneficial way for you to make a year-end gift.

Please Note: *These guidelines do not attempt to give any legal or tax advice. For advice in specific situations, the services of a competent legal, tax or financial planner should be obtained to help you decide what would be your best option.*