



MATTHEWS UNITED METHODIST

1st Quarter Update: April 15, 2021

A Word from your Executive Pastor

In the last year and a half, many doors and businesses have been closed or operated at reduced capacity. Church activities, programs, and ministries had to get creative. We moved outside, beyond the four walls as we fed our community, helped people who lost jobs, and counseled the sick, the grieving and the struggling. Ministry popped up in parking lots, backyards, drive-thru events, and portable communion, all through the gifts of God's grace, new technology, and human perseverance. **The Church of God was never closed; just operating in a different mode. Thank you for your contributions that made this all possible. (Link to your contribution statement below.)**

Professionals call our current reality stress-induced burnout typified by lethargy, depression, and a lack of focus, energy, and mental clarity. Many of us feel less engaged, less connected, and suffering a sense of deep loss. **At Matthews UMC, we want to help with some good news!**

Nearly 200 of us gathered outside for an Easter Sunrise Service filled with uplifting music, a word of inspiration and hope from Pastor Brad. Before sunrise, many hours of pre-dawn labor provided by dedicated staff and wonderful volunteers made it all possible. Thank you, thank you, thank you all!

Now, we are inviting a few "test" groups to attend one of our sanctuary services at 9:15 am (Contemporary; note adjusted time), 11:00 am (Traditional), or 12:45 pm (Spanish; note adjusted time). They are helping us refine our new in-person protocols and cleaning routines. The congregation will be invited to attend worship services beginning Mother's Day, May 9. Given our indoor seating limits, we are asking you to make reservations at [OnRealm.org](https://www.onrealm.org).

This signals our return to a new sense of normalcy and community. Things won't all be as we remember them, at least not at first. We will offer sanctuary worship (children are welcome to attend!), and as we learn and adjust, adult and children's programming will be added. Thank you for bearing with us.

We don't have it all figured out yet, but after the resurrection, neither did Jesus' first disciples. We don't have to have everything figured out yet or how we're going to do it. Neither did the disciples. We don't even need to know how these changes will change us! Jesus' resurrection appearances remind us our lives and everything that went before it will be different, that our future, though unknown, will be filled with excitement and adventure. That's what it means to be a disciple of the Risen Christ. It's not our job to "know." We are just asked to "go," and he will do the rest.

May God's people at Matthews UMC welcome this time of resurrection. Welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit. Submit yourselves to Jesus' presence and power, and let's get going together!

I am always your Pastor and Friend,
Pastor Paul

View your financial contribution statement and online giving at [OnRealm.org](https://www.onrealm.org). For questions, please contact Leigh Ann Fesmire at 704-847-6261 x 103 or leighann@matthewsumc.org.