

6917 North Country Homes Blvd • Spokane, Washington 99208  
www.stmatthewspokane.org • info@stmatthewspokane.org  
school: 509-327-5601 • church: 509-326-3766



Dear St. Matthew Family Members,

Wow! What an uncertain time we are currently in; thankfully, we are certain that “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.” I am sure that you have by now been informed of Governor Inslee’s Proclamation that all schools in Washington State will need to be closed from March 17<sup>th</sup>-April 24<sup>th</sup>. St. Matthew Lutheran School will, out of necessity, need to follow suit. We will however be having school on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. Please note: 1. Students who come to school on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> should be free of all signs of sickness. 2. Students need to have been free of a fever for 72 hours. 3. This school day is not mandated. If you feel uncomfortable sending your child to school, then please stay home. Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> will give us a chance to have another day of instruction/help the students gather books and materials for the hiatus, and also inform the students of some next steps.

What are those next steps? Our intention is to continue to offer school for Prek-8<sup>th</sup> grade through virtual means. While we don’t have all the answers yet, the tentative plan is to host online instruction through YouTube videos/learning links as well as sending scanned packets of materials home with kids via online means. We are also looking into putting into place “office times” where students can communicate with their child’s teacher via Google Hangout, Facebook Messenger, email, text, call, or even possible 1 on 1 half-hour tutoring sessions for healthy students and teachers.

Your school’s Board of Education has been working hard to make sure that something is in place that can continue to offer some semblance of education for your child. However, no online learning is going to be the perfect or ideal setup. Just please know that we will continue to be your child’s teacher(s) and your child’s school even during this hiatus. We will make it so that you still will have access to us, and in some cases more access to us now than before.

Communication is going to be so important to make this all work. Please don’t hesitate to email, call, text, etc. during this time. Please take time to read important updates and learning information that we will be sending out as a school via email over the next days and weeks. The plan is to give you another update on Sunday and towards the middle of next week as we continue to sort through this bombshell that was dropped on ours and every other school in town.

Looking towards the future we would see the best case scenario as being that we are back in school by April 27<sup>th</sup> or sooner. There are many things to consider as we look towards how the rest of the year will play out, but quite possibly the biggest will be with graduation and school education requirements. Private schools are asked to provide a minimum of 1000 hours for 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Our school year is set up with close to 1,200 hours of instruction time, barring any setbacks (snow days, for example). I say this not as a pat on the back, but simply as means of showing that: 1. Our school’s desire is not to do the bare minimum, and 2. Even with many days off your children will still be meeting the requirements.

However, let’s go back to point 1: It is not our desire to just take these next 6 weeks off as a vacation, but we will need your help to facilitate learning at home and hold your child as accountable as possible.

If this hiatus were to take longer than 6 weeks, state mandates that students will not be asked to stay in school longer than June 19<sup>th</sup>. There is the possible option to extend school by 1 hour a day when we come back if we were to need more instructional hours. A bill may also be passed that would eliminate school requirements for the year given all of this madness. Either way, when we get back to school our school plays will be cancelled and extra-curricular events/activities will be cancelled to maximize the learning that would take place for the rest of the year.

Government has been put in place by God to take care of our good. We are thankful that we have such a loving God who is looking out for his creation. Through all of this I cannot think of anything more fitting than what our school year theme was last year, which was Psalm 46. The Psalm writer David expresses a strong faith in a God who literally holds the whole world in his hands. While we may feel like the whole world is spinning out of control right now, it isn’t! God is 100% in control and will continue to take care of his people. God doesn’t guarantee us a set number of days on this earth, but he does promise the mansions of heaven for his children who put their faith in him. Therefore, we can be still and know that God isn’t batting an eyelash at all of this coronavirus mess. Please use this time to find opportunities to grow closer to your loving God, and not distance yourself from him.

*Growing in Grace, Growing in Faith, Growing in Knowledge*

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#### Psalm 46

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

*God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

*The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

*Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.*

*He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.*

*He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.*

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,*

*I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us;*

*the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

God's Blessings to you and your family as we move forward. If you need anything, please stay in contact. Your loving faculty at St. Matthew

1. [https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/COVID-19%20in%20Schools\\_Parent%20Guide.pdf](https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/COVID-19%20in%20Schools_Parent%20Guide.pdf) (A resource for families who have students in Washington schools.)
2. <https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/press-releases/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-resources> (The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction page on the coronavirus.)
3. <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/SchoolClosuresQandA.pdf> (Q&A on the coronavirus and schooling)
4. <https://wfs.org/covid-19-updates/> (Coronavirus updates)
5. <https://www.governor.wa.gov/> (Jay Inslee's website)
6. <https://elemental.medium.com/why-we-should-care-commonly-asked-questions-and-answers-about-covid-19-6b166f1876e9#--responses> (Great article helping explain some of this corona virus madness.)
7. [stmatthewspokane.org](http://stmatthewspokane.org) (Our church and school's website)

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