



August 23, 2017

Dear members and friends of the Hills Church,

There is a stunning idea about the power and strength of the church. It's found in the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus speaks to his disciple Peter about being the "rock" on which Jesus will build the church.

*"On this rock I will build my church,
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."*

In those times, Hades was a quick word for the powers that stand against the will of God, including the power of death. Amazingly, Jesus declared that the powers that stand against God will not prevail over the community of the church.

That is very good news.

We are called to community to stand for life that is shaped by the power of God's grace, a power that is greater than the gates of Hades. The history of the church tells this story. For years, the church has stood against the powers of illness and injury by bringing health care to people in need and against the power of ignorance by championing education at home and around the world. The church stands with those who are oppressed, and answers fear with love.

This fall, I invite us to remember how we are *called to community* by God, that we might be a light to the world.

On September 10, we will celebrate Rally Sunday and begin a new year of program ministries. From September 24 – October 22, I will deliver a sermon series titled "*Called to Community*." It will focus on how God is working through the church community to meet the brokenness of the world with love.

I keep you in my prayers, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt".

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster,
Senior Minister