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# St. Matthew Today

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Wed., Oct. 25th, 2023

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 126<sup>th</sup> year

## Our Old Sins

### Friday's Word

Westover Plantation still stands along the James River in Virginia. It was built by William Byrd in 1730.

My ancestor, Capt. Daniel Lewellen, lived across the river.

Mr. Byrd is famous for having kept a diary, one of our best sources for colonial life in Virginia.

I found one passage very interesting. Byrd said that after dinner one evening his wife and her sister were arguing over the inerrancy of scripture.

It's an old argument.

My ancestor and Mr. Byrd went to the same church, also still standing.

And both owned—bought and sold—enslaved human beings.

Another ancestor, Jessee Lewellen, was a Baptist preacher. He started a church in North Carolina around 1830.

It is still there.

And although a preacher, Jessee owned three people.

As a biblical inerrantist, he could justify that sin.

One of his sons, Jessee Jr., just like Abraham in the Bible, had a child by a woman he owned.

Which leads us to Beverly, our black cousin in California. She is planning a big family reunion next summer in Mississippi.

Our black and white family—all together.

Except for cousin Sam.

He appeared on a family zoom call with a Confederate flag behind him and he used the "N-word."

Like the old buildings in this narrative, the evil of racism still stands, with its sister sin of homophobia.

And if you are a biblical inerrantist like my ancestors, you can justify any sin you want.

But if you listen to Jesus above all, the old sins must go.

His love is our hope.

*God Bless—MB*

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### Last Sunday

I counted only eight — that's EIGHT! — in our choir last Sunday, but what a lovely noise we did make singing a beautiful arrangement of Fairest Lord Jesus.

I am so proud of our choir.

And our choir director.

And our organist.

I felt good about our service last week.

I hope you were uplifted.

The choir will not sing this Sunday. No rehearsal.

Kristi, our organist, will be out. Julian, our newest choir member, will sing a solo. (And I assume Blake will play piano for the service.)

### This Word to Jason

I always give my sermon title here each week, partly so Jason (Hardy) will be able to put it online. But—Jason—I will send it later.

I have several sermons (and scriptures) in mind and as of Monday evening I do not know which I will preach this Sunday.

### Closing Out the Year

We are able to estimate—with some confidence—that we will be able to close out the year with all bills paid (including Conference apportionments) if we bring in \$17,000 a month for the next two months—in other words—what we need every month to meet our budget.

This is good news.

But it does mean that we will need to be faithful for the rest of the year—and it may be necessary for some of us to think about a special Christmas gift to the church.

We have done a lot this year—including paying for the new playground.

We are grateful for the St. Matthew which is—and for the St. Matthew which will be in months and years to come.

We move on—with Christ our Lord.

He is the Rock on which we stand.

Let us worship him—this Sunday.

GOD BLESS—MB

# Mary's Corner

Greetings to all of you in the name of the risen Christ! I hope you are experiencing the love and blessings of God as you read this newsletter. Fall is coming this week, and I am thankful for a break from the summer temperatures. Fall also brings flu, COVID, and other inconvenient illnesses to our communities. Remember to take care of yourselves and each other during this time when your immune system will be challenged. Sleep, healthy meals, hand washing, and avoiding large crowds are vital to maintaining your good health. If you feel sick, please stay home and rest.

I will be out of town this weekend but will return on November 5th to share the message and vision for the Central Texas Conference of the UMC from Bishop Ruben Saenz. In advance of this message, please think about the following questions: "What does our church do well?" and "What does our church need to do better?" These two questions are part of the process that Bishop Saenz has asked us to work through as we work to multiply followers of Jesus and to become relevant to the neighborhoods we serve. I am excited to share with you and to move forward in our ministries to this broken world. I pray for all of you continuously, thanking God for your presence in my life. Blessings, Mary  
[pastor@saintmatthewumc.com](mailto:pastor@saintmatthewumc.com)

## Silent Auction & Bake Sale

Saturday, November 18, 2023. We appreciate everyone's participation in donating to the silent auction or donating your favorite baked goods. VOLUNTEERS are needed to help set up. Items being donated will be accepted Friday morning, November 17, or before 10:00 a.m. Saturday, November 18. Ladies Luncheon Nov. 16 to finalize plans. Contact Veta McCulloch at 817-451-6980 or 817-994-1629.

## Give to Saint Matthew UMC

Please feel free to contribute in any way you can and help us in our efforts to continue spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the community and the world.

Scan the QR code with your phone to securely give online or visit our website at [saintmatthewumc.com/give](http://saintmatthewumc.com/give)



# Kids' News

You may recall that God promised Abraham that he would have as many descendants as there were stars in the sky Abraham and Sarah finally greeted their son Isaac. Today we learned that Isaac was an older man when he married Rebekah. They had been married for many years but had no children.

Rebekah finally became pregnant with twins. It was a difficult pregnancy. It seemed that the twins were fighting in the womb. She asked God why they were fighting. God answered that there were two nations in the womb. One people will be stronger than the other. Esau was born first, with Jacob quickly following, holding on to the heel of Esau.

The twins were very different, Esau liked to be outdoors with the animals, to hunt, and to be active. Jacob liked to stay close to Rebekah and help her with household chores and with the cooking. The Bible story tells us as they got older, the difference split the family apart. This story reminds us that despite our differences, our uniqueness makes each person a special part of God's family. God claims us just the way we are.

While we discussed our story, our kids had a wonderful time completing some wonderful artwork and they promised to bring their completed picture back next week to share with us.

Our swings were being used again by 2-year-old Audrey when I arrived before church, I gave her grandparents a tour of the classrooms, and they were happy to learn what a beautiful building we have.

Jade, Alec, and Remy checked them out after church! What a wonderful playground we have! See you Sunday.

**Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue**

## Ladies of St. Matthew

The Ladies of St. Matthew luncheon is Thursday 11/16 at 11:30. RSVP to Veta McCulloch at 817-449-2063 or TEXT ONLY 817-994-1629 [vetamcculloch@outlook.com](mailto:vetamcculloch@outlook.com)

## Chair Yoga

Join your friends at our free Chair / Standing Yoga class each Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 am.