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# St. Matthew Today

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Wed., Dec. 27th, 2023

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 126<sup>th</sup> year

**New Year's Eve – Usual Time – 11:00**

## Friday's Word

Well—the odometer of the world is about to click over to a new year.

Some people say they don't make resolutions. I say we can't help it. There's just a feeling of new beginning.

For me, 2024 will be all about the book.

I got a call from Boots Richardson before she died. She and Jack were members of St. Matthew years ago, until they moved to East Texas.

Boots, on hospice care at the time, called to say she had worn out my first book, *God, Grace and Gooseberry*. She needed a copy of my next one.

I told her, "Boots, I'm not really through with it. Let me work on it a little longer. Then I'll send it."

"Max! I don't have a little longer. I want it now! Immediately!"

I did have copies run off for a study group. I sent her one and she called a few days later.

"Max, I've read it three times in two days."

I was touched. The book is 250 pages long.

A few days later she called again: "Your book has made me feel safe. We all belong to God."

I told her that is exactly what the accounts in *Discovering God* tell us.

All 100 accounts of powerful religious/spiritual experiences.

Boots died not long after that last conversation.

The book encouraged her in her last days.

The material in the book encourages me.

Beginning January 1st, I will begin the last revision of the book. My resolution is to get it out into the world in 2024.

I may also start my own weekly YouTube program to take people through the book. Let me know if you would be interested. And!

Happy New Year

*God Bless—MB*

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### A Great St. Matthew Christmas

What a glorious Christmas we have had at St. Matthew. There are sorrows in the world. There are sorrows in our own lives. But God spoke his love for us in our Christmas services and we give thanks.

We had 97 on Christmas Eve—and remarkable music. We must thank Blake Glass, our phenomenal choir director, who makes our great music possible, along with Kristi, Shannon, and our choir. Our small choir sounds better than most large ones. We were slightly augmented on Christmas Eve with guest singers. I've never heard such beauty in any church.

Shannon's voice in the solo Sunday morning was a complete surprise. We had not heard the "operatic" Shannon. It was truly remarkable.

And when Blake hit the high notes on "O Holy Night" on Christmas Eve—it gave us goosebumps.

I could go on and on.

I thank God for our Christmas services.

And we had an excellent offering which will help us close out the year successfully.

May our Lord be praised for his loving kindness among us.

### New Year's Day Communion

We will have communion the next two weeks—the last Sunday of the old year and the first Sunday of the new. We celebrate the passing year and our future in Jesus Christ. It seems somehow a blessing to gather at the Lord's table on the eve of a new year. We can make a new commitment to love the Lord more deeply in the year ahead.

May your life be filled with thanksgiving.

I hope you can be with us this Sunday.

God bless—MB

Remember—Suzanne Brennan's hospitalization and Tracy Maxwell's surgery this Thursday.

# Mary's Corner

It is almost 2024! If you are like me, you are probably thinking of a bunch of things to do differently next year: eat better, exercise, save more, etc. Let's pick one thing to do well next year. Just one thing for the first day. Then add or take away something when you feel like you have done the first thing well. Pray every day to just do the next right thing. Let your successes be your successes and your failures be your lessons. The best thing is we don't have to do it all alone. God is always with us in our struggles. I pray for each of us a fulfilling and life-changing 2024. See you Sunday!

Love, Mary  
pastor@saintmatthewumc.com

## Kids' News

Everyone is so busy this time of year with shopping, baking lots of cookies and preparing wonderful meals for the family to gather. But let's not forget the shepherds in the fields quietly going about their night keeping watch over their sheep, when suddenly an angel appeared to them.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I bring good news to you, wonderful, joyful news for all people!" The shepherds were terrified. Instead of running away in terror, they listened to the message and decided to go to Bethlehem to confirm that the message that the angel brought was true. When they got there, they confirmed that it was true. After seeing this, they left and told others, praising God, and expressing joy about the birth of the Savior.

Shepherds were the first to hear of Jesus' birth. Some think that the shepherds were first to hear of Jesus' birth because they were low on the social rung, and God wanted it known that Jesus was for everyone. We do know that the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. Then the shepherds returned home and shared the news of Jesus' birth.

From the angels to the shepherds to the world, the good news of Jesus is for all people. Joy is meant to be shared, as joy is for all. See you in church Sunday so you can tell us of your joy!

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue



### Ladies of St. Matthew Luncheon

Thursday, January 11th at 11:30 a.m.

### Media Team Training and Interest Session

Saturday, January 27th at 2:00 p.m.

Training session and Q&A for new and current volunteers on the sound system and lights.

### Chair Yoga

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

### Sunday Breakfast

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for a light breakfast each Sunday at 10 a.m. while the kids are in Sunday School.

### **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)

