

St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jan. 10th, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 127th year

Jesus Got It Right

Friday's Word



Is theology more like philosophy or math? There are many different philosophical positions.

But two times two is always four.

So, theology must be like philosophy. Look at the 20,000 denominations of Christianity.

There seems to be no stable truth. No clear single picture of what God is like.

I beg to differ.

God is *knowable* through experience.

Every *experience* of God gives us information about God. And that information is *always* consistent from one experience to another.

Talk to 100 people who have encountered God in an NDE or other form of religious experience.

The God they meet will always be the same:

Entirely loving.

Endlessly forgiving.

Every experience of God gives us information about God.

And that information is consistent and reliable.

Like two plus two.

Theology is a study of available information.

It is not guesswork.

It can be accurate.

And here's the big news:

Experience gives us the same information about God that we get from Jesus.

Jesus got God right!

Plato didn't.

Aristotle didn't.

Not one of the great thinkers of antiquity got God right. But Jesus did. This is the most powerful argument for the claim we make that Jesus is Lord.

Luke 6:27-36 is the best description ever written of the God we know exists.

And how do we know this God exists? We meet God through experience.

Two plus two is always four. And God is always and at *all times*—love.

God Bless—MB

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It Was a Good Year

I hesitate to say that. It may have been a hard year for some of our people. But 2023 was a good year in our church.

We reached many with the Gospel.

Our people have been wonderfully faithful.

We may as well face something as we move forward. The church is no longer just the folks in the pews on Sundays. We have many people who cannot come but who are faithful in watching online and faithful in giving. And there are even readers of Friday's Word who think of St. Matthew as their church, or one of their churches. They may attend another church regularly and still watch us every week.

It's a new day.

But one thing we want to do in the new year is to get more people into our pews on Sundays. We want them in on the fellowship—if this is possible.

I like to see you when I am preaching.

But I do thank God for all of you who can now be with us in spirit—or in Spirit—if not in person.

This larger church, beyond our walls, is important to us now.

A Bit More

I'm preaching at Lakewood Village (now, Christian Care Community) Sunday afternoon. If some of the residents there wanted to come to St. Matthew on Sundays—would there be a way?

Mary will be gone for two Sundays.

She will preach for us when she returns.

Expect a time of joyful worship this Sunday.

Don't worry if it's cold.

The heating is working.

God bless—MB

Tracy Maxwell is back home and improving after surgery.

Doug Montgomery's mom passed away—aged 97. Our love to Doug and Cindy and all of Doug's family.

We remember Larry Norris and those who loved him.



Photo by Kathleen Barry, United Methodist Communications

Human Relations Day

January 14th

Human Relations Day is a denomination-wide Special Sunday that celebrates and raises awareness about the strength of human relationships. A special offering is received the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and contributes to building his vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

Your contribution to the Human Relations Day offering holds the potential to bring about transformative change:

- **57% supports community developer programs, nurturing racial-ethnic minority congregations and strengthening local UMC communities according to their unique needs.**
- **33% empowers The United Methodist Voluntary Services (UMVS), challenging unjust systems and advocating for those whose livelihoods are at risk.**
- **10% fuels Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs, empowering young individuals to participate positively in their communities through mentoring and other empowerment initiatives.**

At a time when it may feel like we have lost so much, embracing God's love for us can shift our perspective to recognize and share abundant grace. United Methodist Special Sunday offerings celebrate vibrant ministries while investing in servant leadership, community building and ministries of peace with justice. Concentrating our resources to support these important ministries equips us to work together, empowered by God's love.

For more than half a century, United Methodists have observed Human Relations Day in recognition of the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: all of God's children are important.

Kids' News

It seems only last week that we were talking about the birth of baby Jesus. This week we were at the Jordan River with John the Baptist, who was baptizing people in the river. People from all walks of life were lined up to be baptized by John.

Jesus came from Galilee and asked John to baptize him. John at first said that Jesus was the one who should baptize him, because he didn't feel worthy to baptize someone as special as Jesus. However, Jesus said he must be baptized by John.

When Jesus chose to be baptized, he demonstrated his humanity and connectedness to God's people by joining them at the river to be baptized. Jesus did not single himself out to be baptized alone but chose to be baptized by John with a community of believers. Jesus was part of the community, so anyone could be included in the community of God.

God spoke to Jesus during his baptism and showed a deep sense of joy and happiness in Jesus. God finds happiness in each of us too. The voice from heaven was a voice for all.

We spent some time talking about Jesus when he was a young boy and how Mary was so upset when she lost Jesus as they were traveling with family, going home and Jesus was nowhere to be found. They had to go back to the city, where she found Jesus at the temple listening to the priest. As a mom, we all know how upset Mary was to have lost her son.

Be with us Sunday as we explore more of Jesus' young life. See you Sunday!

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.

Chair Yoga

Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 a.m.

Sunday Breakfast

Sunday at 10 a.m.

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

