

St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jan. 17th, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 127th year

The Book of Revelation

Friday's Word



The final decision at the Council of Hippo in 397 was to include the *Book of Revelation* in the canon of the Bible.

It was a mistake.

After that, it has been hard to get Christians to listen to the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels.

Our natural inclination is toward revenge, and the *Book of Revelation* is a book of vengeance. In it, both God and his Son are

rough customers.

God pours out bowls of wrath on the earth and sends fire and earthquakes.

And Jesus rides in on a white horse with a sword in his mouth and cuts off the heads of his enemies.

And that's it.

That's the *undoing* of the image of God we have in the Gospels.

That wipes out the essential teaching of Jesus—that God loves us, even if we are the worst of sinners. For God loves God's enemies.

Jesus says God is "kind to the ungrateful and to the wicked."

So, Christians face a choice: They must choose bowls of wrath or grace.

They must choose a Jesus who cuts off heads or dies for us on the cross.

They can't have both.

And many Christians, particularly evangelicals, choose the image of God from *Revelation*.

That tells us why a political figure who is all about vengeance has the support of so many people who claim to follow Jesus Christ.

That politician was once asked to name his favorite verse of scripture.

He said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Yes, the very verse Jesus quoted to say that it was wrong.

And so is that "book of vengeance" in the Bible.

It is wrong about God.

God Bless—MB

saintmatthewumc.com

revmaxb@tx.rr.com

What a Good—COLD—Sunday!

Well—I lied—inadvertently—in last week's newsletter. I said—jokingly—the heat would be working on the cold upcoming Sunday. Of course, it would. It always has been.

But not last Sunday. It wasn't working properly. It got up to 55 degrees in the sanctuary. Everybody kept their coats on and we had a great time.

The heat is being fixed this week.

(Fortunately, the rest of the church was warm.)

This Sunday

I always wind my old grandfather clock in my living room every Sunday. I was doing so last Sunday evening and was suddenly fascinated by the thing that provides the power that keeps it running. And I decided what I want to preach on this Sunday. My scripture is the story of Jesus casting out an "unclean spirit" (Luke 4:31-37). My sermon title is "The Source of Power."

Mary is gone one more Sunday.

Kristi will be back.

The heat WILL be on.

Expect a time of joyful worship.

God bless—MB

Do NOT forget the great breakfast Winston prepares for us every week—10:30 before worship. It has become a great time of fellowship.

See you at breakfast.

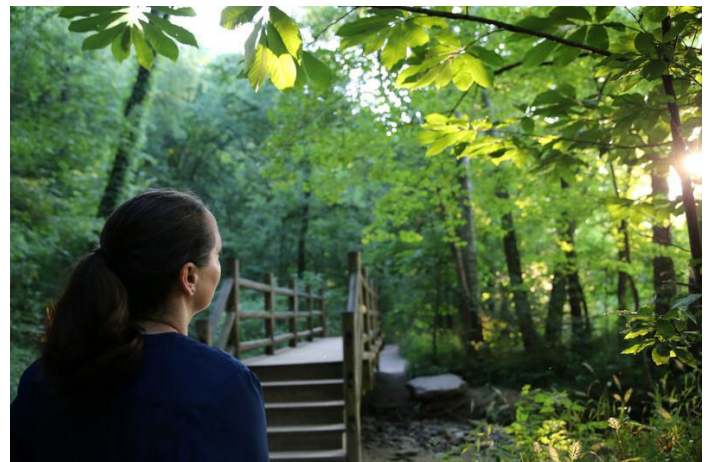


Photo illustration by Kathleen Barry, United Methodist Communications

Mary's Corner



Hello from Marsh Harbor!! I pray that you are all warm and safe. I watched you shiver Sunday morning during the service and I am grateful to the many of you who showed up AND stayed for the service. Please, please reach out to me or to Max if you need anything during this inclement weather. We do not want anyone to suffer needlessly if the church can help. I won't trouble you with the weather details from here. I do not want you to experience the cold and being

jealous.

I submitted everything to the Board of Ordained ministry on Saturday about 3pm. I'm sure you heard me shouting with joy. Twelve thousand words, 42 pages, and most of my heart and mind went into that document. I also realized that by answering those 16 questions, I now have the framework for 16 sermons. I will interview in March and have my results very quickly after the interviews. I cannot tell you how very much I appreciate your prayers and support. I would not have completed all of this without you.

Love to all, Mary
pastor@saintmatthewumc.com

2023 Record of Giving

Records of Giving are being mailed this week. If you do not receive your Record of Giving by 1/27/2024 please contact the Financial Secretary by phone (817.680.5959) or email (vitekdr@gmail.com)

All Council Meeting

Sunday, February 4th at 12:30 p.m.

Ladies of St. Matthew Luncheon

Thursday, February 8th 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



Kids' News

This Sunday we were ready to follow Jesus as he met his first disciples. Unfortunately, the cold weather kept our kids at home. When I went to church at 9:00 to make coffee, I realized that wind was really cold and couldn't get in the church fast enough. That is when I knew our lesson would continue to take place next week.

I hope we see you in church this Sunday! We will travel with Jesus on the shores of the Galilean Sea.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

Go Beyond.

Harnessing AI for Church Excellence: A Beginner's Guide for Clergy and Laity. Please contact pastor@saintmatthewumc.com if you would like to participate.

2-Session Webinar Series

Harnessing AI for Church Excellence: A Beginner's Guide for Clergy & Laity

SESSION 1: JAN 23 @ 11am & 6pm // SESSION 2: FEB 6 @ 11am & 6pm

Central Texas Conference laity are invited and encouraged to be a part of LEAD 2024: A Four-Part Leadership Training & Development Series for laity in Finance, Trustee, S/PPR and Nominations and Leadership Development roles.

LEAD 2024
LEARN › EQUIP › ACTIVATE › DEPLOY

CENTRAL TEXAS
UNITED METHODISTS

LAITY LEADERSHIP
& TRAINING SERIES

FINANCE - TRUSTEES - S/PPRC - NOMINATIONS & DEVELOPMENT