

St. Matthew Today

Wed., Feb. 7th, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 127th year

Nothing Before Jesus Was Like Jesus

Friday's Word



I came across a book called, "What if the Church Were Christian?"

I haven't read it, but the title speaks to me.

Much of the church is not Christian. This makes me sad, but I guess it is not surprising. Real Christianity does not come naturally.

In fact, it makes no sense to most people: Love your enemies. Pray for those who

persecute you.

Give to those who ask something of you and expect nothing in return.

Turn the other cheek. Go the extra mile.

Forgive—always.

Be merciful—always.

What does God want?

Perfection?

Yes, actually. Jesus said, "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

He knows we can't be perfect. But he sets perfect love for God and for the neighbor as our standard.

Unconditional love is the Christian moral code.

And this moral code was new. There is nothing like it in any other of the ancient religions.

There is nothing like it in any ancient literature.

It came from Jesus.

And Jesus alone.

And it did not sit well with most of those who first heard it. Jesus was too loving. *Too* forgiving.

Furthermore, he lived what he preached. He ate and worked with people who were outside the salvation system.

Tax collectors (for example) were not even candidates for heaven.

Jesus was a danger to the whole social and religious system of his day.

That's why the religious leaders of his day made sure he died an ugly death.

And many Christian leaders would make sure he met the same fate today.

I'll talk more about this Sunday—11:00 a.m.

God Bless—MB

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Board Meeting Last Sunday

We looked at the last year in a board meeting last Sunday and, the truth is, we are doing well.

And we want to keep doing well—or better. So let us remain faithful. Let us continue to reach people with the truth of God's unconditional love for all people.

Worship Last Sunday

"I look forward to finding out how many we had," someone said as they exited. "It looked like a full house." We had 67. Which is a pretty good post-COVID bunch. And we had a good service.

That Communion choir number ("How Beautiful") was particularly lovely. Our small choir makes a powerful sound. It helps to have a great choir director.

Transfiguration Sunday

This is Transfiguration Sunday and the Wednesday after is Ash Wednesday.

Our Ash Wednesday service will start at 7:00 p.m.

"He Shook the Foundations"

I will preach this Sunday—a sermon I am very excited to preach: "He Shook the Foundations." When it is over, I hope we may better understand why the religious leaders wanted Jesus dead. (And if he came back today, most conservative Christians would want the same thing.)

Then Mary will have two Sundays to take us a few more "steps." (Her sermons are following the "Twelve Steps" for addiction recovery.)

Breakfast

First of all—remember that we have it—10:30 every Sunday. Winston—inventor of the Sunday breakfast—wants to cut back to twice a month. Mac and Faith Salfen will take it for the third Sunday. We need someone to take the fourth Sunday each month.

See you Sunday.

Hey! Let's hit 70 some Sunday soon.

God bless—MB



Mary's Corner



Blessings and peace to you in the name of the risen Christ,

I pray that your week is peaceful and that you are dwelling in the Lord. Max preached a great sermon last week, one of his best I believe. It encouraged me and challenged me to always tell the truth. I will be preaching the 18th and 25th in preparation for my March 4th Board of

Ordained Ministry interview. Not sure which part of my responses to their 16 questions will make the best sermon, but I am certain that God will help me choose.

We had a very productive All Council meeting this past Sunday. I want to especially thank those folks who volunteer their time and talent in support of the ministries of Saint Matthew. These meetings are not fun, full of business and lengthy discussions about church operations. Serving on these committees is a noble and faithful contribution to the survival of our church. I am grateful for our volunteers. Special shout out to the person (you know who you are) who helped us find a more affordable electric provider and property insurance policy. The church saved thousands on electricity in 2023 (vendor change happened in April) and will save even more in 2024. It is exciting to see what God is doing at Saint Matthew.

There is a report out this morning stating that cases of influenza are on the rise. I know that the sinus infection I had last week wasn't COVID but I am not certain I didn't have the flu. Either way, the instructions remain the same: wash your hands frequently, stay away from large crowds, stay away from sick people, and stay home if you are feeling ill. If you are at home and need anything, please reach out to us at pastor@saintmatthewumc.com. We check that email daily.

Love to all! Mary
pastor@saintmatthewumc.com

Ladies of St. Matthew

Luncheon on Thursday, February 8th at 11:30 a.m.

Chair Yoga

Free Chair/Standing Yoga class each Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10 a.m.

Sunday Breakfast

A light breakfast is served each Sunday at 10 a.m.

Media Team Volunteers!

Anyone who would like to learn more about what happens behind the scenes for sound and video is encouraged to attend an open training session on Saturday, March 9th at 2pm. Please contact Mel or Jason for more details.

Methodist Discipleship Class

Details coming soon! Over 6 weeks we will meet via Zoom. The class is for those who are new Methodists, or who did not grow up in the church.

Follow us on social media!

Following the church on social media allows members to participate in digital outreach efforts. Share SMUMC posts, invite friends to our events, and contribute to spreading the church's message to a broader audience.

Kids' News

We were blessed with a wonderful group of young people Sunday. We talked about the Sermon on the Mount as a place where Jesus taught his disciples.

We talked at length about the Lord's Prayer. The kids all knew it and we talked about how young they were when they learned this prayer. A couple of the boys said they started repeating this prayer when they were about 2! They all knew that this prayer contains elements Jesus considered important when praying: asking God for guidance in our lives, forgiveness, praise, and thanks.

Did you know that the Lord's Prayer is prayed all over the world and in many languages? It is a famous prayer that has been important to many Christians. This example was provided by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount as a way of teaching his disciples. However, the focus of Jesus' teaching is not so much on a method of prayer as it is on our motivations for prayer and our relationship with God.

As we left church to go to Children's church, we were delighted to learn that a kind member had left a basket of treats on our table! We were all delighted that someone was kind enough to leave these treats. I want to extend a big "Thank You" to this kind person. You should have witnessed the delight of the kids when they discovered your thoughtfulness!

During class, they all picked an 8x10 canvas picture to paint as a Valentine gift to give to the person of their choice. We are blessed with the kindness of your kids! See you Sunday.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

Lent begins Feb. 14 and runs until March 28

Ash Wednesday - February 14th

Palm Sunday - March 24th

Maundy Thursday - March 28th

Good Friday - March 29th

Easter Sunday - March 31st

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

