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# St. Matthew Today

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Wed., Mar. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 127<sup>th</sup> year

## A Misconception

### Friday's Word



The late John Shelby Spong, Episcopal Bishop, was a skeptic. He asked of the Resurrection:

*Do bodies dead for 36 hours resuscitate and walk out of graves?*

*Do these revived bodies have working vocal cords allowing them to speak? Do they have a functioning skeletal system so that they can walk?*

*And how can such a body walk through walls with locked doors and barred windows?*

Clearly, Bishop Spong thought the Christian claim for Resurrection meant a resuscitated corpse. And he did not believe in that.

I don't either.

But Bishop Spong had no other concept. And I suspect many (or most) Christians share the same misconception.

A resuscitated corpse would simply put Jesus right back in the world.

Flesh and blood again—someday to die again.

Is this what *you* believe?

Have you ever really *thought* about it?

This is where the image on the Shroud of Turin becomes a vital witness.

For those who are willing to think about what they believe, the image on the Shroud presents a powerful picture.

The Shroud image records a *physical event that left physical forensic evidence*.

Jesus did not resuscitate. His body transformed.

It dematerialized in a quantum physics event.

It returned to the spiritual state from which it had come.

The cloth fell through the body, recording x-ray-like images of the bones in the hands and the sockets for the teeth.

A life-sized replica of the Shroud will feature in our Good Friday service two weeks from today.

Light supper at 6:15.

Worship at 7:00.

## God Bless—MB

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#### Got New Shoes

I Know.

That's not worth a headline. But I bought my last shoes before COVID! It's hard for me to choose new shoes because I have feet problems. My feet look fine. In fact, a foot doctor once told me I had great looking feet. (It's a shame my best feature is on the wrong end.) But my feet don't work that well. The good news is—my new shoes help. You can tell I must be excited about that—because I'm talking about my shoes!!

Of all things.

#### Breakfast

I told you last week we would not have breakfast because Winston was out. Turned out, we had a huge breakfast this last Sunday—and not enough people to eat it—because I said we would not have it.

Shame on me.

#### This Sunday

Sermon: "The Cross Is an X-Ray"

It is the sermon I had planned to preach last week but I changed it to address Mary's situation.

Mary will be moving on with her ministry.

Uninterrupted. Undeterred.

Mary will be back this Sunday.

#### Two Sundays Till Palm Sunday

And Palm Sunday dinner and then Holy Week. And then—you guessed it—Easter.

See you in worship.

See what would happen if everybody decided to come to church on the same Sunday.

Let's do that this Sunday.

God bless—MB

By the way, this Sunday we will sing Love, Mercy, and Grace—not a big deal to most of you, but it was this congregation's favorite hymn when I came here 100 years ago.

AND—remember to bring those plastic eggs and candy for the Easter egg hunt for our children.



# Mary's Corner



Hello dearest church family,

I listened in on Sunday to Max's sermon, not knowing that it was written to me! I am grateful for his honesty and for his compassion. And I am more than grateful for the reminders of what Paul said, "we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed" (2Cor4:8-9) and "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2Cor4: 18).

I will write here, for all the world to see, what happened in my ordination interview. Please understand that I do not need or want to discuss any of this. I only want you to know what happened. I walked into the interview on March 4th expecting it to be like by District Committee on Ministry interviews, collegial and supportive. The trouble with that expectation is that the Board of Ordained Ministry interview is not designed for that purpose. The BOM interview is an examination of the quality and character of the individual applying for ordination. It is an intense review of one's understanding of theology, of United Methodist doctrine and polity, and of the sacred sacraments of baptism and communion. There are other questions as well, but I will admit to you that these are the areas where I struggled. To be completely transparent with you, they asked the questions, and I gave answers that did not meet the standards of a person seeking ordination. I did not adequately prepare myself for the situation. I have been out of school for 6 years and even though I have spent much time preparing for this single interview, I was not ready for it. No excuses either. I had many folks offering to help me, and I did not ask for help from any of them.

My journey to ordination is complicated. It is taking longer than I wanted and, at times, seems like torture. My dear friend and colleague Cantrice Robinson asked me that very evening, "is it fair to put a time limit on God?" She did not know at that moment of the outcome of my ordination interview. But she knows that heart of God. She knows that God's time is not our time. She knows that God's steps are not measured in human understanding. Reverend Cantrice Robinson reminded me that I am not called to the UMC, I am called to share the gospel of the risen Christ to a world that is dying. Today I have hope. Tomorrow is another day, and I will try to have this same hope again tomorrow.

When you see me Sunday, do not feel pity for me. I actually would like to forget this entire thing; except for the part where I work harder to be ready for whatever God has in store for me. I do not want to discuss any of it. I want you to know that my commitment to St. Matthew has not wavered in the least. We will wait together for that time when General Conference makes their decisions about the service of LGBTQ persons within the UMC framework. Until then, we do not have anything to do except love God, love our neighbors and love each other.

I look forward to seeing you this weekend. I missed you, Mary  
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# Kids' News

It appears that Spring Break from school has taken our kids out of town! We missed you this Sunday as we were studying the Passover meal.

The Passover meal is celebrated each year to mark the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. The Passover meal with Jesus would be different, but they did not know that. During the meal, Jesus gave thanks for the bread and broke it and then took the cup and blessed it. Jesus used the bread and the cup, everyday items, to remind the disciples of His Body (the bread) and His Blood (the cup) given for them and for us. They have become symbols in our church today. Symbols of God's love in Christian churches.

During Communion, we recite the familiar words, "Do this in remembrance of Me". And share the bread and cup to remember the life and death of Jesus. We all might practice and participate communion differently; however, we can remember Jesus and His example by simply sharing a meal. Whether we share a meal with friends and family or come forward to receive the elements in worship, we have the opportunity to remember.

On Easter Sunday, we have a big celebration in the way of an Easter egg hunt right before church! Be sure to remind Dad and Mom to get you to church early!! When I arrived home from church last Sunday, I found a big box filled with eggs that contained monster trucks, dinosaurs, puppies, army men, teddy bears, puppies, bugs, bubbles and Mom's favorite, slime!! Of course these will also be filled with candy for your hunt!! Last year, the kids took the plastic eggs home, so we need donations of plastic eggs and small individually wrapped candy to fill all our eggs with sweets!

Can you help us by donating plastic eggs or candy we can use for our kids? Just drop it off in our room any time before Easter!

Thanks for your help...

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

## Scheduled Giving

You can make a special gift or automate monthly giving to Saint Matthew from your checking account or credit / debit card. Contributions in any amount help us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the community and the world.

"Gain all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can." - John Wesley

Scan the QR code with your phone's camera or visit our website  
<https://saintmatthewumc.com/give>

