

# St. Matthew Today

Wed., Apr. 24th, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128<sup>th</sup> year

## No Bowls of Wrath

### Friday's Word



I remember an old Nichols and May routine from the 60s.

Mike Nichols played a man desperate to make a call on his one and only dime. Elaine May was the telephone operator.

He said to her, "Please don't jiggle something with your elbow and make me lose my dime."

She replied, "Sir, we don't work with our elbows."

I heard a preacher reading from *Revelation* the other day—the lines about God pouring bowls of wrath on humankind.

God doesn't work with bowls of wrath.

I used to play the preacher game: Try to find something good to say about *Revelation*.

It's in the Bible! It's part of the canon!

Yes—and a theologically useless book. Tell it like it is. It's a mess.

And it was not written by the author of the gospel and letters of John.

Unlike them, it is written in very poor Greek.

The worst thing about *Revelation* is that it contradicts the teaching of Jesus that we are to love our enemies for God loves his enemies.

In *Revelation*, God hates his enemies and treats them with unspeakable cruelty.

Like pouring bowls of wrath on them.

It has Jesus riding in on a white horse cutting off the heads of sinners.

We all know what Jesus does. He dies for sinners. All of us.

It is *impossible* to affirm the content of *Revelation* and also affirm what Jesus taught us about God.

The God we know in Christ is the only God there is. And God doesn't work with bowls of wrath.

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Special Giving Week.

Help with *Friday's Word*.

*God Bless—MB*

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### A Tour Through History

Connie (Owensby) Eley reminds me I left out a lot of the joy in my run through the history of our congregation's 128 years. That youth group in the late 60s and early 70s filled two rows in church every week. Her brother, our beloved Hubert Owensby, who passed last year, was a youth leader.

I also neglected to tell you that the folks still here in the early 80s when I came as pastor were fiercely loyal to this church—and very proud of St. Matthew.

This church has survived on love.

But I also wanted you to know that love alone won't do it if we have no way to reach out to the world with that love.

*Friday's Word* (or something like it) is still absolutely essential to the ongoing life of this church. We have lost a lot of people through death in the last three years. If you omit from our congregation the people we have gained through *Friday's Word* during that time, *we would have to be considered a dying church*.

Why?—because we would be.

As long as we think of this as "Max's project," we are missing the point. This is our project.

Many once-large churches are gone from the East Side. We are still here. Let us give thanks.

### Breakfast this Sunday

A "Bring It Sunday." I'll bring something.

Let's have breakfast together—10:30 a.m.

### Sunday's Sermon

Sermon Sunday: *That Great Getting' Up Mornin'*

I may sing a solo—if no one stops me.

### Special Giving Sunday

You may give extra this Sunday if you are able. If you are not able, do not do so. The Lord will provide.

### God Bless—MB

Prayer for our members who are ill. We miss you and think of you often. Our love to Tracy Maxwell.



# Mary's Corner



Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Sunday was a very tender day for many of us. It was a day of profound grief and immeasurable joy. I have discovered that both emotions bring me to tears and so Sunday was a very, very tender day. I was not alone in shedding tears of sadness over the loss of Julie M. Julie and Tracy have

been a major force in our church, always generous with their time and talents. And, I saw many of you with "leaking eyes" when Anna and Tyler stood at the back as evidence of God's miracles in our lives. Our family is forever grateful to you for your prayers and for those of you able to sit vigil as Anna healed from her illness.

It is strange to be in the "bittersweet" as we were yesterday, but I am wondering if we are not always living there. We never lose the grief that accompanies loss in our lives and we can always find a miracle in our lives if we look close enough. I think that is what being Easter People means. We are able to see the miracle in the presence of great sorrow. We can do so because we are God's beloved children and we are never alone no matter where the pendulum is swinging.

I enjoyed Max's history lesson on Sunday. It is wonderful to belong to a congregation with so much history. And I am thankful that a newspaper article is the beginning for many folks. I also know that even if the newspaper brings people in, it is you, our loving and caring congregation, who keep people coming back. Saint Matthew has been revived several times in its history and we may face the need for a more modern intervention soon. But, the heart of our Lord joined to the heart of all of you keeps this church alive.

I am one of those "newspaper" people who wandered into St. Matthew after seeing the Meadowbrook News. But it isn't any newspaper that keeps me coming back. It isn't even my job there as associate pastor. I keep coming back, my family keeps coming back because of you. We love you dearly, Mary.

## 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>



# Kids' News

This week we had a nice lesson about a community of believers who worked together for the good of everyone in their community. They held everything in common—meaning that they shared and looked out for one another.

By doing this, they created a community where no one was needy. They even sold their properties and houses to add to the wealth of the community. Their shared resources were managed by the apostles, who distributed them to those in need. This was not mandatory, but people did this to share and honor God. Sharing was a way of showing love and friendship.

As Christians today, we are called to share what we have with those in need. Sharing is hard sometimes for kids. It can also be hard for adults as we might feel ill-equipped or unable to help those who need the most. We often want to hold close to the things we have worked hard for.

This story reminded me of our very own Mr. Bill Parker, who donates so much time and energy to Eastside Ministries. We all have a chance to help Bill by donating our good used clothing to Eastside. They are always in need of donations of food and clothing.

I learned that they give out sack lunches, lots of bottled water, and boxes of food donated to them by stores to those in need. If you would like to volunteer to help Eastside Ministries, they could use your help — see Mr. Parker at church on Sunday for more information.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

## General Conference

As General Conference finally approaches (April 23-May 3), please consider adding prayers for our annual conference delegates, the Council of Bishops, and all the communications and support staff who will spend countless hours producing our worldwide event into your prayer time.

## Special Giving Sunday

If you are able, we will collect a special offering on Sunday, May 5 to help with our church finances. Your giving is entirely private. There is never any pressure in giving.

## New Study: Near-Death Experiences

Sunday mornings from 9:50 - 10:30 am  
Starting after Easter, Jackie Brennan will conduct a 6-week study of near-death experiences.

## 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.

## Sunday Breakfast

Served at 10:00 am in Fellowship Hall

## Chair/Standing Yoga

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