

St. Matthew Today

Wed., May 8th, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128th year

Free at Last! Free at Last!

Friday's Word



Kerry was having a severe allergic reaction. She called her wife, then rushed toward the elevator to get to the hospital.

She died in the hallway.

She then found herself headed toward a white, limitless Light. A loving and gentle force drew her toward it. But her journey was interrupted.

She was stopped by her deceased grandparents. They were luminous and beautiful, and she knew them immediately.

They wanted to tell her they were sorry. They now knew something they had not known in the world. Her family had caused her to live her life in fear.

Her family and her church had told her she was going to hell for being gay. She rejoiced that they now accepted her.

But her grandparents had some bad news for her. It was not her time.

Kerry wanted to stay in this abundant love. She wanted to get to the Light.

And she did.

There before God, "in deepest humility," Kerry said, "I uttered seven words: 'I'm gay, will you still love me?'"

God's words to her changed everything: "You are my child. I love you, I love you, I love you. Go back and tell them."

That's what she has been doing, as have other gay people who have had near-death experiences.

Just this last week, the United Methodist Church at its General Conference got out of the hate business. We removed the anti-gay words placed in our Book of Discipline in 1972.

The chains that bound us have been broken. "Free at last, free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Free to live the Gospel of God's unconditional love for all people.

Let us rejoice!

God Bless—MB

saintmatthewumc.com

revmaxb@tx.rr.com

The Perfect Sunday

It may have been—perfect.

It was a fitting, moving, and festive celebration of our deliverance from those ugly words in the Book of Discipline declaring a malicious falsehood: that being gay is "incompatible" with Christian faith.

Mary preached and consecrated the elements for Communion.

Mary preached a fine sermon—and she preached from the high pulpit for the first time. (I forgot to tell her that, when she is up there, the fan in the north transept must be turned on. Otherwise—it's hot!)

Julian sang *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*—and got another standing ovation.

It was a great day.

Our Special Offering

Our special offering Sunday (to get us through a tight spot) was over \$11,000. We give thanks.

This offering will do two things, one immediate, the other later. It will help get us through our tight month (May) and later, it will help us meet our obligations at the end of the year.

I depend on the people of this church always coming through.

And the people of this church always come through. We lift our praise to the Lord.

Breakfast this Sunday

It's a "We-Bring Sunday."

I'll bring "pigs-in-a croissant."

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

Ascension Sunday this week

Then Pentecost.

Sermon This Sunday: The Great Miscalculation

We are in prayer for those who are ill and those who have lost loved ones.

See You Sunday. (Just do your best.)

God Bless—MB

BY THE WAY—we have a big dinner a week from Sunday—on Pentecost. Get ready to bring.



Mary's Corner



Greetings in the name of the Risen Christ! I am still giggling in joy over the events of the past two weeks. I am especially joyful over the great service we had Sunday morning. Julian's song was perfection. And, once again, you continue to overwhelm me with love. It was so wonderful to feel your joy as well. We can spend a bit of time reveling in our freedom and then we will

get together to make a strategic plan for getting back to the business of loving other people. You may remember last November that Bishop Saenz laid out the plan for fulfilling our mission as the new United Methodist Church. I look forward to working on this with you.

Please remember the family of Julian Rodriguez in your prayers. Julian sang for us Sunday. He called me this morning to tell me his mother passed away suddenly. Julian is the oldest of his siblings also and will need special strength as he helps them navigate this difficult time. We will have the funeral at the church. Julian has a large family, and they will provide their own food; however, I told them we would set up the fellowship hall for them. I will provide more details as they become available.

Blessings to all, and my undying love, Mary

Kids' News

This Sunday we learned about one of my very favorite ladies in the Bible! Maybe you have heard of her. Tabitha was her name. She was one of the poorest ladies in the town of Joppa. In Bible times, women were completely dependent on men for their survival. If a woman's husband died, the woman's life took a drastic turn for the worst. Women were not allowed to own property, so if the husband died, they would be at the mercy of others to be able to live. Tabitha somehow had the resources to sew for others who were less fortunate.

Unfortunately, Tabitha became very sick and died. When the other disciples heard about Tabitha's death, they sent for Peter. Peter went right over and went upstairs where Tabitha's body lay. Many community members were there, crying and showing one another tunics and other clothing Tabitha had made. The presence of the community showed how dedicated Tabitha was to love and serve others.

Peter asked the people to leave the room, and he knelt down and prayed. Peter commanded Tabitha to get up, and she opened her eyes and sat up. Her friends were astounded and overjoyed at the same time. Through this story, we can learn that the exchange of loving gestures is part of being in the community of believers. See you in church.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

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.

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>

