

# St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jul 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128<sup>th</sup> year

## Did God Kill Them?



### Friday's Word

Luke's work, his Gospel and *Acts*, are among my favorite things in the Bible. But there is a story in *Acts* which may give us pause.

The early Christians in Jerusalem sold all their possessions and gave it to the church. They lived a communal life. (*Acts* 4:32)

Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land and gave part of the money to the church.

But they told the church they gave all of it.

Somebody found out and Peter confronted Ananias.

"How could you do this? Peter asked him. "You did not lie to us. You lied to God."

And as soon as Peter said this, Ananias dropped dead at Peter's feet. Peter called on some young men to carry the body away.

Later that day Sapphira came in, not knowing her husband was dead.

Peter asked her if she and her husband had sold their land for a certain sum of money.

"Yes," she said, "that was the price."

"You have schemed together to test the Spirit of the Lord," Peter told her.

"Look over there," he said. "You will see the young men who buried your husband. They will carry you out, too." And Sapphira dropped dead at Peter's feet, just as her husband had.

And, we are told, "great fear seized the whole church." Yes, I think it would.

The implication is that God killed Ananias and his wife for lying about their offering.

I have a question for you—and I need answers from a lot of people. This is for my sermon a week from this Sunday.

Question: Did God kill Ananias and Sapphira?

Please give a reason for your answer.

My e-mail address is below.

*God Bless—MB*

[saintmatthewumc.com](http://saintmatthewumc.com)  
[revmaxb@tx.rr.com](mailto:revmaxb@tx.rr.com)

### At Last—NDE Study Begins

My sister, Jacke, will begin a four-week study of near-death experiences this Sunday at 9:45. It will conclude each week at 10:30, just as breakfast begins.

These lessons will be encouraging, reminding us that life goes on after death. We will get a look at what heaven is like as well as insight into the depth of God's love for us.

I will be sitting in and may chime in occasionally.

During the study, several members of our church will share their near-death experiences and glimpses of life beyond this one.

The class will meet in "The Corner Room—through the door at the southwest corner of the fellowship hall.

When this study concludes, I will begin a continuing study called *The Experience of God*.

One great blessing of these studies is that church members will get to know one another better.

### Breakfast This Sunday

It's a "We-bring Sunday."

I have been confused about this a couple of times lately—asking us to bring when someone was scheduled to do the breakfast. But this Sunday is definitely a "we-bring."

Food and fellowship at 10:30.

### This Sunday

Mary preaches this Sunday.

And Kristi and Blake will be back.

Shannon sang (and played) a beautiful solo last week. Lovely congregational singing, too.

I thought we had a good service.

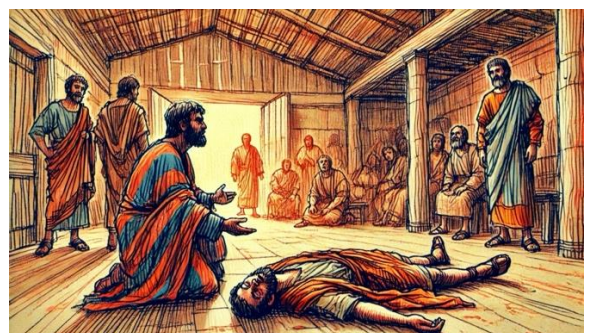
I remind you that the memorial service for Julie Maxwell will be a week from this Saturday—July 20—at 1:00 p.m.

Remember the NDE study.

See you Sunday.

(I do hope to see you.)

*God Bless—MB*





# Mary's Corner

Peace and love to you in the name of the Risen Christ,

It is so good to be Easter People! During this time of grieving, I am deeply comforted by the knowledge that the grave never wins. I know all of you have experienced the loss of someone who was part of the details of your daily life. Your experience brings me comfort and the love surrounding my family is palpable even when I am not in the church with you. I know also that even though you may not be able to speak each other's names easily, your hearts are connected in a sacred place. Being loved the way God loves us makes it easy for us to love each other so fiercely. God spared nothing to regain relationship with God's created and I can feel that kind of commitment in our congregation. We are all moving forward (at various speeds) to fully accepting that we are loved AND forgiven and that God wants nothing more than to be part of our lives.

It is an election year and with this election, there is more fear and anxiety than I have ever noticed before. Our two candidates for president leave something to be desired and the impact of this election will be devastating for some in our country no matter who wins. In the middle of this drama, I know two things are true. First, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Second, the world needs to WITNESS the love of God from people like us. People who know the truth of the Gospel and live it with their hands and feet. A third thing I know is that we must each VOTE and PRAY for God to create a new heart in this nation. Not a political heart, not a capitalistic heart, not an oppressive, oligarchical heart, but a heart where we all begin to care for our neighbors living next to us and living around the world. Lord hear our prayers!

I found out on Sunday morning that Shannon and Julian will be performing "A Night on Broadway" for our delayed concert series.

The program will be at the church, on August 10th. Doors open at 6:30 and the music will begin at 7:00 pm sharp. We will have light snacks afterward and a time of fellowship. There are 3 rules for this concert: 1. Bring a friend(s). 2. Bring a "light snack" for our fellowship afterward. Please sign up on the bulletin board to let everyone know what is being provided. 3. You have to be at church on Sunday morning! A Saturday night concert is not an excuse to skip Sunday church. I am so excited!!!

Love to all, Mary

# Kids' News

In our story today we learned that God created different languages and cultures. We learned that after the flood, all the people on earth were the "clans of Noah's sons." They decided that they wanted to stay together and make a name for themselves, so they built a tower so tall that its top was in the sky. They built it for their glory to keep from being separated. They also built a city around the tower so they could all live together and stay together. But God wants the people to learn that they belong together even if they speak different languages and have different cultures and religions.

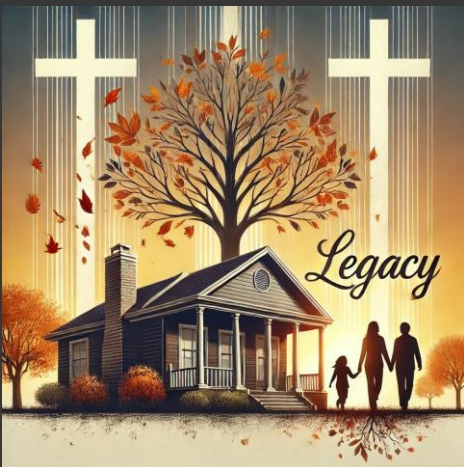
God mixed up their languages and sent them to all areas of earth, in hopes they would accept one another in all their differences. People tell of the mighty works of God in many different languages.

We are exploring belonging through spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are for building up the whole body of Christ. God gave each of us different spiritual gifts.

As we were painting "sun catchers," we could hear you singing. Our sweet little 3 yr. old said "That is grandma singing. I know it is my grandma."

Singing is a spiritual gift that can make others as happy as our little girl. What is your spiritual gift? The story of Babel teaches us that differences are good and God-given. We can use our differences for the benefit of the body of Christ, and our church!

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue



Help us pass on a legacy of spiritual nourishment and community by including Saint Matthew UMC in your estate planning. You can also make a special gift or automate monthly giving from your checking or debit account. Contributions of any amount help us share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the community and the world. Visit [saintmatthewumc.com/give](http://saintmatthewumc.com/give) or [saintmatthewumc.com/info/estate-planning](http://saintmatthewumc.com/info/estate-planning) for more information.

