

# St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jul 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128<sup>th</sup> year

## God IS Love



### Friday's Word

After the news last Sunday around 2:00 p.m. I am filled with hope. I believe we will be okay.

Last Sunday was also a good day in church.

I hope I was clear in my sermon why we can be sure God did NOT kill Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 1- 11)

It's simple.

God loved them just as God loves you and me.

God is never *unloving*.

How do I know?

Jesus tells us so. God is "kind to the ungrateful and to the wicked."

The father in the great parable loved the Prodigal Son just as much when the boy was away and in sin as when he returned home.

God's love does not depend on our behavior.

It is unconditional.

This is one thing that astounds people who have NDEs. They are immersed in a love beyond words—all sins forgiven. "God—*IS—love*." It's as simple as that.

As much as I cherish the book of Acts, the Ananias and Sapphira story is wrong about God.

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Speaking of NDEs, the study is going well. And you can join us—Sunday mornings at 9:45.

Here is a place where you can share those deep experiences you think no one will believe.

The class is also a kind of grief therapy for those who have lost a loved one.

We live forever.

When the NDE study ends, we will move right into an ongoing study of my book about religious experiences, *Discovering God*.

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Our concerts resume in two weeks. Free. (We take an offering.) *A Night on Broadway*.

And join us for worship this Sunday at 11:00. (Or watch online.)

*God Bless—MB*

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### ALL SEEMED BLESSED

Everything last weekend seemed blessed—the service for Julie Maxwell—the new NDE study—and morning worship.

And that solo from Blake—What a Wonderful World. I haven't listened online to it yet, but I plan to. Just about the loveliest thing I have ever heard.

Thanks to all who work so hard around here. The dinner after the memorial service was great. Thanks for Jason's work on the slide show and livestream. Thanks to Mel for his work.

### NDE Study

We had a roomful for the NDE study, with four visitors from outside the church. Sue Kelcey shared her encounter with Jesus during her NDE.

My sister (who is planning the sessions) says that this week the study will be on "The Great Reunion"—our encounter with loved ones during an NDE.

The class will begin with a question: "What do you want when you get to heaven?"

That's at 9:45—over at 10:30 for breakfast.

### Breakfast This Sunday

Veta is bringing this Sunday, but feel free to bring also—and help in the kitchen! With the big NDE class plus others, we are serving some 35 people each week.

Thanks for your help.

Food and fellowship at 10:30.

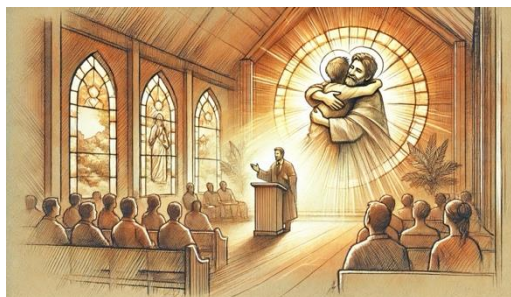
### This Sunday

Mary returns this Sunday—out last week to be with family in West Texas.

She will preach for us in a couple of weeks.

This Sunday I may have the nerve to tell you about an experience I once had with the Lord, if I do, the sermon will be called, "God Said No."

*God Bless—MB*



The upcoming concert is in two weeks — Saturday, August 10, at 6:00 p.m. Shannon and Julian will

take us out for "A Night on Broadway". This will be an exciting concert. Do NOT miss it. (Light dinner after.)



# Mary's Corner

Good Wednesday to all,  
I am back from my many recent travels.

This last trip to Lubbock to celebrate the 7<sup>th</sup> birthday of my great-niece Ady. I am telling you all these details because 7 years ago this church prayed for this baby girl who was born at 20 weeks and overcame tremendous odds to survive. It is your prayers and faithfulness that my family depended on during those 6 months that Ady was in the NICU. Please remember that the prayers of a faithful believer are powerful. This is one of the reasons we pray for each other, because through these prayers we tap into the healing power of the Holy Spirit. I also believe that prayer connects us to each other. The Holy Spirit that dwells with us and never leaves us is ONE spirit, not a bunch of individual spirits. It is the ever present, always loving, presence of God in our lives. The touch of this kind of supernatural love binds us together as children of God. When you bow your head in prayer, or whisper a prayer under your breath, you are never praying alone. Faithful people are praying with you and for you. And even when we are not consciously praying, the Lord is aware and listening to our thoughts. I can remember a time in my life when praying was separate from everything else that I did. When I was young, my family had "prayer circle" at night in our living room. We all sat on the floor, holding hands, taking turns praying. The habit was helpful. Now that I am older, it seems I am constantly in conversation with God. Asking silly questions, "what do you think, Lord" and "where are you today, Lord"? It is really strange that I rarely bow my head and close my eyes for prayer anymore except when I'm in church, or before a meal. My scheduled prayer time is now that constant conversation with God.

I am grateful for your love and your commitment to Saint Matthew United Methodist Church. I was incredibly pleased to see that this past Sunday there were 69 people in attendance. Our numbers are moving back to pre-COVID levels very quickly. Blessings to all. Mary

# Kids' News

Our story this Sunday was very interesting. Jesus had been traveling through Samaria with his disciples. It was around noon and Jesus was hot and tired. He sat down by a well to rest and hoped for a drink of water.

Soon, a Samaritan woman came to the well for water. Usually, no one came to the well at noon because it was the hottest part of the day. She did not want her neighbors to see her, because they were unkind to her. Jesus spoke to the woman. She was surprised because Jews and Samaritans did not speak to one another.

Jesus said to her, "Give me to drink".

Then the woman said, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?"

Jesus answered, "If you knew who saith to you "Give me to drink" thou would have asked him, and he would give you living water."

Jesus talked with this woman for some time and told her all that he knew about her life. Jesus revealed to her that he was the Messiah she had heard about. The woman's faith was so great that she ran into the city to tell people to come and hear what Jesus had to teach. Many believed because of what the woman said.

The main takeaway of this story is that everyone is accepted by God, no matter who she or he is. With God, it doesn't matter what you have done, where you are from, or how different you are from others, we can all find our spiritual gifts through Jesus. See you in church

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue



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You can help us pass on a legacy of spiritual nourishment and community by including Saint Matthew UMC in your estate planning. Learn more about estate planning on our website. [saintmatthewumc.com/info/estate-planning](http://saintmatthewumc.com/info/estate-planning)

