

# St. Matthew Today

Wed., Aug 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128<sup>th</sup> year

## *The Gospel Is Inclusive*



### Friday's Word

Someone asked me, "If you lived in a small town and the only church in town was conservative, would you go to church?"

Well—perhaps.

But I would not be quiet. So, I might cause a bit of a fuss. Because the Gospel is not "conservative." And when someone tells me they are conservative, I am tempted to ask them, "Who are you leaving out?"

"Who do you think is beneath you, not worthy of your love?"

For white people when I was growing up, it was often people of color.

It still is for some.

But add to the list: immigrants, gay people, Muslims, Jews, anyone different.

"Conservatives" tend to be *exclusive*.

The Gospel is *inclusive*.

The Gospel proclaimed by Jesus declares God's love for *all* people, *equally*.

No one is excluded.

The love Jesus teaches is *unconditional, unmerited*.

Jesus specifically tells us to love people who do not love us. He says only this kind of love gets a reward.

And God does not play favorites. Muslims are loved just as much as Christians.

Immigrants have the same value as the native-born.

*Everyone* is made in the image of God. *Everyone* belongs to God. And everyone will be treated with the same love by God.

This is controversial talk in many churches—"conservative" churches.

You may be in such a church—and that's fine.

But don't be quiet.

When you hear others demean gay people or immigrants or people of other faiths—speak up!

It may cause a little fuss.

But it's worth it.

Evil triumphs when love is silent.

### Catching Up

I was about to tell you Sunday morning when something distracted me: Tracy Maxwell has been in the hospital with a serious infection after a cat bite. We hope to see Tracy this Sunday. We have missed him.

Bill Parker is home but still recovering. It will take some time for Bill to feel up to par again, which means we will continue to miss Bill and Linda for a while longer.

Carol Bennett had her second knee surgery this week, so she will be out for a bit, too.

We had a fine service last Sunday—or at least it seemed so to me. Blake's solo was glorious.

### NDE Class

My sister has pulled out two of the most remarkable life review accounts we have ever come across—both from the same NDE—of a person with the unlikely name of Tom Sawyer (nothing to do with Mr. Twain). This material will give us great insight into how God wants us to live—and should provoke some good discussion.

Class at 9:45—followed by breakfast.

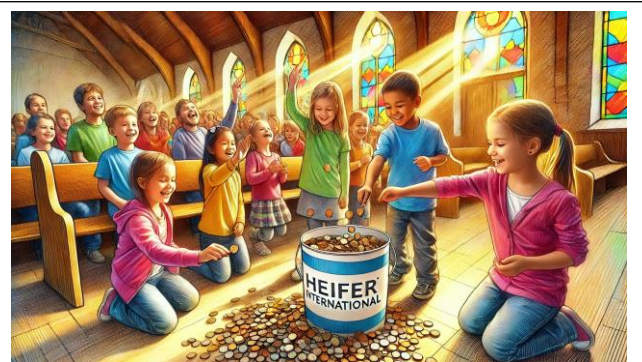
### Speaking of Breakfast

Mark and Connie Ely are bringing food, and Brian McCosky will add to it. Feel free to help.

Food and fellowship at 10:30.

It is, as I write this, very late on Monday—now Tuesday morning. Got to go to bed.

See you in church. Do come—if you can.



### Drop your coins in the bucket!

We're deeply moved by the generosity shown in support of our kids' Heifer International charity campaign, which helps families lift themselves out of poverty through livestock, resources, and training. Our work isn't done yet—continue contributing. Every donation, big or small, helps us reach our goal of empowering families to build a brighter future.

*God Bless—MB*

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# Mary's Corner

Greetings dear friends and family of Saint Matthew UMC,

I want to begin by telling you all that I am so very moved by your response to our new children's project of raising money to help those less fortunate. Your response Sunday morning was phenomenal. The children ended up

collecting \$198 in change and small bills. For those of you who placed large bills in the bucket, I'm grateful for you. In the next few weeks, we will have newly decorated buckets, and we will have one large bucket for each child who comes to church.

I also want to tell you that our project with Bill J. Elliott Elementary School is off to a roaring start. We delivered quite a few pairs of undergarments to the school, and I have just been informed that the socks are already starting to show up at the church for our next event with the school. Your generous hearts are the perfect example of a follower of Jesus Christ putting action to their faith. We will have information very soon about a warm coat drive. This drive will include sweaters, hooded sweatshirts, coats, and warm mittens. Connie Michael is our liaison to the school, and we are grateful for her work. I am excited by the many new connections we are making in our community. I'm also very excited about the work that we continue to do that we've always done. I know that a couple of our anonymous angels reached out to Charlotte Holder Sunday afternoon just to make sure that she had everything she needed. I was able to visit with Bill and Linda Parker that same afternoon. Bill is still recovering and still telling those same dad jokes that he always tells. We look forward to the day when Bill and Linda are back with us in worship.

By the time you read this letter, I will either be in the middle of or just finished with my interview with the District Committee on Ministry. You are all aware that the Board of Ordained Ministry opted for me to wait before being approved for ordination as a provisional elder in the United Methodist Church. I was devastated by that decision last March, but from where I stand today, it was one of the greatest blessings of my life this year. The work that would have been involved in being a provisional elder in the UMC is more than I would have been able to complete successfully given the events of 2024. I look forward to talking with DCoM on Thursday, and to interviewing with the board again next March. Your prayers and your support are absolutely vital to my success.

These horrid temperatures and the unsafe conditions they create will remain with us for the foreseeable future. It looks like it may not even be safe to go outdoors during the day before September. I also want you to be aware that mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus have been found in our neighborhood, making dusk also an unsafe time to be outdoors. Please try to remain indoors as much as you can over the next couple of weeks. I look forward to being outdoors with you in the fall, maybe even having a cookout or an outdoor worship service sometime in October. Speaking of October, on October 13th, Texas Health Fort Worth Faith Community Nursing will be at Saint Matthew from 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM giving flu vaccines. The vaccines are not the senior dose of the flu vaccine; we will not have any supply of the senior vaccine. However, we will have plenty of regular flu vaccines for those folks in the congregation who want to receive a free flu shot. We will also be sharing this event with the elementary school for the parents to come and be vaccinated at our congregation. More to come as we will need volunteers to help with setup and managing the traffic I'm hoping we have that morning.

My love to all of you and wishes for a cold front to come sooner rather than later into our lives,  
Mary

# Kids' News

This week, our story focused on Mary, who shows great courage. Jesus and his disciples traveled to Bethany, the home of his good friend Lazarus, and his sisters, Martha and Mary. They were to host a dinner for Jesus. While Martha served the meal to the guests, Mary took a large amount of expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet. She then wiped his feet dry with her hair. The whole house was filled with the aroma of the perfume.

Mary's actions in this story are deeply courageous. She used perfume that cost a year's wages to anoint Jesus' feet and lovingly rubbed it in. In Jewish culture, it was not customary for a



woman to touch a man who was not her husband in public. After anointing his feet, Mary let down her hair to dry them, which was uncommon for women in public. Any of these acts could have been dangerous for her.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples who often stole money, was angry that she was "wasting" the perfume. However, Mary's loving act was a way of honoring Jesus, and Jesus acknowledged it. Courage can look different to various people, and we show courage when we follow God. Being faithful sometimes means doing the unexpected. Because Mary loved Jesus, she bravely anointed his feet, even though it was risky.

We would also like to extend a big "Thank you" to everyone who contributed with our kids to Heifer International. We will buy several animals to help those less fortunate live better lives. See you in church on Sunday!  
Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

## Did you know?

We offer online giving through PayPal. Your gift can be drawn directly from a checking or debit account on any schedule you choose. Gifts of any amount help us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout our community and the world via our online ministry.

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