
St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jan 1st, 2025

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 129th year

First Sunday of a New Year



Friday's Word

Some time back I asked you to let me know you were still reading this little box each Friday.

It's an expensive project. I don't want to keep talking if no one is there.

I got a big response—too many e-mails to answer, but I read them all. We have signed the contract with the *Star-Telegram* for 2025.

Thanks for your support.

The church in America is in trouble. It is time for honesty. The lies Christians tell turn thinking people away from faith.

The biggest lie is that the Bible is infallible. It isn't. And anyone who can read knows this.

The value of the Bible is not in its perfection. The value is in the truth of its message. And the Bible is not all equally true.

Let's stop pretending that the *Book of Revelation* has anything to do with Jesus. It doesn't.

It is a book filled with blood and vengeance. It *undermines* Jesus at every turn. Preachers need to stop piously defending this vengeful work in defense of "the canon."

"Oh, it's in the canon. We must be true to the canon!"

No! It is time to be true to the teachings of Jesus—the *unique* teachings of Jesus.

And it is time for preachers to proclaim that uniqueness. I was in theology school for years. Not one of my teachers mentioned the uniqueness of the message of Jesus.

Jesus was the first person in all the world to tell us to love our enemies because God loves his enemies.

Jesus was the first person ever to get God right.

And you are in for another year of me pushing a God of unconditional love for all people.

Happy New Year!

God Bless—MB

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Max's Corner

Prayers for Our People

KEITH BUTTERFIELD, about to turn 98, was not answering his door. Doug Kelcey called for a wellness check, and Keith was discovered in poor condition and rushed to the hospital. He remains seriously ill. We ask the Lord's help in getting Keith through this.

MAC SALFEN continues his treatments and is continually on our hearts and in our prayers.

ED HJORTH continues his recovery after hip surgery. He hopes to graduate from his wheelchair to his walker soon. Ed, our love is with you and Carol.

CAROLYN BELL is a bit short on energy but doing well for 93. She sends her love.

Our Christmas Season

We had some joyful services, all well attended. (We had 100 on Christmas Eve.) Thanks to Blake and our extraordinary musicians for glorious music.

Forty-three Years

On January 19, I will complete my 43rd year as pastor of St. Matthew. No need to take any special notice. But when I hit the 45 mark, we can have a shindig. Just don't expect me to dance.

This is the richest time of my ministry. My greatest blessing is that I have been allowed to continue well past the mandatory retirement age of 72.

I am determined that my book be published before the end of 2025. I will be working hard on it.

We will resume the Discovering God class on January 19—10:45 every Sunday.

Mary Preaches Sunday

Mary's ordination will come this year. This will require a MONTH of celebration. She will preach for us again this Sunday.

And by the way, until January 6, it is still the Christmas Season. Sunday is Day 12. Get out of the way of those 12 drummers drumming.

God Bless—MB



Mary's Corner

I bring you good tidings of great joy! A Savior is born and remains with us. It has been difficult to look around and find joy very often this past year. Most of you will be reading this on January 1, 2025—the beginning of a new year and

our hope that 2025 will be better. As I said on Sunday, the calendar is completely oblivious to our trauma and grief. The calendar has no idea what makes us happy or sad. We are what changes. We are where hope can be found! So yes, January 1 is the beginning of a new calendar, but we get to have new hope every day. God's mercy is new every morning. My prayer is to be better in 2025. My prayer is to be more because people will need more. My prayer is to love more because love is in a battle against hate in our world, and I want love always to win.

I visited Keith Butterfield tonight in the hospital. His son Bruce was with him and has been all day. Keith missed church Sunday morning, and several of you asked about him. Doug Kelcey sent a friend on Sunday to check on Keith, thankfully, because Keith was very ill and needed transport to the hospital. Keith is at Texas Health HEB Hospital. The address is 1600 Hospital Parkway, Bedford, Texas 76022. Call before you drive over to make sure he is still there: 817-848-4000. You can get his room number from the hospital operator. Keith is very weak, and not able to eat or drink much. He was not completely sure what his diagnosis is, so please wear a mask when you visit him. And if you cannot visit, I know your prayers are greatly appreciated by Keith and his family. Let's keep each other updated on his progress.

Keith is part of our church "home." He welcomes visitors and tries to meet everyone he can. Keith's love is unconditional for everyone, and his support is unwavering. Keith is often parked at the sink after a family meal washing dishes as part of the clean-up crew. We are blessed beyond measure that Keith is part of our church family. We are blessed beyond measure to have each other. Thank you for being my church home, the place where I bring my joy and my pain, the place where I can hang my heart. Let's make 2025 a year of joy!!

Love,
Mary

Kids' News



The Sunday before Christmas, our children brought the Christmas story to life in a memorable performance. Caesar (**Alek**) declared that all the world would be taxed, while Joseph (**Eli**) and Mary (**Rebekah**) traveled to Bethlehem for the birth of Baby Jesus. Our Angel (**Jade**) announced this joyful news, and our shepherd (**Remmie**) came to see the newborn king. Narrator **Josiah** guided us through the story with grace and concluded by playing the guitar as Rebekah sang "Away in a Manger." The children wrapped up by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas.

A heartfelt thank-you to the parents and grandparents for bringing these talented kids to church and supporting them in sharing their gifts with us. We are so proud of each of them.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue

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