
St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jan 8th, 2025

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128th year

It's a New Year



Friday's Word

Only 69% of Americans say they are Christian. Five percent are agnostic, 4% atheist, and 17% "nothing in particular."

When belief was common, there was a lot of pressure to believe. Now, the pressure is off.

Truth is, many people simply don't know what they believe and don't trust the church to help them decide.

Have you decided what you believe?

Have you?

In the first articles of the new year, I will be pushing you to decide—beginning with a story I have told many times.

(Stick with me here.)

When I was 14, God spoke to me. (Do you believe that's possible?)

I went to bed depressed and, it seems, a bit surly.

I prayed as I did every night, but then mumbled to myself, "Nobody heard me"—my first expression of doubt ever.

But my statement of doubt was followed by a response.

Immediately, a voice replied, "I heard you."

The voice sounded in my head, but I looked around the room for the source.

Nobody there but me.

The voice was clear. I had no question about it. It shook me up at first. But then I felt the wonder of it.

I prayed. God answered.

In first person singular: "I heard you."

But now, I want to know what you think. There are only three options. E-mail me with your choice.

You would say to me:

1. You are lying.
2. You are mistaken.
3. I believe you.

Be honest. Respond right now. I will give the results next week.

Please know, if you choose number 3, the implications are huge.

God Bless—MB

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Max's Corner

Prayers for Our People

KEITH BUTTERFIELD, about to turn 98, is not doing as well as we would hope. He is in Parkwood Healthcare, close to HEB hospital. Several in the church have visited him. He can talk—and smile—but has trouble completing a sentence. He is quite weak.

"Living This Truth"

That's my sermon Sunday. How do we live the truth we know? I am going to talk about some very important scripture this week, some words from Paul—and we will explore the three responses to it I mention in my Friday's Word article. We will read Paul's account and consider the only three possible responses:

Paul is lying.

Paul is mistaken.

I believe Paul.

If we DO believe Paul—it should change the way we live.

"Discovering God" Classes

They will resume on Sunday, Jan. 26—last Sunday of the month—at 9:45 every Sunday. Later in February, we will begin a Thursday evening class called Basic Christianity at 6:30 every Thursday.

Breakfast This Sunday

This time together is important. This is a "We-bring" Sunday. I will bring the pigs-in-blankets. You bring something, too.

Thursday Luncheon Postponed

NOTE NEW DATE – Jan. 16 – For everyone this time, not just the women—a special program on Alzheimer's disease. Potluck lunch will be in the fellowship hall, followed by the program.

Church Leaders' Meeting

The Administrative Board will meet after church this Sunday to see where we stand as we begin a new year and to approve the budget for 2025.

God Bless,
MB

NOTE: It will be clear, sunny, and 35 degrees as we meet for worship this Sunday. Bundle up and come on. The heat is on and the fellowship is warm. See you Sunday.



Mary's Corner

Greetings to all,
The Women's Luncheon on Thursday and the speaker from the Alzheimer's Association have been rescheduled to Thursday, January 16th at 11:30 AM.

Still a potluck! Still open to everyone.

I pray this newsletter finds you warm

and well. By the time you read this, we may or may not be surrounded by snow and ice. Our friends at **Under the Bridge Ministries** have an urgent need for coats, blankets, sleeping bags, hand warmers, and other cold-weather essentials. They've shared that shelters are often filled with women and children, leaving many men outside in the freezing cold.

If you'd like to purchase one, Walmart offers reasonably priced Arctic sleeping bags. I'm happy to deliver any items brought to the church. If ordering and shipping directly to me is easier, just text or speak with me for the address. This cold weather is expected to last a while, and anything you can contribute will be deeply appreciated.

My prayer for you this week is that you have an intense and undeniable experience with God. May God's presence fill your quiet moments, especially if the weather keeps you indoors. If your schedule feels too full for quiet time, I urge you to carve out a few moments just for God.

This week's sermon reminded us to be kind to one another, to live humbly, and to remain open to the needs of others, along with tending to our own. I encourage you to pray for guidance on what it looks like to live as God's beloved children—growing in love and knowledge of God.

On Sunday, I mentioned the opportunity to start **Wesleyan classes**, but no one reached out to express interest. I pray that was simply due to timing. **Please consider if God is calling you to be a leader or participant in a small group.** Imagine the joy of welcoming a visitor to Saint Matthew and inviting them to join a small group in their neighborhood. What a blessing that could be to someone feeling isolated! Let's pray together for God's guidance for our church family.

Special prayer requests:

- **Keith Butterfield**
- Brian McCosky's brother, **Bill McCosky**
- Our friends without access to warm, dry shelter
- Our neighbors living without adequate resources or services

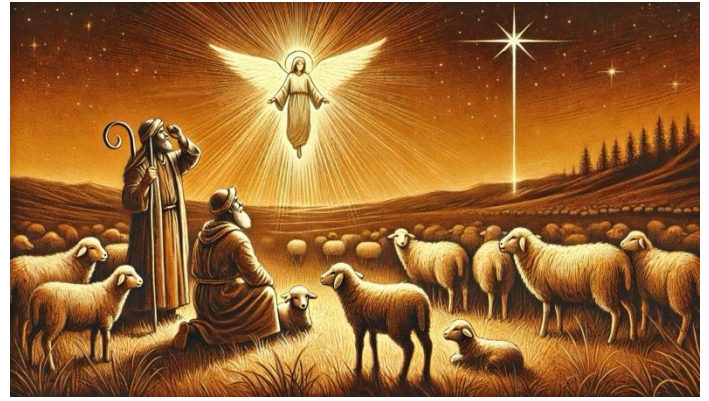
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

I invite you to **join me in prayer every day at 3 PM.** I set an alarm on my phone as a reminder to pause and pray.

Finally, this Sunday, immediately after church, the **Admin Board and all committees will meet in the fellowship hall.** If you're not currently on a committee, please consider joining one.

**Love and blessings to all,
Mary**

Kids' News



We were so happy to see all our kids in church this week! Our lesson focused on **courage** and the amazing story of the shepherds who were the first to hear the good news of Jesus' birth.

The shepherds lived humble and challenging lives, spending most of their time outside caring for their sheep and protecting them from wild animals and thieves. One night, as they were watching over their flocks, an angel of the Lord appeared to them with an incredible message: **"Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord."** (Luke 2:11)

God chose these ordinary shepherds to hear the extraordinary news, showing that Jesus came for everyone, not just the rich or powerful. The shepherds had the courage to leave their sheep and share what they had seen and heard, spreading the message of Jesus' birth to others.

This week, we learned that we too can have courage like the shepherds—to share God's love and good news, no matter our circumstances.

Join us next Sunday as we explore stories of people who seek God.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue



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