

St. Matthew Today

Wed., Jan 15th, 2025

St. Matthew United Methodist Church

Our 128th year

A Communicating God



Friday's Word

Last week I shared an account of an experience I had at age 14.

After my bedtime prayer, I said softly to myself, "Nobody heard me."

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

I believe God spoke to me. But I asked you to say what you think.

There are three possible choices: 1) I am lying. 2) I am mistaken. 3) You believe me.

Six people said I was mistaken.

One replied: *I believe you think you heard the voice, but I doubt that the voice was really there.*

Another said: *Sometimes our internal voice can seem like an outside voice. I heard such an answer to prayer once, back when I prayed. It startled me, but it's not enough to make me believe in a god.*

Fifty-one people said they believe me, and some shared their own stories.

One wrote: *I was trying to decide what to do with my life after college. I was walking late at night and praying. A voice clearly spoke to me, saying, "Seek first the Kingdom of God." I had hoped for something more specific. The same voice spoke again, "Seek first the Kingdom of God."*

Another wrote: *I was leaving for work when a voice said, "Watch for a red car." The message came three times because I ignored it the first two times. I said, "Ok, I'll watch." And a red car pulling a trailer almost ran me off the road.*

I have many accounts like these last two. We are loved and watched over.

And God can speak to us in many ways.

Next time, I have another challenge for you.

Worship is at 11:00.

Give it a try.

God Bless—MB

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Max's Corner

Last Week's Sermon

The sermon was a bit unusual—about the remarkable life of our church. I have heard it said that, according to the laws of aerodynamics, the bumblebee should not be able to fly. But it does. As an older church hidden within an older community, we should not still be here, but we are alive and well.

And, old as I am, I am probably still a necessary part of the St. Matthew mix. That is one reason I have not retired and the Conference has not put me out to pasture.

There's another reason: Ministry is the center of my life. So, I will soon begin my 43rd year at St. Matthew.

"Discovering God" Class

It will resume on Sunday, Jan. 26—the last Sunday of the month—at 9:45, before worship.

Breakfast this Sunday

Just coffee, orange juice, and donuts. It will be cold. Grab a donut and head for worship by 11:00.

A New Church Directory

The Church Council agreed last week that we need a pictorial directory, and I will be calling the people who did our last one to set up a time to do the photography. Mary and I plan to be relentless in getting all of our people into the book.

This Sunday

I preach this Sunday, Mary the next. I will apply the "I lied, mistaken, I believe" choices to a couple of stories from Paul. Yes, I believe these stories. But—if we do believe them—we need to show it in our lives. Sermon title: *If We Believe It—Live It.*

God Bless,
MB

NOTE: Listen—there will be no ice or snow, but it may be below 30 degrees on Sunday. Bundle up and come on. But be careful. See you Sunday.

NOTE: We found the lid to the baptismal font. It was in the pulpit. The font is a wooden copy of a stone font from 1735 in a church in London.



Mary's Corner

Hello Church and friends of Saint Matthew,

Sunday morning was a "magical" feeling, according to Ian Charbonneau after his baptism. It was also magical for me as I considered the mystery of God in the water sprinkled on Ian's head. The sacredness of

Baptism is foundational to our United Methodist faith tradition. The UMC describes the sacrament of baptism as initiation into "Christ's holy Church." The questions asked of Ian are part of the tradition as well. Max asked, "Do you know that God loves you? Do you love God? Do you want to live your life as a follower of the Son of God, Jesus Christ? Today you are committing yourself to be a disciple of Jesus Christ." One very important point Max made: "Neither Mary nor I are going to do the work. But the Lord Jesus Christ is watching. He is doing the work. And He is receiving you into His church." God always does the work. God pursues a relationship with us, covering our lives with prevenient grace.

Prevenient grace happens just before we are aware that God is seeking us out. It readies us to respond to God's presence in our lives. Justifying grace is that moment when we recognize that sin controls our lives, that we need salvation, and we walk into salvation from God through the door of justification. Wesley compared the knowledge that we need God to a porch—the step we take when we recognize that we need God, just before we walk through the door and into the house connected to that porch. All of this is a gift from God because God loves us. We cannot earn any of this; there is no work for us to do. We must only accept God's forgiveness and God's unconditional love. This is not an easy task, and for many of us, it is an ongoing process. Thankfully, God does not wait for us to do any work. It is already done.

Max's sermon reminded me how very special it is to be a part of the Saint Matthew family. Your commitment to the church, to each other, and to the neighborhood inspires me, and I am blessed to be part of your lives. As we continue to grow in love and understanding, remember that all around us are people who need to hear about the love of Jesus Christ.

My deepest gratitude,
Mary

Kids' News



This week's Bible story picks up just after the Israelites leave captivity in Egypt. These people had endured difficult times as slaves, but now they were on a journey toward freedom. Although God didn't lead them on the most direct path, it was a path of protection, showing His continued care for His people.

Do you remember how God guided them? By day, He used a cloud, and by night, lightning lit their way. The Israelites traveled together, seeking safety and a new land, with God by their side every step of the way.

Here's a fun fact: Did you know that Joseph asked Moses to carry his bones out of Egypt? He wanted to rest in the Promised Land! There's so much more to learn about this incredible journey. Don't miss out—see you Sunday for our next lesson!

On a joyful note, Noah made a card for Keith, and we delivered it on Sunday afternoon. Although Keith is very weak, the card brought a big smile to his face.

Blessings, Miss Vickie, Miss Sue



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