

SAINT MATTHEW TODAY



Max's Corner

First of all, some good news—Winston Dietrick-Kirkpatrick's mom is doing better. Her car was sideswiped by another vehicle. She's badly bruised on her left side, but nothing is broken. We give thanks

that things are moving in the right direction.

The days are getting shorter—and somehow, the weeks are too. We're moving up on Thanksgiving, just a week from this coming Sunday. Remember our big Thanksgiving dinner after worship. We started sign-ups last Sunday and will do so again this Sunday if needed. Mostly, remember to come to worship and bring family and friends with you. It's a joyful day!

Not this Sunday—but the next—will be my last time preaching for a while. My knee replacement surgery is scheduled for December 3. I plan to be in church on the first Sunday of Advent, but may be out for much of December while I recover. Mary will preach during that time, and I'll return to the pulpit for Christmas Eve.

Pastor's Class

We continue to discuss where we are theologically after this journey we've been on. Some old beliefs have gone by the wayside—like the idea of an angry God. Join us at 9:45 a.m., followed by breakfast.

Breakfast This Sunday

It's a "We-bring Sunday." Help bring! We need food to share—breakfast begins at 10:30 a.m.

This Sunday

Sermon: "What If There Are No End Times?"

I'm going to preach this someday—it may as well be now. I'm not an "End Times" person. You won't find me selling my house, putting on a white robe, and sitting on a mountaintop waiting for Jesus to return. Count me out.

The choir will sing an arrangement of the stirring hymn "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise."

God Bless,
MB

Remember: Blake's school choir concert will be on Friday evening, December 5, at 6:30 p.m. Mark your calendar!

Friday's Word

At age 19, I had an experience that pushed my life toward ministry.

We lived on a farm just outside Kemp, TX. In the country, we had a night sky that was glorious with stars.

Before going to bed, I often stepped outside to gaze into the starry sky and pray. One of those nights changed my life.

When I glanced up to pray, I was hit by joy.

I say hit. I could say seized. It was a joy so strong it shook me.

It was so much joy I couldn't hold it. I thought I might die!

I thought I might stop breathing.

I told God so.

I said, "Thank you, Lord. But I can't take any more joy."

And it slowly subsided. It had lasted, I think, less than a minute.

Overwhelming as it was, it was joy—ecstasy beyond anything I ever imagined.

It was a "God thing." I knew that.

I just didn't know what it was, exactly.

So, I headed for the library when I got to my junior college the next morning. It was there I found William James' masterpiece, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

That's what I had—

a "religious experience."

I knew that joy was not from me. It came from some realm beyond this one.

And I knew that realm, that sacred realm, was available to us.

God is available to us.

We live our lives on the verge of glory. And even when life is hard, that joy is never far away.

If we ask for it, we will receive it. I believe that.

But I must add—you'll want a lower dose of it than I got. (Worship is at 11:00. Look for us online.)

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Mary's Corner

Hello, Saint Matthew!

I pray you are warm and safe while reading this newsletter. I also pray for those I've seen asleep on the streets over the past 48 hours—I cannot imagine how cold they must be. On Sunday evening, *Under the Bridge Ministries* served food to more than 250 people, including many children. Ronnie shared that they unfortunately ran out of food.

The ministry has asked for the following donations: apples, bananas, and oranges, as well as boxes of healthy snack items such as peanuts, breakfast bars, and granola bars. It's also the season for hats and gloves—whatever you can give will be deeply appreciated.

It's also time for the Thanksgiving bags for *Eastside Community Assistance*. If you picked up a list on Sunday, please remember to bring your items this Sunday. If anyone needs help, we can also arrange to pick them up.

The season of Advent will be here in just 19 days. Please pray for Max and his knee surgeon, as well as for our choir and musicians, as they learn new music for the upcoming season. As always, keep our church family in your prayers as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

Love to all,
Mary

Upcoming Events

Thanksgiving Meal

Sunday, November 23, following worship. We'll share more details next week, but please remember that many of our neighbors no longer have access to food assistance. Christ commands us to love our neighbors — and love means action. Let's each pick up a little extra at the grocery store this week and help feed those in need.

Western Hills Ensemble Choir and Enchilada Dinner

On Friday, December 5, 2025, we will host the Western Hills Ensemble Choir, directed by our own Blake Glass. Music begins at 6:30 PM. This concert benefits the Western Hills Choir for their 2026 competition expenses.

We will have a free shuttle service for those who need a ride or are unable to drive at night.

Following the concert, our annual Enchilada Dinner will be served in the Fellowship Hall. Dinner is \$10 per person.

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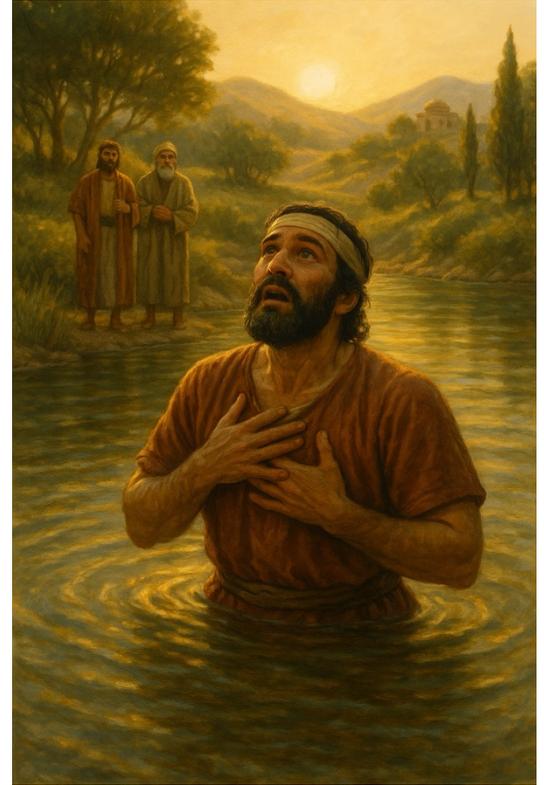
Kids' News

Samuel Chooses a King

This week, we heard the story of Naaman, a powerful army commander who had everything he could ever want—except his health. Naaman suffered from a terrible skin disease, and even with all his strength and wealth, he couldn't make himself better. But one day, a young servant girl who worked for Naaman's wife spoke up with courage. She told them about the prophet Elisha in Israel who could help. (*2 Kings 5:1–14*)

Naaman traveled far to find Elisha, hoping for a dramatic miracle. But instead of meeting him in person, Elisha sent a messenger with simple instructions: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River." Naaman was frustrated—he wanted something grand and powerful! Still, his servants encouraged him to trust and obey. When he finally did, his skin became clean, and his heart was changed.

Naaman learned that true healing comes not from pride or power but from listening, trusting, and obeying God. Sometimes God asks us to do simple things that bring big blessings. Let's remember this week that God can use anyone—no matter how small—to show others the way to His love.



What We Learned

- ✓ God often works through people we might overlook.
- ✓ Simple obedience can lead to powerful results.
- ✓ Pride can keep us from seeing God's plan clearly.
- ✓ Healing and faith begin when we choose to trust God.