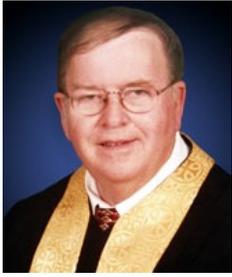


SAINT MATTHEW TODAY



Max's Corner

I want to share my full support for the Administrative Board's decision to conclude our long relationship with the Star-Telegram at the end of this year. I am grateful to Brian McCosky for

the thoughtful work he put into exploring new online platforms for sharing "the little articles." Brian is a brilliant guy, and I appreciate his dedication.

I am hopeful that the church might consider a one-time expense to equip my classroom so I can begin recording my class each week as a podcast. So much of our future ministry together depends on finishing and sharing the book I've been working on for the past 20 years, and this would help us move in that direction.

Be encouraged, dear friends—we are moving forward.

I miss all of you. I am in considerable pain unless I am sitting still, but I am sleeping well, and for that I'm grateful. There is a hard road ahead, yet I know God walks with me.

I was delighted by the concert attendance—95 people! What a gift.

Please hold these dear ones in prayer:

- Charlotte Holder, whose surgery is scheduled for next Monday. Charlotte, our love is with you.

- Linda Anderson, after her fall. Linda, we love you and are praying for healing and comfort.

Pastor's Class remains on hold until January.

As for breakfast this Sunday, if everything stays on schedule, it should be a "We-bring" Sunday at 9:30 AM. And thank you, Mary, for all your wonderful work.

Has anyone arranged a Christmas dinner so that Santa can visit? And I'm assuming we may not have a Christmas concert this year, though we'll see how things unfold.

I look forward to being with you again.

For now— God bless you all.

I'm taking my poor knee to bed tonight. One of my knees had a birthday on Monday, and the other is still new—and crying like a baby.

God Bless — MB

Friday's Word

For forty years, this little box has appeared in two different newspapers—twenty of them in the Star-Telegram. The world has changed in those decades, and this newspaper has changed with it. What once reached thousands now reaches far fewer, and the time has come to bring this long chapter to a close.

This decision is significant. This little box played a part in saving a church. Without this outreach, St. Matthew might not have survived. Through it, God gathered a community of people who longed for grace, who weren't drawn to fundamentalism, and who believed in the wideness of God's love.

From this space, we have proclaimed the Gospel truth that God loves all of us equally—gay or straight, male or female, Black or white, immigrant or native-born. We have spoken against the harm caused by power misused. And through it all, I have simply shared the truth I know through Jesus Christ.

And let me be clear—I'm not going anywhere.

I'll still be preaching.

This box, under a new name, will soon appear on several online platforms. I will also begin a weekly podcast of my Discovering God class. And in 2026, I intend to complete the book I have been working on for many years and send it out into the world.

I hope you'll stay connected.

You can read these articles every week through the church's online newsletter—just visit the link below and subscribe.

But you don't have to remain anonymous.

You are always welcome to join us for worship.

If St. Matthew, or anything in my ministry, has mattered to you, come sit with us. Let me see your face. Let us thank God together.



Mary's Corner

Greetings, dear friends and family of Saint Matthew,

This season of Advent is meant to slow us down, to help us breathe, and to make room for God in the middle of our hurried lives. As I mentioned on Sunday morning, I encourage you each day to pause—sit with God, breathe deeply, and savor your morning cup of whatever brings you comfort. You will need that quiet strength for what I must share.

Our dear **Carolyn Bell** passed peacefully into her heavenly reward on the morning of December 9. Carolyn was one of the pillars of our church. She served faithfully on the Administrative Board and many committees over the years, and she was one of the last members who joined Saint Matthew simply because she lived in the neighborhood and wanted to be part of this community. Her warm smile and heartfelt welcome were the very reasons my family knew Saint Matthew was our home the very first time we walked through the doors.

The family is working to finalize arrangements, and the plan—pending confirmation—is to hold her memorial service this **Saturday, December 13**, here at Saint Matthew United Methodist Church. As soon as I receive word from the funeral home, I will share details. Please be prepared to help with a meal at the church, either before or after the service. Whether you knew Carolyn personally or not, I would love for us to show her family just how deeply she blessed our lives.

As we look toward the new year, we also have some important work ahead. We will begin addressing foundation issues in the annex, a project that truly cannot wait. Following that, we will move into long-overdue updates to the bathrooms, fellowship hall, and several other areas that need attention. These improvements will help us care for our building the way it has cared for us.

I have also asked Veta to coordinate meals over the next two weeks for Pastor Max and his sister Jackie, as well as Linda Anderson and Charlotte Holder. Nothing fancy—just good, comforting food from the heart. Max is progressing and starting physical therapy, though he continues to have considerable pain. Linda is healing beautifully from her fall and is nearly back to her joyful self. Charlotte's surgery is today (Tuesday), and I will keep you posted as I learn more.

This coming Sunday is already the third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Love. As I read back over everything I've asked of you in this newsletter—your prayers, your presence, your service—I'm struck by how clearly this church reflects the body of Christ. The way you care for one another, lift one another up, and offer hope is exactly what Jesus intended for His people.

Our next steps—reaching into our neighborhood, diversifying our congregation, and offering programs beyond Sunday mornings—will help us continue to grow in God's grace and truth. I am grateful for you, and for your commitment to the gospel work unfolding at Saint Matthew.

Stay warm, be blessed,

Love to all, Mary

Upcoming Events

December 14: 3rd Sunday of Advent: Joy

December 21: 4th Sunday of Advent: Love

December 24: Christmas Eve Service at 6:00pm: Christ Revealed

Transportation is available for this service with advanced notice!

December 28: 1st Sunday after Christmas

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Kids' News

Josiah and the Lost Scroll

Many years after King David lived, a boy named Josiah became king of Judah. He was only eight years old, far younger than anyone expected a king to be, and the throne felt much bigger than he was. Still, Josiah wanted to lead in a way that honored God.

As Josiah grew older, he noticed that God's temple had fallen into disrepair. The stones were cracked, and dust covered the floors. Wanting to restore the place where people worshiped, Josiah ordered the workers to begin repairing it.

During the renovations, something remarkable happened. The high priest discovered a forgotten scroll tucked away in an old room. It was the Book of the Law—God's instructions for how the people were meant to live. When the scroll was read aloud, Josiah felt a deep sadness. He realized the people had drifted far from the path God had set for them.



Instead of ignoring what he heard, Josiah listened. He let God's words shape his heart. Then he gathered the people and renewed their covenant with God, promising to follow God's commandments and encouraging the nation to return to faithfulness. Even though he was young, Josiah led with courage, humility, and a deep desire to do what was right.

What We Learned

- ✓ You're never too young for God to use you in important ways.
- ✓ Listening to God helps us find our way, even when the path feels unfamiliar.
- ✓ Good leaders choose what is right, not what is easy.
- ✓ When we return to God, God always welcomes us back.

Kids' Christmas Program Update

Christmas is coming soon, and our kids are excited to share this year's special program, "Our Magi Mission." They've already begun learning their parts, and we will have a Saturday rehearsal to get costumes ready and practice the story. And yes—Julie Anne still remembers that pizza was promised for lunch!

If you have a young person who would like to participate in telling the story of Jesus' birth, we would love for them to join us.

See you Sunday! Blessings...