

SAINT MATTHEW TODAY



Max's Corner

The loss of Carolyn Bell feels like the end of an era to me. But most of our present members did not know her. She has been with her family in Flower Mound since 2014. That family is largely Church

of Christ, so Carolyn's family brought their minister to conduct a Church of Christ service in our church, with my eulogy in the middle of it.

Robbie, Carolyn's daughter, knew her mom would want her service at Saint Matthew. And the family was happy with the service. That, of course, is what is important with a memorial service.

With my knee replacement only 10 days before, I was definitely in no shape to participate in the service. I did anyway, and I am so glad I did.

Danny and Leslie Detrick, the former choir director and his wife, were present, along with beloved former members. An era closes. Life goes on.

After My Surgery

I am making slow progress. It is harder and more painful than I thought it would be. The church has made a big difference. My sister and I are so grateful for the food that has come in. Thank you.

I hope to see you on Christmas Eve. Do not expect miracles. My movement will be limited. But what a time of rejoicing it will be.

We will have a great Christmas Eve service, and I will arrive hungry for worship.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

And a big Christmas dinner, with Santa for the kids.

Mary finishes her beautiful Advent sermon series this Sunday. The choir sings a glorious anthem. And then Christmas dinner.

Come prepare your hearts for the Babe in the manger.

God bless.

All that some of you must bring to the dinner this Sunday is desserts. Wish I could be there. I like desserts.

Friday's Word

I began my working life as an English teacher. In 1982, at the age of 39, I entered Perkins School of Theology at SMU to prepare for ministry.

I was immediately eligible to serve a church as a student pastor. I was sent to Saint Matthew, a small church in East Fort Worth, with little hope of survival.

I was overjoyed to be in ministry. And against all odds, the church began to grow, mainly from members who returned and friends of those still in the pews. Before long, we exhausted that pool of potential growth, and I knew we had to find a way to reach a wider world.

In 1987, I started *Pastor's Corner* in *The Meadowbrook News*, a local Eastside shopping paper. It did the job. Growth soon accelerated. By 1988, we had grown from about 30 in attendance to more than 150 on some Sundays.

We needed more room, so we decided to build. We hired a rising young architect, Greg Wyatt, to transform our rather dreary sanctuary into the beautiful Victorian Gothic building we worship in today.

In the early 2000s, *The Meadowbrook News* closed down. That is when we shifted to *The Star-Telegram* and *Friday's Word*. But with changes in how people get their news, we can no longer reach the audience we once did. So once again, we change.

This is our next-to-last appearance here. We will be turning to social media and other online forums to reach a larger audience. Please keep up with us. Subscribe to our weekly online newsletter. The address is below. Just click the subscribe button.

In 2026, Saint Matthew will celebrate its 135th anniversary. We will celebrate.

Join us for our Christmas Eve service at 6:00 p.m.

"The most beautiful service of the year"

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Mary's Corner

Greetings, dear friends and family of Saint Matthew!

As we draw near to the end of our Advent season together, I find myself looking back and wondering what happened to all the days between the first Sunday of Advent and now, here on December 16. I've told myself for years that life would calm down someday. And yet, when I look back and see how quickly time has passed, I sometimes feel cheated, as though it only keeps getting busier.

Today, I've decided to stop fighting that feeling. I've decided to trust that what is happening in my life is exactly what is meant to be happening. God's grace and presence place me right where I'm supposed to be, doing exactly what I'm called to do. So instead of looking back and wondering where the time went, I'm choosing to stay right here in this moment—grateful for what is unfolding.

Because what is happening right now, in my life and in all of our lives, is that God continues to reveal God's self in both microscopic and magnificent ways. We simply have to be open to noticing. It's easy to become focused on the mundane, to slip into a kind of stupor as the world rushes by. But no more—not when every breath is precious, every word matters, and every interaction and experience can be a vessel of God's grace. I encourage you to lean into each day. Advent may be marked once a year, but Jesus shows up every single day. Don't blink, or you might miss him.

I also want to remind you that this Sunday, following worship, we will gather for our annual Christmas dinner. This year we'll celebrate simply, sharing pizza and leftover spaghetti—along with an abundance of desserts, thanks to those of you who are bringing them. After lunch, we will enjoy the cutting of the cake with Joshua and Julian. I look forward to seeing you there. And for those watching remotely, please know that I am thinking of you and that you are missed. We love you so much. I am deeply grateful to be part of the ministry of Saint Matthew United Methodist Church and humbled to walk this journey with you each week.

With love,

Mary

Upcoming Events

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

Mary's Story

This Sunday, we learned about the family story of Jesus, a story that begins in a very ordinary way. Mary was not a queen or a princess. She was a young woman, engaged to be married, living a normal life. At first, there was nothing about her situation that seemed special or important.

Then something unexpected happened. An angel came to Mary and said, "Do not be afraid." Those words appear again and again in the Bible, especially when God is about to do something new. The angel told Mary that she would be part of God's plan to bring love into the world through Jesus. What makes Mary's story meaningful is not power or position, but her willingness to trust God when she did not have all the answers, just as we hear in the Gospel of Matthew's telling of Jesus' beginnings (Matthew 1).



Mary did not walk this path alone. She leaned on her community and found comfort and courage alongside her cousin Elizabeth, who was experiencing her own unexpected joy. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we remember that God's love often shows up quietly, through ordinary people, and that this love, once given, lasts forever.

What We Learned

- ✓ God often works through ordinary people.
- ✓ God's love does not need power or fame to change the world.
- ✓ Trusting God can be hard, but we are never alone.
- ✓ When we share love and kindness, we help show God's light to others.