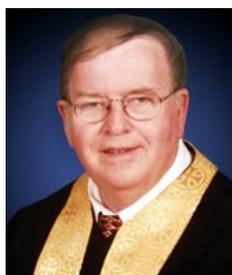


# SAINT MATTHEW TODAY



## Max's Corner

Part of my job is to keep us honest about how we got here—and where we are going.

Now that Friday's Word is gone, you will hear some around the church say that we can grow our church from the neighborhood around it.

Do not believe it.

Handley and Eastern Hills Methodist also had neighborhoods around them. These churches died. But our great new playground will bring children into the church, and their parents will follow.

Handley had a successful daycare center. It was a lively place during the week. Neither parents nor kids came on Sundays. Handley died, ending a 145-year history.

When I came to pastor St. Matthew in 1982, there were three strong Methodist churches on the East Side—and one dying one.

Two of the strong ones are closed. The third, Meadowbrook, has merged with another once-great church—Poly Methodist—and is now no bigger than St. Matthew.

The one dying in 1982—St. Matthew—is still here.

It has taken extraordinary measures to maintain the life of St. Matthew—primarily the longevity of the pastor and Friday's Word.

Friday's Word is gone.

It will require new extraordinary measures for this church to continue to live.

One thing we will do is start a new YouTube channel devoted to the class I teach on my book, *Discovering God*. I am willing to say that this is an important book. It makes a difference.

We will need to advertise this new channel in every way we can. (This will cost a little money—but I will pay part of it.)

I am hopeful about the future.

We have made it this far together.

By the power and grace of our Lord, we will move on—all of us serving our Lord Jesus Christ in a New Year.

Truly, truly, the best is yet to come.

### A New Picture Directory

We will have a new pictorial directory in 2026. The date for photographs has not yet been set, but we will aim for March.

Connie Michael has produced the most accurate list we have of present members and regular visitors. We will try to get everyone on that list pictured in the book.

### Providing Rides

There are older folks at home and in a local retirement center who would love to attend St. Matthew. We need to provide rides. We also need to run a shuttle in the local community for children who want to come to Sunday school. We need a large van (or small bus).

### Mary's Ordination

Mary, we hope and pray, will be able to remain as our Associate Pastor when she is ordained in June. But this involves changes. Mary will have to be paid more when she is full-time, but our budget cannot bear any more. So, we will take the money we used for Friday's Word to add to Mary's salary. And my salary will have to be lowered to raise Mary's.

No church the size of St. Matthew can afford two full-time pastors, but we can if both pastors are willing to make a sacrifice.

St. Matthew lives by being the exception to the rule. We can do it.

### First Sunday of the New Year

Epiphany Sunday.

We will be just where we long to be as we begin a new year—at the Lord's Table.

What a privilege! What a joy!

### Sermon: *Something New in the World*

If you are able, come Sunday.

Your witness is our strength.



## Mary's Corner

Happy New Year! I pray that you are all warm and getting caught up on your rest.

Santa's helpers, the McCoskys, spent Monday afternoon at the church working (again!!). Brian and Nan were able to get all of the Christmas decorations taken down, including the ornaments from the trees! What a blessing these two are at St. Matthew. What that means for you, if you are of a mind to help, is that the ornaments and decorations need boxing up and the large tree in the sanctuary disassembled. We can take care of the sanctuary tree on Saturday morning, January 3rd at 9:30, as I announced this last Sunday. Thank you again, Nan and Brian, for getting the meticulous and slow part of this work done. We will have everything boxed up and put away for another year before services on Sunday.

I also announced that on January 11, 2026, we would be honoring Courtney Moore for her work with St. Matthew and installing our new business administrator, Amber Hartwell. We will be rescheduling that event to January 18, 2026. On January 11th, we will still have our "Multiplication Masterclass" after church. The webinar starts at 1:00 pm. We will eat lunch at the church before the class. Please let me know if you plan to attend. Seating will be limited, as will the food available, if I do not know you are coming. The purpose of these classes is to build the membership of the church by making our ministries relevant to our neighborhood. Our sanctuary holds 100+ folks comfortably and 180 if we squeeze together. Let's all work together in 2026 to sustain the life of Saint Matthew by ministering to our Fort Worth neighbors.

Greetings to our neighbors on the World Wide Web!! I am grateful to all of you who continue to be a part of the life of Saint Matthew from afar. We would be struggling without your prayers and support. Please let us know when you are online. There is a link on the broadcast to report your attendance.

Stay warm, my friends. We have a new year coming, a new chance to bring the good news of the gospel to folks who are starving for a bit of good news. As Max said on Sunday, be at peace knowing that you are loved by God eternally.

Blessings,

Mary

## Multiplication Masterclass: Bridge Events

Join us after worship on Sunday, January 11, for a relaxed lunch-and-learn in the Annex as we gather with colleagues from across the Horizon Texas Conference for a webinar on Bridge Events. Together, we'll explore how churches can intentionally reach beyond their walls to connect with and serve their surrounding community. The session will run from 1:00–3:00 PM, lunch will be provided. We hope you'll join us for conversation, learning, and encouragement as we look for faithful ways to grow our ministry.

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# Kids' News

## *The Shepherds were tending to their sheep*

Sometimes exciting things happen when we least expect them. We might be busy with homework, chores, or helping around the house when something surprising comes our way. God often shows up in moments like these, right in the middle of ordinary life.

In our lesson this week, we discussed the shepherds who were tending to their sheep when angels appeared and shared the joyful news of Jesus' birth, as recorded in Luke 2. The shepherds were ordinary people doing everyday work, yet God chose them to be among the first to hear about the Savior. Even though they were afraid at first, they trusted God's message and went to see baby Jesus for themselves.



The story of the shepherds reminds us that God's love is for everyone and that God can use anyone to share good news. We do not have to be famous or important for God to work through us. Just like the shepherds, we can share kindness, hope, and joy with others and help spread God's love in simple ways each day.

## What We Learned

- ✓ God meets us in everyday moments
- ✓ Jesus came for everyone, not just a few people
- ✓ Good news is meant to be shared