



From the Pastor's Desk



Brothers and Sisters in Christ-

Wow, a LOT has happened since I became your pastor! I've been very excited with the ministry that you were already doing that I have gotten to be a part of. You should be very proud of the work you do engaging our community and sharing the Good News of Jesus. It has been an honor getting to work with our amazing staff and dedicated lay leaders in partnership with the Holy Spirit to build God's Kingdom. I feel like we have all done a good job of keeping "the main thing the main thing."

One thing that is not the "main thing" but that has nevertheless been garnering some of our attention is the continuing conversation within the United Methodist Church about human sexuality and the very real and sometimes painful reality that some churches are exiting the denomination. Some are exiting because they wish the United Methodist Church would be more affirming in its stance toward homosexuality, and some are exiting because they see the UMC as becoming too progressive in that area.

I firmly believed that our special congregational meeting in October to address where the denomination stood and where we stood as congregation on these issues had given us clarity on what the right course was for St. Matthew. But in the last month two large congregations in the Oklahoma City Metro- St. Luke's in Mid-town and New Covenant in Edmond- both made headlines for disaffiliating, and since then I think we've all experienced a little more uncertainty as to what the future holds.

So, I'll reiterate the points I made at that October meeting:

- 1.) Disaffiliation is not a process that can be or should be initiated by the pastor. It is to be decided by the will of the congregation, not me.
- 2.) That being said, I think disaffiliation would be DISASTROUS for St. Matthew.
- 3.) First, the process of disaffiliation requires a 2/3 majority vote for churches to successfully disaffiliate per paragraph 2553 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline. When the congregation of St. Matthew was polled shortly before my arrival, only 53% said that they would be in favor of disaffiliating.
- 4.) Churches that take votes that DON'T pass almost universally experience immediate and disastrous decline in membership and giving. In fact, even in churches that DO pass a disaffiliation vote, there are still dangerous declines. Only churches that pass with a vote of more than 80% seem to be "safe."
- 5.) More than that, regardless of what "side" you're on, the person sitting next to you often isn't on the same side as you. Yet you've been worshipping together and doing ministry together for years! Can you imagine our church being what it is right now if every person you disagreed with suddenly stopped doing ministry? On any vote, some of those folks are leaving.

From the Pastor's Desk Cont.

6.) There's also a financial component to all of this. Technically, St. Matthew doesn't own any of our property, the Oklahoma Conference of the UMC does. In order for us to disaffiliate and retain our property, the Conference would require us (per paragraph 2553 of the Discipline) to pay two years of apportionments and any unfunded liabilities related to clergy pensions and other denominational costs. This could cost St. Matthew as little as \$175,000.00 or as much as \$400,000.00. This would stretch the liquid assets that St. Matthew has available and strip the church of much of its ability to do viable ministry.

7.) The UMC hasn't officially changed its stance on human sexuality. In essence, it remains traditional and orthodox while affirming that every person is of sacred worth. This may satisfy some and disappoint others, and I get that. But I think that the inherent status quo undermines any arguments for disaffiliation as a reaction to what's been happening in the UMC. Essentially what's been happening in the UMC is the same thing that's been happening since language about human sexuality was introduced into the Discipline in 1972!

Those were the basic points I made in October. To reiterate, I have no leaning from the Spirit (nor authority per the Discipline) to lead this congregation through the disaffiliation process. Even the discernment process before the vote is often contentious and has a negative impact on the ministries of the church. But if it were the will of the congregation, I would still assist in the process as necessary.

That all being said, I have heard some concerns from one or two folks in the congregation that the foundational theological doctrines of the UMC are in the process of being eliminated - specifically, that the UMC will abandon historical doctrines of the Trinity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the elimination of the Articles of Religion of the Church. At best, these assertions are conjecture or speculation. At worst, they're blatant falsehoods that these folks have been told that seem designed to evoke fear and distrust.

The Constitution of the UMC safeguards these historic doctrines and beliefs. I encourage you to review the Articles of Religion in ¶104 of the Book of Discipline. These articles contain the basic UMC doctrines. I also refer you to the Restrictive Rules of the UMC Contained in ¶¶17-22. Article I declares, "The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine." Article II states, "The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Confession of Faith."

The bishop of our Conference, Rev. James Nunn, is on record reiterating this statement in the Book of Discipline: "The UMC affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all" (¶121).

There's a lot of fear about the future of the UMC, and I get that.

But I wouldn't be here, and I wouldn't be advocating for us to stay in the UMC, if I didn't think there were also a lot of HOPE. God the Father has created us for a purpose. Jesus, the Son, has saved us and made us new for a purpose. The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, guiding us and empowering us FOR A PURPOSE.

So let's keep the main thing (worshiping Jesus and building his Kingdom) the main thing!

God's love and peace,

Pastor Jonathon



Words About Worship
From the Director of
Music Ministries



After the long, cold winter we have experienced, it is great to see the buds on the trees and plants beginning to turn green. Hopefully we have turned a corner, and Spring will arrive at last! With Spring, our thoughts naturally turn to Easter. Holy Week and Easter will be here before we know it!

Our Children's and Program Director, Katelynn Henderson, needs *many* helpers for the Easter Eggstravaganza on Palm Sunday, April 2. In the past we have had hundreds of children. Please see Katelynn to sign up for a shift to help that day!

Palm Sunday is April 2. We will have the traditional Procession with the Palms in the 11:00 service. St. Matthew Children will join the Chancel Choir to sing ***Celebrate the King!*** in the 11:00 service.

Our traditional **Maundy Thursday Dinner** is April 6 at 6:30 pm in Wesley Hall. The menu for Maundy Thursday consists of foods that Jesus and his friends might have eaten: fish, beef, bread, honey, nuts, cheese, olives, dried fruit, fresh fruit. The tables are covered with cheesecloth. Food is eaten out of wooden bowls, and no silverware is used. The only light is provided by candles and natural light. The evening begins with the shared meal, and ends with communion. Reservations are required for this dinner, so we know how much food to buy, and how many places to set. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$5. for children 7 and under with a \$35. maximum per immediate family. Reservation deadline is Sunday, April 2.

Our **Tenebrae Service, *The Passion of Christ from the Gospel of John*** is **7:00 pm Friday, April 7.** "Tenebrae" comes from the Latin word meaning shadow or darkness. During the service, candles are extinguished and the light gradually diminishes until the sanctuary is dark. The increasing darkness symbolizes the approaching darkness of Jesus' death and the hopelessness of a world without God. The Chancel Choir, Spirit Singers and speakers will present the events of the last week of Jesus' life in word and song. To truly appreciate Easter Sunday, it is necessary to walk with Jesus to the cross.

Easter Sunday! This year Easter Sunday will begin with a Sunrise service at **7am** led by Pastor Jonathon. In addition, there will be two *identical* services at **8:30 am and 11 am** in the Sanctuary. In addition to the great Easter hymns (Christ the Lord Is Risen Today and Up From the Grave He Arose), special music will be provided by the Spirit Singers and Chancel Choir. Chase Dealy returns to play trumpet with our hymns. After the sorrow of Good Friday, it's **great** to look forward to the rest of the story; **"He is risen, He is risen indeed!"**

Easter Brunch is **9:30-10:30 in Wesley Hall.** Please bring food to share. We have to feed the multitudes! Help is also needed to set up on Saturday and clean up afterward on Sunday. Karren Brown volunteered to coordinate the brunch.

This is a wonderful time of the year to worship and grow closer to Christ. See you Sunday!

Email gtatum@stmatthew.org
for questions about music ministry.

Shalom,

Gayle Tatum



LIBRARY NEWS



April 2023

from Terri



APRIL IS AMISH MONTH AT ST. MATTHEW!

The library has a bevy of new Amish books by authors such as Linda Byler, Amy Clipston, Kathleen Fuller, Kelly Irwin, and Beth Wiseman!

I snagged several series and a few single titles books at a great sale. A few of the new series are the *Amish Legacy Novels*, *Amish Mail-Order Bride Novels*, *Amish Journey Novels*, *The Amish Inn Novels* and *Lancaster Burning*.

We also have *Love's Dwelling* by Kelly Irwin and *The Teacher's Bride* by Kathleen Fuller. I hope you'll stop by the library and try out one of these great new books!

2023 BIBLE IN A YEAR GROUP!

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Valarie Autry | Eric Autry |
| Jackie Elk | Rebecca Hartmann |
| Dayna Heath | Katelynn Henderson |
| Vickie Kinsey | Larry Kisner |
| Susie Larsen | Beverly Link |
| Karen Marichal | Ella McDonald |
| Joyce Perkins | Ashley Poole |
| Donna Rader | Kaye Rhoades |
| Kalyn Roark | Kay Ross |
| Emily Robinson | Stacey Ruston |
| Jayna Sims | Marilyn Solomon |
| Carolyn Specht | Candace Thompson |
| Barbara Wallace | Cynthia Weldon |
| Terri Weldon | |

They're reading the greatest story ever told!

AMISH BOOKS FOR KIDS!!!

Yes, I even have a couple of Amish books for kids! New York Times bestselling author Wanda E. Brunstetter has quite a few books for young readers and the library is lucky enough to have two: *Out of Control* and *The Wisdom of Solomon*.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!!!

The library has some new shelves right as you walk in the door! I'm hyped about the extra space these shelves provide. So let me give a shout out to SCOTT MOODY and AARON LARSEN. These new shelves are the reason why there is room to add extra Amish books. Plus, there is still room left over! Stop by and admire their carpentry skills and if you see them around the church, please tell them thank you!

HEARTS OF AMISH COUNTRY!!!

Another great Amish Series is *Hearts of Amish Country*. We have 10 books in the series, but the nice thing about these books is they aren't all interconnected. They share the same series title; however, each book can be read as a standalone. If you read these and enjoy them, let me know and I'll keep an eye out for the rest of the series.

EASTER BOOKS!!!

The library has Easter Books for readers of all ages and there's still plenty of time to read one!

Alpha Omega News



CAKE AUCTION: Oddball Holiday Hubbub

Our cake auction is right around the corner! You've heard of Christmas, Easter, and Halloween... but what about National Popcorn Day, May the Fourth be with You, and National Penny Day? Well, our youth are going to show you all about these weird holidays at our Cake Auction!



Join us on April 16th, immediately following the 11AM service for lunch and then our annual cake auction! 100% of donations go directly to our youth group. These funds help our youth: go on mission trips; go to summer camps; spend time in fellowship; participate in local activities; attend mystery trips; and other various travel opportunities. We can't wait to see you!

Easter Eggstravaganza

The youth will be helping with the annual Easter Eggstravaganza on April 2nd! Youth need to be at the church at 1:30 to get their assignments and help with set-up. We will be helping throughout the entire event and will help with clean-up. We should be finished around 4:30PM!



Upcoming Events:

- April 2nd: Easter Eggstravaganza | 2-4PM
- April 2nd: NO YOUTH
- April 6th: Maundy Thursday | 6PM
- April 7th: Good Friday Service | 7PM
- April 9th: Easter Services
 - Sunrise Service | 7AM
 - Early Service | 8:30AM
 - Brunch | 9:30AM
 - Traditional | 11AM
- April 9th: NO YOUTH
- April 16th: CAKE AUCTION
- April 19th: Ding-Dong Prayer Dash

ST. MATT KIDS

APRIL NEWS

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14

Easter is here! We are having fun learning about Jesus! We talked about Holy Week and what that means! St. Matt kids are so excited to join the choir on Palm Sunday. We will be practicing this week at WOW and just doing a quick run through. Last week gave Ms. Katelynn goosebumps!

Our butterflies are here! We have enjoyed watching them grow and will be letting them go on Palm Sunday (yes we typically do Easter, but they came early)! We hope to see everyone at Eggstravaganza and THANK YOU in advance for all the adults who make it possible!

AT ST. MATTHEW, OUR MISSION IS TO SHOWER GOD'S LOVE UPON OUR CHILDREN

**SO THAT THEY WILL KNOW:
GOD LOVES THEM... UNCONDITIONALLY.
CHURCH IS A WONDERFUL, SAFE PLACE TO BE.
STORIES OF JESUS.**

WILL YOU ANSWER THE LORD'S CALL AND BE A PART OF THIS MINISTRY?
CHRIST HAS NO HANDS BUT YOURS.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

2-Eggstravaganza
9-Easter (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL)

MAY

7-Family Camp (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL)
12- Muffins with Moms @ 10am
17-Last MidWeek before Summer Break



Contact Information:

Katelynn Henderson
405.740.4379

children@stmatthew.org

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS

Sunday School-9:45am
Children's Church during 11am Service
*No Children's Church 1st
Sunday of the Month

WEDNESDAYS

WOW 6:30-7:30pm

April at St. Matthew

Upcoming Events

| | | |
|----------|--------|------------------------------|
| April 1 | | AO Youth Lock-In |
| April 2 | Noon | Church Council |
| April 2 | 2-4pm | Easter Eggstravaganza |
| April 3 | 7pm | SPRC |
| April 4 | 6pm | Trustees |
| April 6 | | TEFAP |
| April 6 | 6:30pm | Maunday Thursday Dinner |
| April 7 | 7pm | Good Friday Tenebrae Service |
| April 8 | 8am | Men's Breakfast |
| April 9 | | EASTER! |
| April 16 | Noon | AO Youth Cake Auction |
| April 24 | 6:30pm | Finance |
| April 25 | 7pm | Lydia Circle |

For a more complete list of events and activities visit stmatthew.org/calendar



- April 2 Janet Todd
- April 3 Sammy Todd
- April 8 David Heath
- April 9 Selma Bediako
- April 11 Carm Eastham
- April 13 Rose Devanney
- April 17 Keith Endsley
- April 18 Lilyann Keenum
- April 19 Charles Tinsley
- April 23 Lydia Arkoh
- April 24 Jennifer Alleman
- April 25 Ricky Clemence
- April 25 Andrew Wilson
- April 28 Del Ramsey

Week at a glance

| | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| Sunday | | |
| 8:30am | | Worship |
| 9:40am | | Christian Discipleship Classes |
| 11am | | Worship (w/ LiveStream) |
| 5pm | | AO Youth Group |
| Monday | | |
| 1pm | | Mobile Meals Prep |
| Tuesday | | |
| 7am | | Mobile Meals |
| 10am | | Quilters Sew&Go |
| 1pm | | Moving For Balance |
| 6:15pm | | Toastmasters Meeting |
| 7pm | | Okie Dokie Banjo Band |
| Wednesday | | |
| 5:30pm | | Midweek Meal |
| 6:15pm | | Spirit Singers |
| 6:30pm | | Midweek Classes, WOW and AO Youth Group |
| 7:15pm | | Choir |
| Thursday | | |
| 10am | | Mobile Meals |
| 1pm | | Moving for Balance |
| 6pm | | OK Scottish Pipes & Drums |
| Friday | | |
| 7am | | Mobile Meals Prep |
| Saturday | | |
| 9:30am | | Girl Scouts |

April's Special Offering is for our Adult Christian Education! This fund provides materials and events for St. Matthew Adults! Join us on Sunday morning at 9:40 and Wednesday nights at 6:30!

MIDWEEK
@ ST. MATTHEW'S
Food, music, and Bible study for all ages every Wednesday @5:30 PM.

Young Adult Small Groups Thursday Nights
CONTACT
DIAHRA
FOR DETAILS
DHELSON@OKUNC.ORG



- April 16 Paul & Carolyn Specht
- April 24 Charles & Patti Brown

Pumpkin Grants Awarded

The Pumpkin Grant committee is pleased to announce that they awarded a total \$20,852 to help members of our community. Those receiving grants were Mid-Del Food Pantry, Mission Mid-Del (operating Master's Market) and St. Matthew Mobile Meals. Thank you for all your hard work in the pumpkin patch and at the festival so that we can help those in need. We are looking forward to another great year this fall!

Have an announcement that needs to get out to the church? Please email katelynn@stmatthew.org. She can make sure it gets in the correct weekly update, bulletin, and if needed announced on Sunday morning!



St. Matthew United Methodist

A place to grow in Christ

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

300 N Air Depot Blvd
Midwest City OK 73110
www.stmatthew.org
405-732-6831

*The Mission of The United Methodist Church
is to make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world.*



*The worshippers at St. Matthew are our ministers.
These are the staff members who support them:*

St. Matthew Staff

- | | |
|---|---|
| Rev. Jonathon Clinesmith | Pastor |
| e-mail: jonathon@stmatthew.org | |
| Stephanie Ballow | Business Manager & Nursery Director |
| e-mail : businessoffice@stmatthew.org | |
| Diandra Nelson | Young Adult Director |
| e-mail : dnelson@okumc.org | |
| Kalyn Roark | Director of Student Ministries |
| e-mail: youth@stmatthew.org | |
| Katelynn Henderson | Director of Children's Ministries & Program Director |
| e-mail: katelynn@stmatthew.org | |
| Gayle Tatum | Director of Music Ministries |
| e-mail: gtatum@stmatthew.org | |
| Susie Larsen | Spirit Singers Director |
| e-mail: spiritsingers@stmatthew.org | |
| Emily Robinson | Organist/Pianist |
| Drew Andrews | Custodian |
| Louise Barnett | Financial Secretary |