



St. Matthew United Methodist

A place to grow in Christ

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 2023

From the Pastor's Desk



Greetings, St. Matthew United Methodist family!

In the spirit of the season, let's embark on a journey of anticipation, hope, and expectation—unwrapping the unexpected joys of Advent. During one of my Advent sermons last year I asked you to picture Ralphie from "A Christmas Story," eyes sparkling with excitement over his coveted Little Orphan Annie Secret Society decoder ring, and the disillusionment he experienced when he realized that it was just another marketing scam. It was a relatable moment. We've all had times where we've built up hope, only to face disappointment.

Life, like Ralphie's decoder pin, has a knack for challenging our expectations. Money can't buy happiness, beauty fades, and let's not even start on the letdowns of online shopping!

Advent is a season in the church that is all about expectation. But unlike Ralphie's ring, Advent isn't a season of false promises, but of promises fulfilled. The word "advent" is derived from the Latin "adventus," meaning coming. Ancient Christians actually borrowed the term from the Roman Empire, where cities buzzed with anticipation, celebrating the arrival of Caesar with an "adventus." It wasn't just about the emperor's physical presence; it was a public proclamation of honor and power. They'd even put up decorations!

If an ancient Roman were to time travel to today, there's a good chance they'd recognize what we're doing during Advent, with our own civic and private decorations reminding them of the decorated city streets of ancient Rome, heralding the anticipation of something significant.

What they wouldn't know is how much more significant our own Advent is compared to theirs. Advent is a reminder of why Jesus was born and why we exist. It's a season of hope and anticipation. And it's about more than just anticipating a holiday. It's about the anticipation of Christ's presence. His past presence, his future presence, and his presence at this very moment. In other words "Christ has come, Christ is with us, and Christ will come again."

So, what can we glean about these comings of Christ? Yes, there's the historical Christmas arrival, complete with the 8lb 7 oz. baby Jesus. But let's not forget the second coming—the less-discussed yet crucial aspect of Methodist doctrine. Are we ready for Jesus' return?

If we say that we are, then we have to recognize that this isn't just about the future. In the midst of our anticipation, let's recognize Christ's presence in our lives now. Living for Him, grounded in the present, and making this place ready for His return. Imagine if we lived every day as if Jesus were among us—challenging, guiding, and inspiring us to action.

As we navigate the Advent season, let's unwrap the unexpected joy of anticipation, with our hope firmly anchored in the enduring promises of Christ.

St. Matthew, we have a lot to look forward to in this month with Christmas on the horizon, a ton of special services and events and parties and gifts and time with people we love. But don't forget that at this very moment, Christ is with you, and we are called to live our lives in joyful anticipation of what Christ is going to do next.

God's peace and love be with you,
Jonathon

Worship Online 11am: www.facebook.com/StMatthewMWC or www.stmatthew.org/sermons
Give Online: www.stmatthew.org/giving



Words About Worship
From the Director of
Music Ministries



Last Sunday we celebrated Christ the King Sunday, the final Sunday in the Christian year. This Sunday, we begin the season of Advent. Can you believe that it's only 4 weeks until Christmas?! Many thanks to the faithful helpers who decorated our church home for the season! There is a sense of expectation in the air. Company is coming! Our "house" is prepared, now we need to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Messiah. Please plan to worship with us in person if you are able. If not, online worship continues on Facebook Live and on Youtube.

A quick refresher course — Advent is a form of the Latin word that means "arrival or to come." The colors of Advent are purple and blue. These colors denote royalty because in ancient times the dyes to make these colors were very rare and prohibitively expensive. Only the very rich could afford them. As we begin worship each Sunday, we will light the Advent candles. There is one candle for each of the four Sundays, Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The Chrismon tree is decorated with gold balls and our Chrismons. The word Chrismon is a combination of Christ and monograms. They have symbols, or monograms of the Christian faith, cross stitched on them. The lights on the trees and Communion rail remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

There are many opportunities for worship during Advent. December 3, we will celebrate Holy Communion in both services. We will light the candle of Hope. Scripture reading is Isaiah 64:1-9. Jonathon's sermon title is "Awesome Deeds We Will Not Expect." December 10, is the Candle of Peace, scripture reading is 2 Peter 3:8-15a, sermon title is "Slow vs. Patient." December 17 in the 8:30 service, the scripture is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, sermon title is 8 Things to Do While We Wait.

December 17 during the 11am service, the Chancel Choir and Spirit Singers will present our Christmas Cantata, **Love** by Joel Raney. St. Matthew Youth will provide the drama and we will welcome Mary and Joseph and Baby Jesus!

December 24, Christmas Eve, we will have **three services**. The first service will be **one service at 11am**. The scripture reading is Luke 1:26-38. Jonathon's sermon is "Name Him Jesus." The Chancel Choir anthem will be "Sleeping Adonai" with soloist, Maddie Ellis.

The **6pm Christmas Eve Service** will feature our children's Christmas Program, "Christmas Hang-Ups." Special music will be provided by Chancel Choir, Do You Hear What I Hear, soloist Bob Dimski, and Spirit Singers "Listen Children, Hear the Angels Sing!" Jonathon will light the Christ Candle and Chelsea Luxen will end the service with "O Holy Night." This service is designed for children, so it will be informal. This is an excellent time to invite family and friends to join you!

The third Christmas Eve service is the **11pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion**. This service features Carols and Scripture, "A Cradle in Bethlehem" by the Spirit Singers, "O Holy Night" sung by Stacey Ruston, and Holy Communion. The service ends with lighting our individual candles and singing Silent Night. If you have never attended this service, please make this a new part of your Christmas tradition, and bring someone with you. If you desire, pjs for kiddos are not only allowed, but encouraged.

December 31 we will again have **one service at 11 am**. The Scripture is Galatians 4:4-7 and Diandra Nelson is preaching. End your 2023 the right way with your church family!

I'll see you Sunday morning as we begin our preparation for the coming of the Messiah!

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

Shalom,

Gayle Tatum

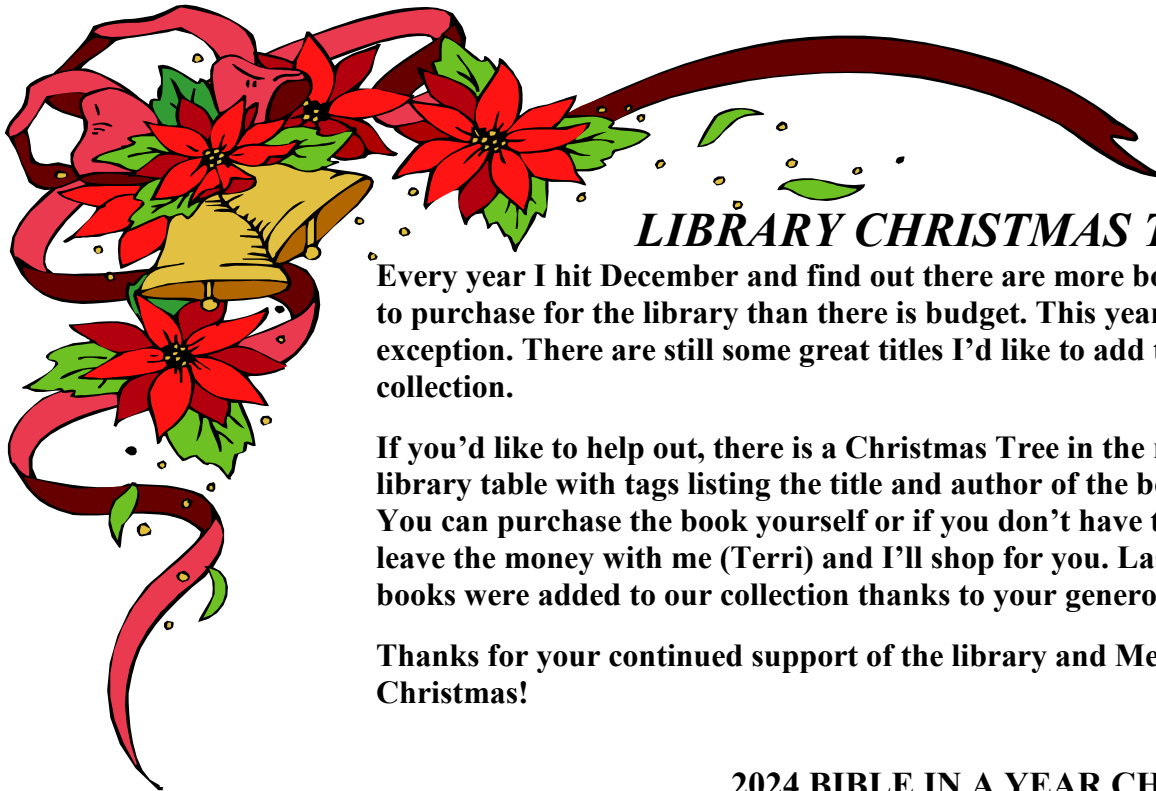


LIBRARY NEWS



December 23

from Terri



LIBRARY CHRISTMAS TREE

Every year I hit December and find out there are more books I'd like to purchase for the library than there is budget. This year is no exception. There are still some great titles I'd like to add to our collection.

If you'd like to help out, there is a Christmas Tree in the middle of the library table with tags listing the title and author of the book needed. You can purchase the book yourself or if you don't have time to shop, leave the money with me (Terri) and I'll shop for you. Last year 17 books were added to our collection thanks to your generosity!

Thanks for your continued support of the library and Merry Christmas!

2023 BIBLE IN A YEAR GROUP!

Valarie Autry	Eric Autry
Jackie Elk	Rebecca Hartmann
Dayna Heath	Larry Kisner
Susie Larsen	Beverly Link
Joyce Perkins	Ashley Poole
Donna Rader	Kaye Rhoades
Kalyn Roark	Emily Robinson
Kay Ross	Carolyn Specht
Cynthia Weldon	Terri Weldon

They are one month from finishing the greatest story ever told!

2024 BIBLE IN A YEAR CHALLENGE!

Have you always wanted to read the entire Bible, but didn't know how to go about it? Sign up for the St. Matthew Bible in a Year and we will keep you on track. You can read your Bible with a daily reading plan or the library has copies of *A Bible In A Year* we loan out. Contact Terri at Westieplace@cox.net or stop by the library and sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board hanging outside the library door.

If you've read the Bible in the past don't let that stop you. There are different versions or Chronological readings to try. The Bible is one book that's new every time you read it!

CHRISTMAS BOOKS!

Just a reminder that the library has a selection of Advent devotionals, children's Christmas storybooks, and adult fiction novels and novellas for you to checkout and read. We have a great selection from Adam Hamilton to the Jingle Bell Pups to Debbie Macomber, Sarah Monzon, and Natalie Walters. Stop by and check one out!

DEVOTIONAL SWAP

We're trying something new this year. If you have a devotional book that you don't plan to use again, bring it to swap with someone else. Place your devotional in the basket on the backbar in the library and take one from the basket to read in 2024.

Sunday School 9:40AM | Sunday Youth 5-7PM | Wednesday Youth 6:30-7:30PM

Alpha Omega News

Christmas Party Mystery Trip

Join us on December 15th at 4:45PM for a Christmas Party Mystery Trip!

- Youth are asked to bring a gift under \$15 for White Elephant
- Dinner will be Provided
- Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater for our Ugly Sweater Contest
- Youth will be back to the church around 10pm!

Firefighter Baskets

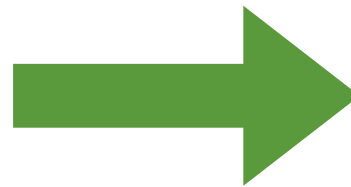
THE YOUTH ARE COLLECTING ITEMS FOR OUR ANNUAL FIREFIGHTER BASKET DELIVERY ON CHRISTMAS EVE! THIS YEAR, WE ARE ASKING FOR ONLY GAMES, CARDS, PUZZLES, BOOKS, ETC. DUE TO HAVING AN ABUNDANCE OF SNACKS ALREADY! THIS YEAR, WE HAVE ALSO CREATED AN AMAZON WISH LIST! FEEL FREE TO USE THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT TO FIND OUR WISH LIST! ITEMS NEED TO BE AT THE CHURCH BY 10AM ON CHRISTMAS EVE! FOR QUESTIONS, SEE KALYN!

The Christmas Cantata is December 17th! The youth will be performing the drama portion! All youth need to be at the church BY 9:30AM on December 17th! We will be practicing every Sunday and Wednesday in December, so please make sure and be at youth!

Holiday Parent's Night Out

NEED A NIGHT TO FINISH UP CHRISTMAS SHOPPING? WHAT ABOUT JUST NEEDING A DATE NIGHT? THE YOUTH HAVE THE THING FOR YOU! ON DECEMBER 9TH FROM 6-9PM, WE WILL BE HOSTING A PARENT'S NIGHT OUT FUNDRAISER! IT IS \$30 PER CHILD, WITH A \$5 DISCOUNT FOR MULTIPLE CHILDREN. PLEASE LET KALYN ROARK KNOW BY DECEMBER 6TH IF YOU

ARE INTERESTED!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- DEC. 9TH: HOLIDAY PARENT'S NIGHT OUT
- DEC. 13TH: DING-DONG PRAYER DASH
- DEC. 15TH: CHRISTMAS PARTY
- DEC. 17TH: CANTATA - NO YOUTH
- DEC. 24TH: FIREFIGHTER BASKETS
- DEC. 25TH-JAN. 6TH: BREAK

The purpose of Alpha Omega Student Ministries is to stand on the foundation, with a heart to worship, a mind to reach out, and hands to serve and love.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

December is such a fun month to be spending with kids! They are so excited for Christmas, and we will be working on the true meaning! There will be no Children's Church in the month of December, so we can celebrate advent with our families in the big service!

They have been rocking Christmas Program rehearsals! We are so honored to be bringing the message to the 6pm Christmas Eve Service. Parents, we have 2 dress rehearsals before the big day, Sunday, December 17 after the 11am service (pizza provided) and Saturday, December 23 at 9am (donuts provided). It's also VERY important to have your kids at WOW and Sunday School.

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**

DECEMBER

17-Dress Rehearsal
23-Dress Rehearsal
24-Christmas Program
31-No Sunday School

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



ST. MATTHEW GIVING OPPORTUNITIES



Monetary Donations via Check or Online Greatly Appreciated:

(Please note which ministry in check memo)

Mail to: St. Matthew United Methodist, 300 N Air Depot Blvd.. Midwest City, OK 73110

Or Donate at www.stmatthew.org

Angel Tree-December 17

OUR TREE IN THE NARTHEX HAS ANGELS ON IT. EACH ANGEL REPRESENTS A LOCAL CHILD AND HAS SOME GIFT IDEAS. PLEASE TAKE AN ANGEL AND SIGN THE CLIPBOARD. ALL GIFTS NEED TO BE RETURNED BY DEC. 17TH

Katelynn Henderson 405.740.4379

UWF Canned Food Drive-December 17

BRING CANNED AND NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS TO ST. MATTHEW FOR THE MID-DEL FOOD PANTRY.

Joyce Perkins-405.306.1569

Ice Angels Mitten Tree-December 17

ICE ANGELS IS A MINISTRY TO HOMELESS PERSONS. THEY ARE IN NEED OF HATS, SCARVES, MITTENS, COATS, BLANKETS, JEANS, UNDERGARMENTS, SOCKS, TOOTHBRUSHES, HAND SANITIZER, AND TRAVEL SIZED TOILETRIES. PLACE THE ITEMS ON OR UNDER THE MITTEN TREE IN THE NARTHEX.

Kay Ross-405.740.7837

Mobile Meals Surprises-December 14

MOBILE MEALS IS ASKING FOR SMALL GIFTS OR MONETARY/GIFT CARD DONATIONS FOR GIFTS TO PROVIDE GOODIE BAGS FOR THEIR RECIPIENTS.

Jennifer Cameron-405.795.4530

Christmas Goodie Sale-December 17

CALLING ALL BAKERS AND DESSERT MAKERS! THE CHRISTMAS GOODIE SALE IS SUNDAY, DEC. 17 AND ALL MONEY WILL GO TO FUND THE UTILITY ASSISTANCE FUND TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY.

Susie Larsen-405.826.0782

Firefighter Christmas Baskets-December 20

THE ALPHA OMEGA YOUTH PROGRAM WILL PUT TOGETHER CHRISTMAS BASKETS FOR FIREFIGHTERS! THIS YEAR THEY REQUEST BOARD GAMES, PUZZELS, BOOKS ECT.

Kalyn Roark-405.919.9621

December at St. Matthew

Upcoming Events

Dec. 5	6:30pm	Trustees
Dec. 7	8am	TEFAP
Dec. 9	8am	Men's Breakfast
Dec. 9	6-9pm	Parent's Night Out
Dec. 13	5:30pm	Birthday Party for Jesus and Last MidWeek until January
Dec. 24	11am 6pm 11pm	Christmas Eve Services
Dec. 25		Church Office Closed
Dec. 26-31	9am-Noon	Church Office Open
Dec. 31	11am	One Service

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

Week at a glance

Sunday

8:30am	Worship
9:40am	Sunday School
11am	Worship (w/ LiveStream)
5pm	AO Youth Group

Monday

9am	Mobile Meals Prep
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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 Programs
7:15pm	Choir

Thursday

10am	Mobile Meals
1pm	Moving for Balance
6pm	OK Scottish Pipes & Drums

Friday

7am	Mobile Meals Prep
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Saturday

9:30am	Girl Scouts
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dec. 2	Melissa Neidhardt Wendi Ramsey
Dec. 3	Reeanna Dixon
Dec. 5	Kayla Allen
Dec. 8	Ryan Ruston
Dec. 9	Betty Quartey
Dec. 10	Bill Case
Dec. 14	Paulina Covington Tim Wincapaw
Dec. 15	DesiRae Keenum
Dec. 16	Pam Brown Chris Elbah Barbara Wallace
Dec. 17	Janet Fryer
Dec. 18	Lucas Menser
Dec. 19	Chase Dealy
Dec. 20	Tom Miller Josh Pray
Dec. 21	Creed Elbah Lilith Pray
Dec. 23	LaRue Alexander
Dec. 24	Dean Wiltfong
Dec. 25	Joeann Gately
Dec. 26	Daniel Ruston
Dec. 27	Phillip Clemence
Dec. 28	Evangeline Bediako
Dec. 29	Maddie Ellis
Dec. 30	Travis Barnett Gracelyn Evans
Dec. 31	Paul Smith

UMC Marketplace

Want to help St. Matthew while you do your online shopping? Join the UMC Marketplace through iGive at <https://www.gcfa.org/umc-market>.

Many of your favorite retailers are on there such as Walmart and Kohl's and St. Matthew gets a percentage of every purchase!

Love Offering for Staff Bonus

SPRC Members will be collecting a donation for our staff's Christmas Bonuses. They will be at the doors after services for the first 2 Sundays in December. Thanks for your help blessing our staff!

Happy Anniversary!

Dec. 4	Mark & Robin Murphy
Dec. 11	Joshua & Rebecca Arkoh Ryan & Katelynn Henderson
Dec. 23	Joe & Ella McDonald
Dec. 27	Max & Susan Wilson



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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.*

Christmas Post Office



Open December 3rd in the Narthex! Save your stamps and "mail" your church family's cards via our own post office! Don't forget to stop by and pick up your mail!

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