



## *A Message from Rev. Tom Ficklin*

We are going to be spending the whole summer in Matthew. Remember, Matthew is written for a largely Jewish group to convince them that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. Matthew loves to relate the then present day to the Old Testament.

The apostle Matthew, a former tax collector, wrote his gospel in the Greek language of that day, around about 70 C.E. As hard as it is to believe, most of the gospels were written after Paul's epistles. The placement in the New Testament often leads us to think otherwise.

Matthew contains many thoughts important to the early church; Jesus' immaculate conception, the relationship of liturgy, law, discipleship, and teaching, and Jesus' life and death story. So why is it important to study the ancient literature in this day and time?

I would contend that Matthew has given us that answer himself. IF his goal was to connect the Old Testament to Jesus' life and ministry, then it must be important for us to connect Jesus' life and ministry to our lives, here and now. As was said in the sermon on May 24<sup>th</sup>, eternity is without beginning and without end. Our lives are a part of all eternity. It would seem prudent to seek to better understand our connection to Jesus and to eternity. Knowing about God and Jesus and The Kingdom is pretty important, especially when we are talking about a loving and dedicated relationship.

I would encourage everyone to read the gospel of Matthew as a story without stopping for a grand overview as we move into the sermons. Some have advocated that everyone, especially new Christians, should read Matthew for six times in a row without reading any other parts of the Bible in between. However you choose to approach the next month's sermons, approach them with the wide eyed wonder of a child seeking to learn more about someone you love. Jesus WAS, and IS, the long awaited Messiah, the Christ, the Savior from God.

