

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda NY
November 12th, 2023**



AS WE GATHER

It's not a big surprise that no one has accurately predicted the end of the world—not that it hasn't been attempted. From religious sects to cult leaders to apocalyptic predictions made when we entered a new millennium, a fascination grows around those who claim they have it all figured out. We are wise though to take the Lord at His word concerning the Last Day. From Amos in the Old Testament proclaiming the day of the Lord, to Paul writing the Thessalonians about Christ's return, to Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, the Lord does not give us a date or a time of the end of this world as we know it. What He continues to give us, though, are promises of His faithfulness, His continued care and providence, and His assurance that when that day comes, it will usher in a glorious blessedness in His perfect presence that will last forever.

Welcome to all our Members, Guests and Visitors today, if you're a visitor, please introduce yourself to the pastor after service in the Narthex. We here at St. Matthew pray that you enjoy your time worshiping with us today.

PREPERATION

LSB 816 From All That Dwell Below the Sky

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD?

Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

At midnight there was a cry, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."

The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father. Merciful Lord, as we await the day to come when Christ returns, we grow impatient as we wait.

We become distracted by the things of this world that do not last, and have given our attention and even devotion to things not beneficial to our faith. Forgive us.

As we await the day to come when Christ returns, we grow impatient with others.

We have sinned against others and You in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved You with our whole heart, nor loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us.

As we await the day to come when Christ returns, we grow impatient with You.

We come to think the day will never come when You make all things new, and have let our earthly circumstances cause faith to waiver, despair to increase, and doubts to arise. Forgive us.

But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

In His parable, Jesus reminds His people to “watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” In our watch and in our waiting, the Lord remains faithful to His promises of provision, and assurance of grace and forgiveness. Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Introit

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where
she may lay her young,

at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

How lovely is your dwelling place,

O LORD of hosts!

Behold our shield, O God;

look on the face of your anointed!

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the
tents of wickedness.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory be to God on high.

and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Let us pray.

Lord God, heavenly Father, send forth Your Son to lead home His Bride, the Church, that with all the company of the redeemed we may finally enter into His eternal wedding feast; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading Amos 5:18–24

¹⁸Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, ¹⁹as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. ²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? ²¹“I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²²Even though you offer me your

burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. ²³Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. ²⁴But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

****Choir: Here I Am Lord****

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the Twenty fifth chapter.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom

was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

LSB 851 Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us

Sermon

Offertory

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Offering

Prayer of the Church

As the Lord invites us to come to Him with petitions and supplications, we commonly close our prayers with “Amen.” Derived from a Hebrew verb, *amen* means “certainty” or “to confirm.” As Martin Luther put it, *amen* means, “Yes, yes, it shall be so.” As we await the day of the Lord, we pray in confidence as Scripture closes with the words: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” We, in our wait, come to our Lord in prayer, proclaim our “amens,” and confidently invite Him to come.

Let us pray for the people of God in the Bridegroom, Christ Jesus; His Bride, the Church; and for all people according to their needs. Heavenly Father, grant to us all things needful and dissuade us from all things harmful. Fill the oil in our lamps, strengthen and nourish our faith, that united, together we as Your Church and as Your people confidently and courageously shine Your light to our neighbors, our community, and the world. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Heavenly Father, keep us ready in our waiting for the promised day to come when the door is opened and we are welcomed to the wedding feast. In our wait, keep us from earthly distractions that would lead us away from You. By Your Holy Spirit, keep us prepared to welcome Jesus when He comes in all His glory at the hour and the day You have set, as we remain trusting in Your promises made, promises fulfilled, and promises to come. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Heavenly Father, You have already called faithful servants from this life as they are in Your glorious care and await the resurrection. For we who remain on this earth, give comfort and hope to those who grieve, [*especially . . .*]. For those who struggle with health of mind or sickness of body, grant healing according to Your will and lasting peace in light of affliction. For all those whose needs are known only to You and for all who face the afflictions of this life while awaiting the Last Day at Your time, grant patience. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Heavenly Father, as we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” awaiting His return, we know that in the meantime He even comes to us now through Your Word and Means of Grace. In the body and blood given and shed for us in, with, and under the bread and wine given and received, forgive us our sins and nourish our faith in our waiting that our hearts and lives be reflective of the grace You freely give. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

*Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever
and ever. Amen.*

Pax Domini

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

CLOSING RESPONSE

But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

And so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Watch therefore,

for you know neither the day nor the hour.

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Amen, amen, amen.

Hymn to Depart

LSB 924 Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing