

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda, NY  
April 28, 2024**



**AS WE GATHER**

When Jesus uses the image of the vine and speaks of vineyards, He is choosing something very familiar to His hearers. Viticulture is well known around the world. More than eighteen million acres worldwide is used for growing grapes—from Panama to Tajikistan to Zimbabwe! Today, the cultivation of vineyards is still an important agricultural component in both Israel and the Jordan, lands where Jesus walked and taught. Life in the vineyard is vital! As branches grafted to the Vine that is Christ, we are vitalized by His power. As we worship, God's life-supporting power infuses us! It is time to continue growing!

*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 worshipping with us today.*

**\*PREPERATION\***

### **TLH 188 Halleluiah! Jesus Lives!**

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

#### **OPENING SENTENCES**

Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

**sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise!**

Say to God, "How awesome are Your deeds!

**All the earth worships You and sings praises to You; they sing praises to Your name."**

Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of His praise be heard,

**who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip.**

You have multiplied, O LORD my God, Your wondrous deeds and Your thoughts toward us; none can compare with You!

**I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.**

*(We prepare for our time of confession in silence)*

#### **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

**O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature, I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.**

God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

**Amen.**

As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant 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**

A little while, and you will see me no longer;  
and again a little while, and you will see me.  
I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.  
Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.  
The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,  
and all your saints shall bless you!  
My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,  
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. 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**

The Lord be with you.  
*And with thy spirit.*

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Amen.*

### **First Reading Acts 8:26–40**

<sup>26</sup>An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. <sup>27</sup>And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” <sup>34</sup>And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning

with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup>And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\*\*Choir Write Upon My Heart\*\*\***

**Epistle 1 John 4:1–11**

<sup>1</sup>Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup>Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup>We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. <sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter

***Glory be to Thee, O Lord.***

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

***Praise be to Thee, O Christ.***

**Apostle’s Creed (rear cover of maroon hymnal)**

**TLH 352 O Savior, Precious Savior**

**Sermon Pruning Hurts**

***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**

Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on

earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [*name(s)*] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through 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.**

**Benedicamus**

The Lord be with you.  
*And with thy spirit.*  
Bless we the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God.*

**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.*

**TLH 47 Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise**