

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda, NY  
December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**



**AS WE GATHER**

The Advent season of preparing for the promised Savior to be born as one of us soon reaches its climax. Though in our homes and lives we may be wondering if we have done all we have needed to get ready for our own celebrations, we give thanks that at the center of our coming Christmas observations the Lord has prepared all we need. In this last Sunday of Advent and in the days ahead of anticipated Christmas joy, may we find peace in the preparations done freely for us out of grace, mercy, and perfect love centered on the Savior we soon welcome, who was born for us and all the world.

*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.*

**HYMN TLH 63 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry  
INVOCATION**

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

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

We light the fourth Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** The fourth Advent candle has been known as the angel candle and the candle of love. As our Advent season soon ends, we await the angelic message of the good news of a Savior. We have come to know the love of the one true God this season and always as we have prepared to celebrate His birth. We know God's promises come to fruition in Jesus, who later made known His Father's love in His being born into this world; in His life, ministry, teaching, preaching, healing; and ultimately in His dying and rising. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

**The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.** Guided by the light of love, we respond with the psalmist: "Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O LORD.**

How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

**They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights.**

For with You is the fountain of life;  
**in Your light do we see light."**

**THE GREAT O ANTIPHONS**

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:

**Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay.**

*Four Advent candles are lit.*

**HYMN      LSB 357      “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vv 1-2**

### **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**who made heaven and earth.**

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,  
**and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean.

**Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!**

We have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed.

**Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!**

Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!**

**O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to be born in our flesh, to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins.

**Restore us, O God of hosts; let Your face shine, that we may be saved!**

As a called and ordained servant of the Word and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the X Son and the Holy Spirit. To those who believe on His name He gives the power to become the

children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. Those that believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, to us all.

**Amen.**

### **Introit**

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.  
There is none holy like the LORD;  
there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
The LORD kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low and he exalts.

***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 & Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

*And with thy spirit.*

Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Amen.*

### **Old Testament Reading Micah 5:2–5a**

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup>And he shall be their peace.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\*\*\*\* Choir ” What Did the Star See”\*\*\*\*\***

### **Epistle Hebrews 10:5–10 <sup>5</sup>**

When Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup>Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’” <sup>8</sup>When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup>then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And by

that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**VERSE**

Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel. Alleluia.

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

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

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

### **Apostle's 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.**

### **Hymn TLH 55 Come Thou Precious Ransom, Come Sermon**

*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**

Let us pray for the church, for the people of God, and for all people according to their needs. We await to celebrate our King, who has come, promised to be born among the small clan of Judah in Bethlehem, fulfiller of

the old covenant promise, and bringer of life and grace in the new covenant in which we now live. We await our King, who promises to return, to restore and renew what was broken, and to bring life and light everlasting. Be with us as we soon close this Advent season of anticipation and preparation, rejoicing in the everlasting King who has come and will come again.

Almighty King, Your ways are not our ways nor are Your thoughts our thoughts. In days of doubts and despair that arise, in cases of confusion, and in times of trial and tribulation, remind us of Your kingdom in which we have been called and Your eternal kingdom to come. Be with those who struggle, [*including . . .*]. Help us to see Your mighty work even among our wayward world of sin and sorrow and the perfect plan of salvation imparted through the Savior we await.

Ever-present King, we lift up those who have been placed in authority over us in our community, state, nation, and world. Guide and direct their decisions that they be pleasing to You and for the benefit of all, including the marginalized, the voiceless, and the outcast. Where there is violence and warfare, grant peace. Where there is distress, bring stability. Where there is terror, bring comfort. Where there are opportunities for us to bring compassion and concern through our voices and actions, compel us to do so faithfully.

King of grace, the one sacrifice needed on our behalf has been given in Jesus, who was born into this world to take upon Himself our sin, burdens, and shame. In the new covenant of grace You have established through Him, help us through Your Spirit to remain faithful to You in Your eternal kingdom.

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.**

**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.*

**Hymn TLH 66 Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes**

