

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda, NY  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024**



**AS WE GATHER**

Tomorrow, we celebrate the beginning of the new year. For many, that will mean a family gathering, a meal, and stories about the past. On this New Year's Eve, many will make New Year's resolutions—something they intend to change in the upcoming year. There is a good chance you already know where you will spend that time, often with family, food, and storytelling. Have you ever considered there is a day coming that will be like no other before it? That day will be a day of judgment and salvation. It will be a day when wickedness is forever vanquished to the pits of hell and the righteous will celebrate with a feast and the story of our salvation told. It will be a day of change—one the world has never seen before and never will again. Thanks be to God for that day—let us look forward to it with great joy!

*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.*

**LSB 733 O God, Our Help in Ages Past  
INVOCATION**

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

**OPENING SENTENCES**

Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.

**I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many— terror on every side!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.**

But I trust in You, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

**Make Your face shine on Your servant; save me in Your steadfast love!**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, we gather on this last day of the year to worship our God and to receive the Lord’s Supper.

**We are also called by the apostle Paul: “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”**

Lift up your hearts, and joyfully give answer to the questions I shall now ask you. Do you believe that you are a sinner in need of God’s forgiveness?

**Yes, I confess it; I am a sinner in need of God’s forgiveness.**

How do you know this?

**From the Ten Commandments. I have sinned against God and against my neighbor.**

Are you sorry that you have sinned against God and your neighbor?

**Yes, it bothers my conscience that I have sinned against God and my neighbor.**

Where will you look for comfort and forgiveness?

**Only to the mercy and grace of God, which He demonstrated by sending Jesus to the cross and then to rise from the tomb. There is no other place.**

Do you repent of your sins?

**Yes, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, I will turn from my sins and live a holy life.**

Indeed, you should turn from your sins, as did Simon Peter, Paul, and all who have believed. Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the X Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God for His gifts of mercy, forgiveness, and newness of life. Amen.**

### INTROIT

Our help is in the name of the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The LORD has made known his salvation;

he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
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 & Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

*And with thy spirit.*

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

*Amen.*

### **Old Testament Reading Isaiah 30:15–17**

<sup>15</sup>For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” But you were unwilling, <sup>16</sup>and you said, “No! We will flee upon horses”; therefore you shall flee away; and, “We will ride upon swift steeds”; therefore your pursuers shall be swift. <sup>17</sup>A thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle Romans 8:31b–39**

If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than

that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia. The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him. Alleluia.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twelfth chapter

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

<sup>35</sup>[Jesus said:] “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! <sup>39</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

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.

#### LSB 878 Abide With Me

##### 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

##### LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray for the whole people of God and for all people according to their needs.

**Lord, we ask in Your mercy to hear and answer our prayers.**

Almighty God, You created this world from nothing, and by Your will it exists to this day;

**yet there is coming a day when You will be revealed, the world will be judged, and we will be home forever.**

We know that we are but strangers here;  
**heaven is our home. Bring us home as You have planned before the creation of the world.**

We look around our world, and we do not understand it;  
**we see things we do not understand, such as violence against others, and our hearts are broken.**

We long for the day Isaiah prophesied that will come;  
**today, however, You have made us Your hands, feet, and heart to other people as long as we are here.**

Therefore, we lift up those who are suffering in this life. Lord, be with them, provide for their needs, and comfort them in their hour of affliction, reminding them of their great reward.

**Help us remember Paul's reminder that our sufferings are not worthy of being compared with the glory that awaits us.**

You have commanded us to pray for rulers everywhere in Your Word.

**We lift up our President, all members of Congress, and our state and local leaders, and ask that they would be led by Your Spirit to make decisions pleasing to You and helpful for us, as well as all who rule this world.**

For those whose needs are not known to us, we lift them up in silence, knowing You will hear and answer. Lord Jesus, we look forward to the day when tomorrow is no more;

**hear our prayers and keep us in the true faith, so we need not worry about tomorrow or eternity;**

for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

**Amen.**

**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.**

**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.*

**LSB 748 I'm But a Stranger Here**