

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda NY
March 5th, 2025**



AS WE GATHER

We live as both saints and sinners. We cannot free ourselves from the effects of sin, and the ashes we receive today are only symbolic of our hopes and faith. We live among the ashes of past attempts to live better lives. But it does not depend on us! God's concern for His people in Joel's day has become Jesus' entrance into time and space. Salvation is assured for us as it was for Paul's readers. And the blessings of our Father in heaven are as certain for us as for Jesus' hearers. Our continued sinning shows not the ineffectiveness of ashes but the need for the continued grace of God. Today is a day to let that loving grace for Jesus' sake get through our ears and into our hearts.

****The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at this service, Communion is offered to Lutheran members in Altar & Pulpit Fellowship only, we believe based on Scripture and the "Book of Concord", (The Lutheran Confessions) that only those who share the same faith and teaching of Doctrine should Commune together. **Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:17, 1 Cor. 11:26 and Rom. 16:17** is where we find this written, if this is your first time at St. Matthew, and would like to take Communion, please talk to the Pastor before the service. If you are taking Communion, please fill out the Communion Registration form. ****

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.

TLH 145 Jesus, Refuge of the Weary
INVOCATION

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

Amen.

EXHORTATION

We would prefer to remain on the mountaintop with Jesus, shining in glory. But we know what follows: Lent and Holy Week. We cannot celebrate Easter resurrection without dying to sin, without our faults and failings being forgiven, and without receiving new life by the grace of God for Jesus' sake. We need to hear the accusing Law with its death sentence as well as the invigorating Gospel in which Christ calls us to new and eternal life. We need to hear God's Word in our own ears so that the ashes we receive today are not mere outward symbols but are reflections of our faith in God's grace in becoming one of us in our Savior, His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Joel 2:12–17* (“Return to Me.”)

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

People: Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster.

Who knows whether He will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, “Spare Your people, O LORD, and make not Your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why

should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

CONFESSION *Psalm 51:1–9*

Let us humbly go to God, confessing our sins. Almighty, eternal, loving Father,

we confess to You and one another not only that we have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions but that each failing has been a symptom of our sinful condition. We have tried to overlook our faults but realize the truth of our fallenness. We have tried to do better by our own strength but have fallen back into sin again. We are helpless to change by ourselves.

We mirror the sins of our spiritual ancestor, whom You, gracious God, guided to write in the Psalms: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**

Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, **so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that You have broken rejoice.

Hide Your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Let us go to our gracious God, asking for mercy.

We are not the people You would have us be; we are not what we had hoped for; we throw ourselves on the mercy of Your holy court, asking

Your forgiveness and renewal of life for the sake of our Savior, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

As a sign of your repentance and trust in God's mercy and grace, please come forward as you are directed to receive the sign of the cross on your forehead and to hear the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

All may come forward to receive ashes.

ABSOLUTION

God does not desire the death of sinners, but that they may live forgiven in His presence. He sent His Son, our Lord Jesus, to take our sins upon Himself and then to rise in our place, drawing people of faith to His eternal realm. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING (Continued) Joel 2:18–19

Then the LORD became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The LORD answered and said to His people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Introit

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
□ a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;

□ according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
□ and cleanse me from my sin!
For I know my transgressions,
□ and my sin is ever before me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
□ and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
□ and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
□ and uphold me with a willing spirit.

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.

SALUTATION & Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent.

Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness;

through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Epistle 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, “In a favorable time I

listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel St. Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter
Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. . . . ¹⁶“And when you fast,

do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ¹⁹“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
of all that is seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and
the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.**

TLH 149 Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

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 ourselves, the church around the world, and all people in their various needs. For those who join us in our repentance and in asking God for forgiveness, strength, and renewal of faith, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who do not know Christ as Savior, that God would send them messengers of hope to bring the good news of salvation to them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are ambassadors of our Lord in difficult circumstances, that God would protect and guide them as they seek to open new doors for those looking for God's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who provide support for those who are ill, in mourning, or in need of food, clothing, or shelter, that God would give them the words to say and actions to take to alleviate suffering in His name, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those in our circle of family, friends, and acquaintances for whom we pray silently, [*pause for silent prayer*], that God would provide answers in His almighty wisdom and love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For peace and prosperity, joy and hope, that God would listen to our sighs and groans, answering in His good time, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Into Your hands we place ourselves and all for whom we pray, heavenly Father, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

PREFACE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the Paschal Feast in sincerity and truth.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Having in remembrance the holy incarnation and life of Your Son, Jesus Christ, acknowledging His all-sufficient suffering and death upon the cross for our sin, praising His victorious resurrection from the dead, confessing His ascension on high where He evermore intercedes for us, and looking for His coming again in glory, we pray You, Father, to sustain the people Your Son has redeemed and bring us to the marriage supper of the Lamb in His kingdom without end; for in You, with You, and to You all glory, honor, and praise belong, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Hear us as we pray in His name as He has taught us:

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.

Distribution / TLH 659 Feed Thy Children, God Most Holy

Nunc Dimittis

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. 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.*

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
and His mercy endureth forever.

Let us pray

We give thanks, Lord our God, for the strengthening we have received in this Sacrament. Keep us close to You through the days ahead, guide us when we are perplexed, and continue to shepherd us through our turmoil in Your grace and mercy until we join those who have preceded us in glory; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God.

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 354 In the Cross of Christ I Glory