

St. Matthew Lutheran Church North Tonawanda NY



AS WE GATHER

Some of the tools and implements that make our lives easier do not have very lengthy histories. Although ladders of rope, wood, and stone have been around for thousands of years, the trusty stepladder we use in so many ways was not invented until 1862, when John Basely of Dayton, Ohio, constructed a hinged ladder so it could be put away easily after use. Ladders have aided humans for centuries. They assist a person to reach high places safely. The ladder in Jacob's dream did that and more—it reached down to him on earth with an affirmation of God's promises. As we worship, God reaches to us with His promises of redemption, forgiveness, and love. What a great vision that is for us to share!

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.

Opening Hymn

INVOCATION

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

PSALM

Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy! In Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness!

Enter not into judgment with Your servant, for no one living is righteous before You.

For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done; I ponder the work of Your hands.

I stretch out my hands to You; my soul thirsts for You like a parched land.

Answer me quickly, O LORD! My spirit fails! Hide not Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

Let me hear in the morning of Your steadfast love, for in You I trust.

Make me know the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul.

Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD! I have fled to You for refuge!

Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God! Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

For Your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life! In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

And in Your steadfast love You will cut off my enemies, and You will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am Your servant.

**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.**

SALUTATION & COLLECT

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O Lord, You gave the Law so that even in our sin we might know Your will for our lives, and You gave us Your only Son to cleanse our lives of sin. For His sake, forgive us and renew us so that we may serve You faithfully; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and infants, You have established strength because of Your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place,

what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?

Yet You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!

**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.**

FIRST READING *Genesis 50:15–21*

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people^[a] should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Let us pray.

Lord God, as we remember the past and meditate on Your works, we give thanks that when the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature have pursued us, in Your faithfulness and righteousness You have not hidden Your face from us but have rescued us from our enemies and preserved our lives though Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, for He was not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters but freely forgave and rescued us, and He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

SECOND READING *Romans 8:28–39*

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[a] for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he

also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be^[b] against us? ³² 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? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ 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.^[c] ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 26:47–56*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.”^[a] Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant^[b] of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled,

that it must be so?”⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.”⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

**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.**

Sermon Hymn

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

RESPONSIVE LITANY

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Let our cry come to You.

Lord Jesus Christ, as we draw near to the end of this Lenten season, we pray that the words we have heard would abide in our hearts as we abide in You.

You, O Lord, have the words of eternal life.

Grant us peace this night

with hearts that are restful, because they have found their rest in You.

Send us back tomorrow to our daily lives and duties, refreshed and restored,

with greater understanding in our minds, greater love within our hearts, and a firmer grip upon Your hand.

Lord, we lift up to You our friends and loved ones who are not with us at this time.

Bless them, O Lord, and keep them safe.

Hear us, O Lord, as we silently bring You our private petitions.

Silent prayer

Trusting in Your mercy, we pray as Your Son taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

**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.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you, defend you from all evil, and bring you to everlasting life.

Amen.

Closing Hymn