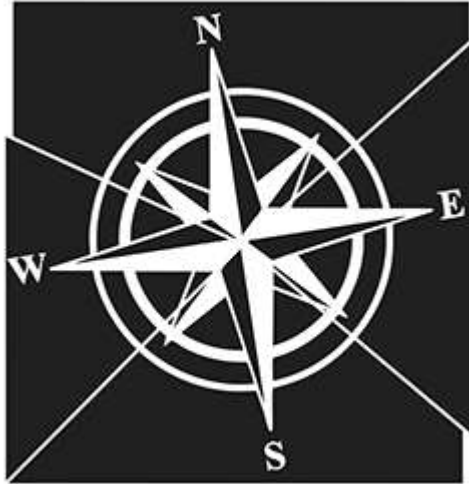


**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
August 24th, 2025**



AS WE GATHER

To be the “favorite child” in a family is often a source of competition and sometimes a source for comedy. Years ago, a pair of sibling entertainers, the Smothers Brothers, made their family relationship a staple of their onstage humor when Tom, the older brother, would remind Dickie, the younger, “Mom always did like you best.” As we gather with God’s people at worship week by week, we can be certain that our gracious God values all of us and is pleased to see us grow in grace year by year. The psalmist wrote that “the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor” (Psalm 84:11). In the same Psalm 84 is the verse where the psalmist exclaims to God, “For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere” (v. 10). There is nothing better than for God’s favorite people, which we are, to be gathered in a most favorite place—which this is! It doesn’t get any better than that!

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 16 Blessed Jesus, At Thy Word

INVOCATION

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

Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will!

Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

INTROIT

Splendor and majesty are before him;

we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us,

and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

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,

Let us pray.

O Lord, You have called us to enter Your kingdom through the narrow door. Guide us by Your Word and Spirit, and lead us now and always into the feast of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 66:18–23

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the

Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. ²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD. ²²“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. ²³From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Epistle Hebrews 12:4–24

⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” ⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no

chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. ¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

St Luke 13:22-30

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

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

²²[Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, ²⁴“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ ²⁶Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ ²⁸In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. ²⁹And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Apostles' 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 life everlasting. Amen.**

Hymn I Am The Bread of Life See Insert 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 whole people of God in Jesus Christ and for all people according to their needs. We begin this time of prayer as we sing the first stanza of the prayer hymn “In Holy Conversation.” We pray for the whole church throughout the world that, as people united in faith and active in love, we may witness to the Good News that is ours in Christ Jesus. We pray for all nations of the earth, that in those places where strife and discord rule there may be times of peace and reconciliation, and we pray for our own nation that it may be an ensign of hope.

We bring our special petitions today to God’s throne of grace as we pray for our families, thanking God for the blessings that are received from caring parents, grandparents, public service and emergency workers, and caregivers who intersect with our lives. We thank God, our heavenly Father, for listening to our petitions and responding to them—as we sing of in the second stanza.

We pray for the varied situations of daily life in which we are placed, especially in our workplaces and neighborhoods, that we may be peace bringers in all our actions and words. We pray for the special needs of this day, remembering those who are ill and those who mourn, and for all those matters on our hearts currently, [*including . . .*].

For all those saints who have completed their earthly journeys in faith and have left us a legacy of love, we thank You, Lord, and faithfully commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy 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.**

BENEDICAMUS

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hymn TLH 54 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah