

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
August 31st, 2025**



AS WE GATHER

Entering the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the traditional site of the birth of Jesus, is one of the most memorable experiences for any Christian pilgrim visiting the Holy Land. First constructed at the commission of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great in AD 326, the church is on the oldest site continually used for worship by Christians anywhere in the world. Although the basilica initially had a grand arched entrance in its first thousand years, it came into a period of disuse and neglect after the conquest of the Holy Land by the Islamic rulers of the Ottoman Empire in AD 1516. In an effort to prevent people from entering the church with horses and cattle, the Christians caring for the building at that time walled up the main entrance, leaving only a very small door. This opening has ever since been known as the "Door of Humility." It makes a most fitting way for those who come to worship at the site of the manger of the Christ Child to enter that sacred space. Where we worship here and now is also a sacred space. Although we may not have needed to bow down to enter the front door today, bringing an attitude of humility to our worship of our gracious Lord is truly fitting for us.

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 worshipping with us today.

Hymn: LSB 869 With the Lord Begin Your Task

INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song,

His praise in the assembly of the godly!

Let Israel be glad in his Maker;

let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

Let them praise His name with dancing, making melody to Him with
tambourine and lyre!

**For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He adorns the humble with
salvation.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

It is good and right that we should make confession of our sins. The section on confession in Luther's catechism instructs us with these words:

"Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven." Humble yourselves, then, before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your present and eternal punishment. By nature, I am a sinful creature. By thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all of my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life.

God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

Amen.

As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Introit

It is God who executes judgment,
putting down one and lifting up another.
We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near.
We recount your wondrous deeds.
At the set time that I appoint
I will judge with equity.
For not from the east or from the west
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up.
But I will declare it forever;
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

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 of grace and mercy, teach us by Your Holy Spirit to follow the example of Your Son in true humility, that we may withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds avoid ungodly pride; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Old Testament Proverbs 25:2–10

²It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out. ³As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable. ⁴Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel; ⁵take away the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness. ⁶Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, ⁷for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of a noble. What your eyes have seen ⁸do not hastily bring into court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame? ⁹Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not reveal another's secret, ¹⁰lest he who hears you bring shame upon you,

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Epistle Hebrews 13:1–17

¹Let brotherly love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. ⁴Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. ⁵Keep your life free from love of money,

and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” ⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. ¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

St Luke 14:1-14

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

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹One Sabbath, when [Jesus] went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ²And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. ³And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” ⁴But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” ⁶And they could

not reply to these things. ⁷Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” ¹²He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

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: LSB 850 God of Grace and God of Mercy
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

God, our Savior, wants all people to come to know the truth. Let us pray for ourselves and for the church everywhere, that we may persevere in grace, and for all people, that we may share with them the joy we have in the unity of Christ. For the church, the gathering of God's people; for the clergy of the church that the Holy Spirit confirm then in their apostolic mission; for all Christians, that persevering in grace, we may proclaim the kingdom of heaven in our lives, For all public servants, that they zealously promote justice and the common good; for industrial workers, that their productivity provide blessing for all; for favorable weather, that we may give thanks for a good harvest, For the homeless and the hungry; for the physically and mentally ill and the aged and infirm, that we cherish Christ in them and surround them with our care, [*especially . . .*], and that each of us would be graced with holy humility that we may find our joy in humble service in Jesus' name in every situation, For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of our missionaries, missionary teachers, medical personnel, and all Christian aid workers, that their work be unhindered and be a continuing source of blessings in Jesus' name, With thanks for the faithful examples set by those whose earthly journeys are complete and whose witness to Christ

still inspires us, and also for this holy assembly here and now, that sealed with the promised Spirit, we may witness to the fullness of God's love
Be merciful, Lord God, and hear our prayers; grant Your Holy Spirit to plead for us and guide Your church into all truth and holiness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, 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: LSB 919 Abide, O Dearest Jesus