

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda, NY  
December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025**



**AS WE GATHER**

During Advent, we wait *for* Jesus, *with* Jesus. The darkest part of the year is brightened by the assurance that the Savior who came for the world once is coming again. And we do not wait alone. Together, the whole Christian Church is accompanied in this waiting by the Christ who promises to be with His people always. Jesus' mother, the virgin Mary, knows a lot about waiting. With pregnant anticipation, Mary waited *for* Jesus, the promised Messiah who would reign from David's throne forever. But Mary was always waiting *with* Jesus, the Son of the Most High nestled within her womb. Throughout this Advent, we will listen with Mary, sing with Mary, and wait with Mary. Because, on darkest days, the Christ comes as near to you as He did to Mary to wait *with* you for the glorious sunrise that's coming.

Today we shall remember Mary as God reveals who she is through His Word, not how the world and many churches describe her. And in considering Mary, we look to the One who is the reason the Bible teaches us about Mary—Jesus Christ, her Son and our Lord

*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.*

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**TLH 71 Watchman, Tell Us of the Night**  
**INVOCATION**

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

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God.

**The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.**

*Silence for self-examination.*

Holy and gracious God,

**I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.**

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of 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.**

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**\*\*\*\*\*Hymn LSB 357: O Come O Come Emmanuel vv1\*\*\*\*\***

*Advent Candle to be lit during hymn*

***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and Ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.***

***Rejoice, Rejoice, Immanuel, shall come to you, O Israel.***

### **Introit**

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
[ ] again I will say, Rejoice.  
I will hope continually  
[ ] and will praise you yet more and more.  
My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the  
day,  
[ ] for their number is past my knowledge.  
With the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD I will come;  
[ ] I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.  
O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
[ ] and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.  
So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,  
[ ] until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all  
those to come.

**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.*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **FIRST READING Isaiah 35:1–10**

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” <sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup>And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING James 5:7–11**

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia. Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.

## **Matthew 11:2-15**

Gospel of Matthew the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter

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

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” <sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger

before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ <sup>11</sup> Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup> and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”  
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.**

**TLH 63 On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry**

### 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

### PRAYERS

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That the church may proclaim the Good News to the poor, forgiveness to the sinner, and healing to all those afflicted in body or soul, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That hope may rule our hearts against despair and that we may know joy in the midst of trials, giving thanks that Jesus Christ has come to set us free from sin, death, and all our enemies, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That peace may calm our upset hearts and love direct our words and our actions, giving thanks that we shall be raised from this mortal life to everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That the nations and all the people may be well served by good and faithful leaders, that violence be replaced with peace among the nations, and for our good citizenship, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That the home may be a place of blessing and love, that marriages may be kept holy, that the lonely may find friendship, and that we may serve one another in love, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we may respect life and gladly serve children and support mothers with child and those whose desire for a child has yet to be fulfilled, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That all those afflicted in body or soul may know healing and peace and that the grieving may be comforted in their loss, [*especially . . .*], let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we who here receive this Holy Sacrament be granted the fullness of what is to come when at last the dead shall be raised and the heavens and earth be made new and all the people of God reunited in the eternal dwelling place of God Most High, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. 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.***

**TLH 66 Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes**