

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
December 17th, 2025**



AS WE GATHER

During Advent, we wait *for* Jesus, *with* Jesus. The darkest part of the year is brightened by the hope 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.

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.

Midweek Advent 3

HYMN LSB 338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

OPENING SENTENCES

The Lord Himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely.

And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

INVOCATION

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

Amen.

During the hymn, the Advent candles may be lit.

HYMN LSB 357 O Come, O Come Emmanuel vv1

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.

PSALM

From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Hear my cry, O God,

listen to my prayer.

For You have been my refuge,

a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me dwell in Your tent forever!

Let me take refuge under the shelter of Your wings!

For You, O God, have heard my vows;

You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name.

Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!
May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

So will I ever sing praises to Your name,
as I perform my vows day after day.
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.
From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O light in our darkness, by Your Word, You brighten our path. When days are dark and our direction unclear, send Your guiding Spirit that we might be assured of Your nearness and cling to Your promises; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Hosea 2:18–23

¹⁸ And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish^[a] the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

²¹ “And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD,
I will answer the heavens,
and they shall answer the earth,

²² and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and they shall answer Jezreel,
²³ and I will sow her for myself in the land.
And I will have mercy on No Mercy,
and I will say to Not My People, You are my people’;
and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’”

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING Matthew 1:18–25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed^[b] to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Apostle's 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 the life everlasting. Amen.**

Hymn LSB 350 Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come 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

Son of David and Son of Joseph, Your arrival fulfills every promise ever made by the Lord, our God. Teach us to know You as the joy of every

longing heart, that we might kneel before You, just as Your earthly guardian Joseph knelt beside Your manger, in trust that You hear our prayers and will bring us deliverance. O holy Child of Nazareth, You learned and grew in the house of a carpenter.

hear our prayer.

Build every father within Your great family into an honorable man, sacrificing for the sake of their household and leading them in holiness for the sake of Your name. Particularly bless fathers who have a troubled relationship with their children; heal their hurts and bind them in kindness and love. Son of Joseph,

hear our prayer.

Incarnate Son of God, You dwelt among sawdust and splinters. Bless all those whose work is difficult and dangerous and take under Your protection all who put their hands to any useful task. Sustain the commerce and industry of this nation. Give all who work the just rewards for their labor and the knowledge that their work is a blessing in Your sight. Son of sweat and toil,

hear our prayer.

Son of heaven's splendor, You came into our world yet had no place to lay Your head. Mercifully care for the homeless, the hungry, the poor, the unemployed, the lonely, the sick, and the troubled of mind and heart. Relieve their want, provide for their livelihood, and make their needs known that Your servants might bring to them the blessings of Your hand. Son of suffering,

hear our prayer.

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.**

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

**I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son,
that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would
forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me
this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul,
and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may
have no power over me. Amen.**

BENEDICAMUS

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

CLOSING SENTENCES *Luke 1:49, alt.*

He who is mighty has done great things for me.

Holy is His name.

To God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—be all honor and glory in
His holy church, forever and ever.

Amen. Christ died! Christ is risen! Christ shall come again!

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

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.

Hymn LSB 887 Now The Light Has Gone Away