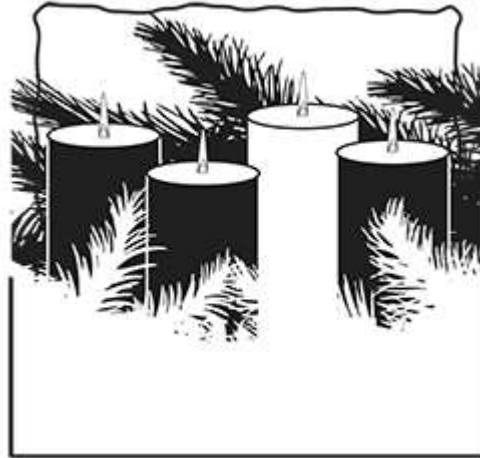


**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda NY  
December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025**



**AS WE GATHER**

It is still Advent, but today we hear an account of the Christmas story early so that we may know what to look for later this week. The Son of Mary by the Holy Spirit is Jesus, who saves us from our sins and who fulfills the promise of Immanuel: God is with us. Perhaps the richness of the details of Luke's account sometimes distracts us from the message. The Lord has come to keep His Word, to save us from our sins, and to keep us in His hand so that we may be His eternally. None of this was obvious to either Mary or faithful Joseph, and yet the Lord was at work through it all to deliver to us His Son to be our Savior. We will still worry when things do not go as we plan, and we will still struggle with doubts and fears, but the angel of God's presence is no mere messenger sent in His place. No, the angel of God's presence is His only-begotten Son, whose name is Jesus and whose work is our salvation.

\*\*\*\*The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at this service, Communion is offered to Lutheran members in Altar & Pulpit Fellowship only, we believe based on Scripture and the "Book of Concord", (The Lutheran Confessions) that only those who share the same faith and teaching of Doctrine should Commune together. **Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:17, 1 Cor. 11:26 and Rom. 16:17** is where we find this written, if this is your first time at St. Matthew, and would like to take Communion, please talk to the Pastor before the service. If you are taking Communion, please fill out the Communion Registration form. \*\*\*\*

*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.*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**TLH 64 Jesus, Thy Church with Longing Eyes**  
**INVOCATION**

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

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
**and with Him is plentiful redemption.**

*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 Candles 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**

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,

□ that the mountains might quake at your presence.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,

□ and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning,  
more than watchmen for the morning.  
O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
and with him is plentiful redemption.  
And he will redeem Israel  
from all his iniquities.

***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.***

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

***And with thy spirit.***

Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

***Amen.***

### **First Reading Isaiah 7:10–17**

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup>And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\*\*\*Choir: What did the Star See\*\*\*\***

### **Epistle Romans 1:1–7**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup>To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel. Alleluia.

### **Matthew 1:18–25**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

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

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

***Praise be to Thee, O Christ***

### **Nicene Creed**

**I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,**

begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the  
dead, whose kingdom will have no end.  
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

**TLH 56 Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring  
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**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord

**Lord, have mercy.**

For faith to rejoice in the promise of the Father kept in Christ, for an end to worries and fears, and for peace to rule our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the courage in the face of danger and confidence in the face of doubt, knowing that God will keep us as His own possession, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this congregation and the church across many nations, called by the Spirit and sustained by the means of grace, that we may not fail to tell the story of our Savior's birth nor the promise of His name, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peoples and leaders of all the nations, that in every place they may know justice and be free to worship the Lord without fear, and for an end to violence and war, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all those who protect us in this and every place, for the emergency workers and disaster relief personnel, and for those who watch on our behalf in the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For generous hearts that those in poverty and need may be supplied from the abundance the Lord has granted to us, and for our tithes and offerings to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For families and homes, especially those alone in this holy season of our Savior's birth, that we may love and serve them, extending Christ's compassion to all those around us, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For God's mercy to the sick, His relief to those who suffer, His presence with the grieving and dying, and His peace to those troubled in mind or spirit, [*especially . . .*], let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For faith to discern and believe Christ's presence in this Holy Communion and for repentance that we may receive His body and blood for our good, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all those who travel and those whose celebrations may be missing loved ones, that the Lord may at last bring us together in His presence on high, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Come to the aid of Your people, O Lord, and defend us against all our enemies of body and soul, that at the day You have appointed, we may rejoice in Your presence together with those who have gone before us with the sign of faith and now rest in peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom with the Father and the Spirit You are one God, one Lord, now and to the end of the ages.

**Amen.**

## **PREFACE**

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit*

Lift up your hearts.

*We lift them up to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*It is right to give Him thanks and praise.*

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



### **Sanctus**

*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.*

### **THE WORDS OF OUR LORD**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

### **PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST**

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

### **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.*

#### **PAX DOMINI**

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

#### **AGNUS DEI**

*O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.*

**Distribution / TLH 314 Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray**

#### **Nunc Dimittis**

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. 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.*

#### **Thanksgiving**

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,  
*and His mercy endureth forever.*

### **POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,  
**for His steadfast love endures forever.**

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**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 673 Let There Be Peace on Earth**