

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
December 28th, 2025**



AS WE GATHER

The stores are processing gift returns, but we dare not return our greatest Christmas gift—our Lord Jesus! God is gracious and forgiving, remembering His promises. He leads us, as we hear He did for the Israelites in the Old Testament Reading. We need no one else, as we are God's dear children, which Paul reminds us in the Epistle. It is not that we do not have enemies—even Joseph had to figure out what to do—but we have Jesus with us. It is still Christmas.

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.

First Sunday after Christmas

TLH 102 Oh Come, All Ye Faithful
INVOCATION

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

PSALM 111

Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of splendor and majesty is His work,
and His righteousness endures forever.

He has caused His wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear Him;
He remembers His covenant forever.

He has shown His people the power of His works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

The works of His hands are faithful and just; all His precepts are
trustworthy;

**they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness
and uprightness.**

He sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is His name!

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it
have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

O Lord God, we confess that although we usually prepare for, as Paul put it,
“the fullness of time,” that is not true in our personal lives.

Forgive our impatience for taking matters into our own hands, forgive our not trusting that You are in control of all things, and forgive our failing to acknowledge You above all else.

We confess, O Lord, that unlike obedient Joseph, we have not always listened to Your commands and instructions.

Forgive our desire to be in control, forgive our avoiding difficult decisions, and forgive our thinking that we are able to arrange all things for our own benefit.

We confess, O Lord, that we have kept our faith to ourselves.

Forgive us for not giving Your leading us “a glorious name,” forgive our failure to ask You for guidance each day, and forgive our seeking to be like everyone else, rather than trusting You.

Forgiveness has been won for you! The babe born in Bethlehem is the only-begotten Son of God and your elder Brother. The Spirit urges you to cry, “Abba! Father!” As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Introit

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

Thus says the LORD: “Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears,

for there is a reward for your work, declares the LORD,
and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

There is hope for your future, declares the LORD,
and your children shall come back to their own country.”

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 also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 63:7–14

⁷I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely.” And he became their Savior. ⁹In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence

saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ¹⁰But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, ¹²who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, ¹³who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. ¹⁴Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING Galatians 4:4–7

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia. My eyes have seen Your salvation; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel. Alleluia.

Matthew 2:13-23

Gospel of St. Matthew the Second chapter

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹³When [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for

the child, to destroy him.”¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,²⁰ saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”²¹ And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.²³ And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

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 94Hark! The Harold Angels Sing
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 go to our heavenly Father in prayer.

For the church, that the news of Christ's birth among us would bring joy to many people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have rebelled against all that our caring God has lavished upon them and that He would open their hearts and minds, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have not heard about Jesus' birth, about our Savior's willingness to be a servant of the Most High, or about their own salvation, that God would surround them with people of faith and the Gospel Good News, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who tend fields, raise animals, distribute food, or work in supermarkets and roadside stands, that they recognize that they work to

alleviate hunger and do what pleases our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the leaders of the nations, those who bear arms, and all who run toward harm to help those who need aid and rescue, that they stop at nothing to establish and maintain peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those near and dear to us, [*especially . . .*], that God would alleviate suffering and pain, sadness and grief in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Into Your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of our elder Brother and Your Son, 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.

CLOSING SENTENCES

Let us pray. We give thanks, heavenly Father, that You sent to earth Your only-begotten Son. By His entry into human existence, open our hearts and eyes to see that You are indeed our heavenly Father and we are heirs of Your gracious promise; 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 87 Joy To the World, the Lord is Come