

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda NY
March 4th, 2026**



AS WE GATHER

We pray, but at times God seems distant. Today we hear the Good News that God has come down to us as Jesus, who calls Himself “I AM,” the name Moses was to use. Jesus is God, in whom all of God dwells bodily, Paul writes. In His Son, our heavenly Father made lavish promises: to Abraham, “In you shall all the nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8), and to us, who belong to Christ, “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Galatians 3:29). God has revealed Himself in our Savior, Jesus, by His wondrous love.

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.

Lenten Mid-Week 3

LSB 437 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed
INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in You I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths.

Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

for You are the God of my salvation;

for You I wait all the day long.

Exodus 4:1–20

Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’”² The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.”³ And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—⁵“that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”⁶ Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.”^[a] And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous^[b] like snow.⁷ Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.⁸ “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign.”⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry

ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.”¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do.¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.¹⁷ And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”¹⁸ Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.”²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God

Hebrews 3:1–6

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.³ For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.⁴ (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later,⁶ but Christ is faithful over God's house as a

son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God

John 8:31-38

The Holy Gospel according to St John, the eighth chapter.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave^[a] to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

RESPONSORY

You who share in a heavenly calling.

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son.

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

PASSION READING

The Passion of our Lord according to St. Mark, the fourteenth chapter.

And they laid hands on Him and seized Him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them,

“Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture Me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.”

And they all left Him and fled. And a young man followed Him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked. And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. And Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against Him, saying, “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have You no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?” But He remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said,

“I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? You have heard His blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned Him as deserving death. And some began to spit on Him and to cover His face and to strike Him, saying to Him, “Prophesy!” And the guards received Him with blows.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

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 life everlasting. Amen.**

LSB 770 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

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 pray for all people who are unsure of God's hearing their prayers.
**Hear their cries, O Lord, grant them courage as You accompany, and
answer them speedily.**

Let us ask God to strengthen the faith of those who only recently have known Him.

Reveal Yourself gently to them, Lord Jesus, through the caring of Your church.

Let us pray for those who feel trapped by circumstances beyond their control.

Assure them that You know their dilemma and that the deliverer has come: Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

Let us pray for all who fear God's punishment.

Show them mercy, O Lord, as You passed over Your Old Testament people. Grant them peace through Your presence.

Let us pray for all who know no good ways to turn, are unsure of the truth, and await only their deaths.

Tell them again, Lord Jesus, that You alone are the way, and the truth, and the life.

Finally, let us pray for all who are tired from opposition in the world around them and from their own conflicts within themselves.

Awaken in them a sense of Your accompanying them on their journey until that day when they and we join those who have gone before us at Your heavenly banquet hall.

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength.

By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works,

give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness;

through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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.**

BENEDICTION

Our heavenly Father, who revealed Himself to us as love eternal, bless you;
His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave Himself in love for the sins of all,
bless you; and the Holy Spirit, who has worked trusting faith in your hearts,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

LSB 919 Abide, O Dearest Jesus