

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda NY
March 11th, 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 worshiping with us today.

Lenten Mid-Week 4

TLH 354 In the Cross of Christ I Glory
INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

For to everyone who has will more be given,
and he will have an abundance.

I will pass over you,
and no plague will befall you to destroy you.

Exodus 12:1–14

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.^[a] ⁷“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man

and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God

1 Corinthians 5:6–8

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God

Matthew 25:17–30

The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew, the twenty fifth chapter.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.^[a] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you

scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

RESPONSORY

Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Cleanse out the old leaven.

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

PASSION READING

The Passion of our Lord according to St. Mark, the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” But he denied it, saying,

“I neither know nor understand what you mean.”

And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” But he

began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he broke down and wept. And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole Council. And they bound Jesus and led Him away and delivered Him over to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him,

"You have said so."

And the chief priests accused Him of many things. And Pilate again asked Him, "Have You no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against You." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered Him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.

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.**

**TLH 145 Jesus Refuge of the Weary
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, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways

and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; 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.

TLH 653 Now the Light has Gone Away