

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
March 22nd, 2026**



AS WE GATHER

Lent is a time when God prepares His people to celebrate the Paschal Feast, the resurrection of Jesus, with sincerity and truth. In the Reading from Ezekiel 37, we see the power of the Word that transforms dry bones into living flesh with the breath of the Spirit. This same Spirit lives in us and will raise us at the Last Day, which is exactly what we hear from Paul in the Reading from Romans 8. The Spirit who raised Christ will also give life to us. Having received the Spirit in Baptism, we join with Martha in confessing boldly that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who comes to us today in His Word and Sacrament and will come again to call us out of our graves.

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.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

TLH 140 Jesus, I will Ponder Now (Vv. 1-3)

INVOCATION

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

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD!

O Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.

Silent reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we cry to You from the depths of our sin. We were born into those depths and need Your Word to call us out of them. We have sinned against You with our thoughts, our words, our actions, and our inactions. We have lived according to the flesh rather than the Spirit. From the depths, we wait for You. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, deliver our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from stumbling. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name.

Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. You are precious in His sight because Christ is in you. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Introit

Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints.

I love the LORD, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.

Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.

Then I called on the name of the LORD:

“O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”

For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

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

SALUTATION

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading Ezekiel 37:1–14

¹The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ²And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many

on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” ⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.’ ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

****** Choir: “I Know the Plans”******

Epistle Romans 8:1–11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the

law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

John 11:1–45

The Holy Gospel according to St. John the eleventh chapter

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day,

he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” ¹¹After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” ¹²The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” ¹³Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” ¹⁷Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” ²⁸When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jews

said, "See how he loved him!"³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

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 140 Jesus I will Ponder Now (Vv. 3-6)

Sermon

Offertory

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

Because the Lord has inclined His ear to us, let us call upon the One who delivers us in our time of need. Lord of life, You look upon the ways in which sin has withered our existence, and You speak Your words of life over us.

Bless all pastors, that they may speak that same word with the faithfulness of Ezekiel, for the benefit of Your church and her mission,

for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Loving Father, You claimed us as children in Holy Baptism, setting us free from the law of sin and death by sending Your own Son in the likeness of human flesh. Help us to forsake the ways of sinful flesh and to walk according to the Spirit who lives in us,

for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Fearless Lord, even in the threat of death You pursue those You love. Give us courage to follow You into those places where death taunts and persecution lingers. Help us to fix our eyes on the One who is the founder and perfecter of our faith,

for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Almighty God, precious in Your sight is the death of Your saints. Strengthen our leaders, our government, and all You have put in place to protect us, that they look upon every life entrusted to their protection with the same care,
for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Merciful Lord, You deliver those who cry to You from the depths of distress and anguish. Visit the sick, the dying, and the grieving, [*especially . . .*]. Bring them Your peace, especially as they might question Your ways and Your timing. Comfort them with the hope of life everlasting, when Your Word will restore their bodies again,

for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Receiving the fullness of Your Spirit and offering these prayers to You, O gracious Lord, we trust that You hear and answer us according to Your good and gracious will.

for Jesus is the resurrection and the life. 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.

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 674 Amazing Grace

