

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda, NY
January 25th, 2026**



AS WE GATHER

The Epiphany season proclaims and celebrates the salvation of God coming into the world as a light shining in a dark place. Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah predicting the dawning of that light into the darkness of unbelief, separation from God, sin, and “the shadow of death” (Matthew 4:16). That light was and is Jesus and His message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (v. 17). It may seem like a minor detail that Matthew says Isaiah’s prophetic words were fulfilled when Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth to live “in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali” (v. 13). Yet even this little fact testifies to how real the words of the Old Testament are and how they are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ.

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.

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

TLH 9 O Day of Rest and Gladness INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

I will go to the altar of God,

to God my exceeding joy.

The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
on them a light has dawned.

CONFESSiON AND ABSOLUTION

Today Jesus Christ comes to you with an invitation, saying, “Repent” and “Follow Me.” Let us prepare to receive His Word, leave our sin behind, and follow Him in the power of His forgiveness.

Lord God, open our ears to hear Your call of salvation and life. Enable us to hear the voice of Your Son, Christ our Lord, that His Word may move us to turn from our ways and our walk without You, and follow Him in faith, that we may learn and live in the light of Your love.

Lord Jesus, “I will tell of Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You.” Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the **☩** Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Now, let us follow Him!

Amen.

Introit

I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the **LORD**,
and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

For kingship belongs to the **LORD**,
and he rules over the nations.

All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could
not keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.

***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 with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord God, You call each and every sinner to awaken to their need to turn to You for deliverance from the ravages of suffering, sickness, and sinful separation from You. By Your powerful Word, draw us by Your grace and mercy to a living faith in Your salvation, Your help, and Your purpose for

us, that we may live daily trusting in Your guidance and love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

FIRST READING **Isaiah 9:1–4**

¹There will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. ³You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

****Choir: “One Step, He Leads” : “****

SECOND READING **1 Corinthians 1:10–18**

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹²What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its

power. ¹⁸For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia. From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Alleluia.

Matthew 4:12-25

Gospel of St. Matthew the fourth chapter

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

¹²When [Jesus] heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—¹⁶the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ¹⁸While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. ²³And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and

Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

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 422 Savior, I will Follow

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

“The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light.” Lord of light and life, we thank You for opening our eyes to see the light of Your mercy and salvation, our ears to hear Your call, our hearts to receive the faith that saves, and our minds to acknowledge Your glory. Cast Your light of grace through our lives, that many in our dark world may turn in repentance and joy to You. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Lord Jesus Christ, by Your Holy Spirit, give us faith to turn and follow You each day. Direct, guide, and rule our hearts that we may reflect Your love and forgiveness. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Jesus says, “Follow Me.” Help us, O God, to leave the cares of our lives in this world to pursue the life You give us anchored in Your Word and gracious will. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Jesus came teaching, preaching, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. Continue to come to us and especially to all who suffer any need, injury, disease, or fear, [*especially . . .*]. Grant the healing of body, mind, and spirit with faith in Your never-ending help and kindness. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

As You blessed the land of Zebulun, Naphtali, and Galilee of the Gentiles, so grant Your blessing on our nation, that those in positions of leadership and community service may work for the health, peace, and safety of all. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Remembering all who have followed You in faith whom You have called to Yourself through the grave and gate of death, give us endurance and strength to abide in the fellowship of Your church all our days, that we may enter the glorious fullness of Your eternal kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through 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.**

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 642 Arise, O God, and Shine