

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
North Tonawanda NY  
February 18th, 2026**



**AS WE GATHER**

As we begin another Lenten journey to the cross and to the empty tomb, we will pass the familiar route of Wednesday services, special devotions, and sacrificial acts. It all begins here with ashes, an old and biblical sign of repentance. From the Old Testament to the present, ashes have been an outward sign of inward contrition. While not sacramental, they are not mere ritual either; they bear witness to the internal sorrow over sin with which we come while asking for and expecting forgiveness from God. The mood of this service is somber as we reflect upon the shape of our lives of faith and recall the discipline or piety that accompanies that faith. We are dust and to dust we shall return but even in dust there is hope. The ashes are marked in the sign of that hope: a cross where Christ bore the weight of our sin so that we might be forgiven and restored to Himself.

\*\*\*\*The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at this service, Communion is offered to Lutheran members in Altar & Pulpit Fellowship only, we believe based on Scripture and the "Book of Concord", (The Lutheran Confessions) that only those who share the same faith and teaching of Doctrine should Commune together. **Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:17, 1 Cor. 11:26 and Rom. 16:17** is where we find this written, if this is your first time at St. Matthew, and would like to take Communion, please talk to the Pastor before the service. If you are taking Communion, please fill out the Communion Registration form. \*\*\*\*

*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.*

**Ash Wednesday**

**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.**

**THE LITANY**

Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope. Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

O Lord,

**have mercy.**

O Christ,

**have mercy.**

O Lord,

**have mercy.**

O Christ,

**hear us.**

God the Father, in heaven,

**have mercy.**

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

**have mercy.**

God the Holy Spirit,

**have mercy.**

Be gracious to us.

**Spare us, good Lord.**

Be gracious to us.

**Help us, good Lord.**

By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your

Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and Passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

**Help us, good Lord.**

In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment:

**Help us, good Lord.**

We poor sinners implore You

**to hear us, O Lord.**

To prosper the preaching of Your Word; to bless our prayer and meditation; to strengthen and preserve us in the true faith; to give heart to our sorrow and strength to our repentance:

**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

To draw all to Yourself; to bless those who are instructed in the faith; to watch over and console the poor, the sick, the distressed, the lonely, the forsaken, the abandoned, and all who stand in need of our prayers; to give abundant blessing to all works of mercy; and to have mercy on us all:

**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

To turn our hearts to You; to turn the hearts of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and graciously to hear our prayers:

**We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

**we implore You to hear us.**

O God, You desire not the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**

*Those who desire to receive ashes come forward at this time and stand before the pastor. The pastor applies ashes in the shape of a cross on the forehead while saying to each person, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of Your salvation,

**that we may show forth Your glory in the world.**

By the cross and Passion of Your Son, our Lord,

**Bring us with all Your saints to the joy of His resurrection.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through Jesus Christ, our Lord, strengthen us in all goodness, and, by the power of the Spirit, keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

### **Introit**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

□ a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;

□ according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

□ and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,

□ and my sin is ever before me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

□ and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,

□ and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

□ and uphold me with a willing spirit.

***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.***

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

*And with thy spirit.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Amen.*

### First Reading Joel 2:12–19

<sup>12</sup>“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. <sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. <sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, “Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. <sup>19</sup>The LORD answered and said to his people, “Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10**

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. <sup>1</sup>Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. <sup>3</sup>We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; <sup>7</sup>by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. This is the Word of the Lord.

### **Thanks be to God**

### **Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

### ***Glory be to Thee, O Lord.***

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly,

I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. . . . <sup>16</sup>“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”  
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise be to Thee, O Christ*

### Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.**

**And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the  
dead, whose kingdom will have no end.  
And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ☩ of the world to come. 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**

We give You thanks and praise, O Lord, holy God, almighty Father, for  
Your goodness in creating all things and for Your mercy, which bore with us  
sinners until You sent forth Your Son in flesh to accomplish our salvation by  
His death and resurrection. Keep us in this holy faith and fear all our days.  
Lord, in Your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give You thanks and praise, O mighty and everlasting God, for  
establishing Your church, for calling us into her life through Baptism, and  
keeping us as Your own possession through the grace of absolution and the

food of Your Son's Table. Give us ears to hear and hearts to heed His voice ever calling us back to You that we may live holy, upright, and godly lives now until we dwell in Your presence on high. Lord, in Your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give You thanks, O gracious God, for Your kindness in looking upon our weakness and sin, forgiving us our sin, and setting us a place at our Lord's Table. What we here receive, help us to keep in holy hearts and lives. Lord, in Your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give You thanks, O Lord God, heavenly Father, for looking upon us with compassion and for not counting our sins against us because of Christ alone. Help us to earnestly wear the marks of our repentance and even more earnestly still to believe in Your gift of salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **PREFACE**

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit*

Lift up your hearts.

*We lift them up to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*It is meet and right so to do.*

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the Paschal Feast in sincerity and truth.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

**Sanctus**

*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.*

#### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

#### **THE WORDS OF OUR LORD**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

#### **PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST**

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.*

**PAX DOMINI**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

*Amen.*

**AGNUS DEI**

*O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.*

**Distribution**

### **Nunc Dimittis**

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. 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.*

### **Thanksgiving**

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,  
*and His mercy endureth forever.*

### **POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Let us pray.

O God, merciful Father, You do not turn away from the sighing of a contrite heart nor the desires of those who in sorrow for their sins cry to You for mercy. Hear the prayers of Your people who in the midst of their troubles call to You for relief. Graciously hear us that the evils which burden our souls and the sins which weigh greatly on our hearts may know peace and forgiveness. Rekindle within us Your new life imparted in Baptism and restore to us the holy joy that belongs to all Your people, that we may keep Your commandments and do on earth Your heavenly will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*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 653 How the Light has Gone Away**