

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church
North Tonawanda NY
February 25th, 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 2

**TLH 390 Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blest
INVOCATION**

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

OPENING SENTENCES

As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.

I have come down to deliver them.

If anyone keeps My word, he will never see death.

In [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

First Reading Exodus 3:1-15

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" [And he said,] "Here I am." [Then He said,] "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." [And He said,] "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. [Then the LORD said,] "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the

children of Israel, out of Egypt.” [But Moses said to God,] “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” [He said,] “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” [Then Moses said to God,] “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” [God said to Moses,] “I AM WHO I AM.” [And He said,] “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” [God also said to Moses,] “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God.

Epistle Colossians 2:6–10

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

Thanks be to God

John 8:48–59

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

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my own

glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’” ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” ⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’” ⁵⁵ But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

RESPONSORY

I am the bread of life and the light of the world.

I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

I am the good shepherd and the door of the sheep.

I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, and the truth, and the life. I am the true vine.

I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.

PASSION READING

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

They went to a place called Gethsemane. [And He said to His disciples,]

“Sit here while I pray.” And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

[And He said to them,] “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”

And going a little farther, He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

[And He said,] “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

And He came and found them sleeping,

[and He said to Peter,] “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came the third time

[and said to them,] “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, My betrayer is at hand.”

And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize Him and lead Him away under guard.” And when he came, he went up to Him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed Him.

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 157 There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood
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 Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the Promised Land.

Guide the people of Your church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Christ, 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