

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025

Joseph's quandary was resolved in a way he did not expect. Not only would he not put away his pregnant fiancé, he would embrace her and her child by giving him the name Jesus. The kingdom of God drawn near leads to many unexpected results. We await with anticipation and wonder the results of its coming in its fullness.

† *Congregation stands as able*

GATHERING

Prelude

Sandra Nearhoof



P: In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. 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.**

P: In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you, the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn *“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”*

ELW #265

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. **Amen.**

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Rose Johnson

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also?” ¹⁴ Therefore the

Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

L: The word of the Lord
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Tone 8

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph ¹ like a flock;
 shine forth, you that are enthroned up-¹ on the cherubim.
² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, ¹ and Manasseh,**
 stir up your strength and ¹ come to help us.
³ Restore ¹ us, O God;
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.
⁴ **O LORD ¹ God of hosts,**
 how long will your anger fume when your ¹ people pray?
⁵ You have fed them with the ¹ bread of tears;
 you have given them bowls of ¹ tears to drink.
⁶ **You have made us the derision ¹ of our neighbors,**
 and our enemies laugh ¹ us to scorn.
⁷ Restore us, O ¹ God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.
¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at ¹ your right hand,**
 the one you have made so strong ¹ for yourself.
¹⁸ And so will we never turn a-¹ way from you;
 give us life, that we may call up-¹ on your name.
¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD ¹ God of hosts;**
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name,⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

L: The word of the Lord
C: **Thanks be to God.**

† Gospel Acclamation

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P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Immanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon “Ready to Name Jesus” Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

 Hymn of the Day “Joy to the World” ELW #267

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;

he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

A: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

A: In awareness of these days, prepare our hearts for your return. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your coming advent among us. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: The church breaks forth in singing as it heralds the coming judge. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing his appearing. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet Jesus in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

- A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them....God of grace,
C: hear our prayer.
- A: We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,
C: hear our prayer.
- P: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Immanuel.
C: Amen.

MEAL

Anthem *“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”* Choir

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

- A: Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Thought this meal, satisfy our parched places that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.
C: Amen.

 Great Thanksgiving	Page 161
Holy, Holy, Holy	Page 162
Lord's Prayer “Our Father, who...”	Page 163
Lamb of God	Page 164

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Each person may respond, Amen.

 Table Blessing
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- P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

- A: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
C: Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn

"All Earth is Hopeful"

ELW #266

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

The Memorial Book is open today to the Glory of God

In Memory of:

Ludwig "Lenie" Grudisher, Jr., 2008



The Advent Wreath for the Fourth Sunday of Advent is lit by Children & Rose Johnson

READINGS AND PSALM **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2025**

Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm 148

Hebrews 2:10-18

Matthew 2:13-23



"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me." —Martin Luther

December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent

ATTENDANCE — 74

(IN-PERSON — 50, YOUTUBE — 24)

2025 BUDGET-\$177,962

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 12,580.00
Building	\$ 150.00
Memorial	\$ 100.00
Other	\$ 130.00
Total	\$ 12,960.00

December 10, 2025 **Midweek Advent Service**

ATTENDANCE — 11

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 60.00
Memorial	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 160.00

St. Matthew Lutheran Church (ELCA) will not engage in any act or public statements to endorse or oppose any candidate for public office.

Serving December 21, 2025

Opener/Closer	Lisa Pettit
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Allena Sperry
Lector	Amy Hoag
Ushers	Jim Sperry
	Bill Wallace
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson
	Allena Sperry
	Catherine Sayers-Clean-up
Live Streaming	Matt Pettit

Serving December 28, 2025

Opener/Closer	Allena Sperry
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Raymond Lawton
Lector	Toni Mion
Ushers	Bill Wallace
	Ron Ullman
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman
	Martha Vargas
	Catherine Sayers-Clean-up
Live Streaming	Cecil McGouirk

Pray Without Ceasing



“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” —1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

5:16-18

—1 Thessalonians

The Armed Forces, their families, and victims of war	Sandy Gibbs	Gaza
The ministries of St. Matthew	Moses Glidden	Palestinian People
Bishop Yehiel Curry	Estrella Gonzales	Israel
Bishop Kevin Strickland	Doris Grier	Ukraine
Southeastern Synod Staff	Grigsby Family	People of Russia
Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards	Laura Jett	Jamaica
Pastor Rachel Zarnke	Norma Kilby	Philippines
St Matthew Congregational Council	Ken Korn	Hong Kong
Laura Alexander	Emma Kump	Thailand
Carol Bingemann	Robert Lowe	Indonesia
Isabelle Clark	David & John Lucas	Philippines
Randy Craven	Michelle Matthias	Somali Refugees
Myrna & Ken Hoag	Brady Meeks	Flood victims in Washington
Marga Miller	Tim Moore	Brown University
Charlotte Moore	Debi Nelson	Jewish community in Australia
Traudel Mosely	Vincent Pawlowski	Mr. Pizza
Debby Owen	Terry Pendergraft	Quality Inn
Dorothy Redden	Beth Price	Smoke Buddy's
Gary Anderson	Mark Purushotham	Gold Teeth World
Eric & Tinisha Bryant	Tiffany Richardson	Apparel King & More
Jean Clemons	Dayna Ryan	Hollywood Barber Shop
Nancy Edmundson	Shirley Scott	
Lynne Funck	Dou Shizhen	
Brandy Garnett	Ricky Skinner	
	Amanda Steinagel	
	Sara Steinagel Sturgis	
	Fred Turpin	
	Charlie VanHousen	
	Dawn VanHousen	
	Martha Zimmerman	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to St. Matthew: Jesus Christ offers himself to all. All baptized Christians are invited to feast with us at the Lord's Table.

We invite you to join our congregation if you have not yet found a church home. We are people of God that share a living, daring, confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person, questions, complexities and all. Join us, as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Nursery: St. Matthew provides nursery service for children ages 6 and younger. All children are welcome to attend worship with their families. If a child needs a break during the service, they may sit with a parent/guardian in the Narthex.

Mission Outreach Opportunities:

Mission Focus:

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|----------------------------|--|
| • Lion's Club: | Operation Christmas Child |
| • Family House of West GA: | Glasses, sunglasses and old cell phones |
| • Flags to Retire: | Pop tabs |
| • St. Anne's: | Used flags to dispose of properly |
| • SafeHouse/St. Benedict's | Feminine hygiene products, Personal hygiene products (travel size) |
| | Sealed plastic utensils (take-out meals) |

Leave donations in the labeled containers in the Narthex.

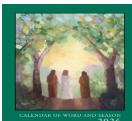
Bible Study: Please join us on Tuesdays at 10:15 in the Church House to review and discuss the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.

Craf-Tea: This group will meet December 19th at 10:00AM-12:00 PM in Luther Hall. If you enjoy crafts and tea, this group is for you! Please see Linnea Grosse for more information.

Chair Yoga: We will resume meeting on Monday at 11:00 AM in Luther Hall in the new year. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers.

Save the Date

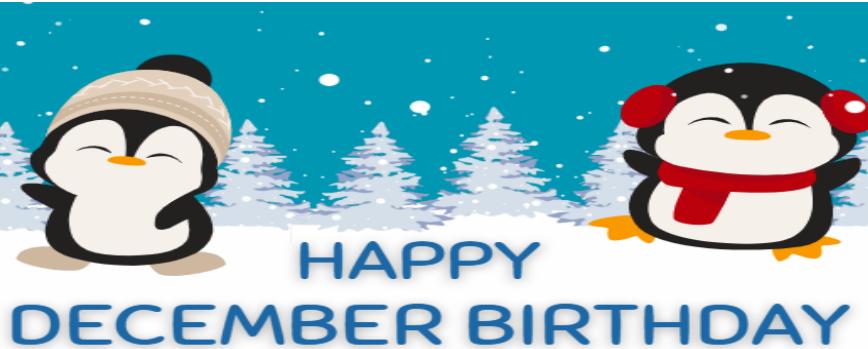
- December 24th-7:00-Christmas Eve Service
- December 30th-10:15 - Bible Study - Church House



2026 Calendar of Word and Season is now on sale thru the end of the year. Please see Allena Sperry if you want to purchase a calendar for \$13. Please make checks payable to St. Matthew.



Christmas Eve
Holy Communion Service
Wednesday, December 24
7:00 PM



1 RANDALL CRAVEN

4 JONATHAN THIES

20 CONNOR GLAU

21 LINDSAY BROWN RATLIFF

23 PATTY CHAPPEL

26 ZAIGA MION

27 KATHY SKELLY

29 DAVID ALLEN



St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Statement



Reach in to grow in Christ

Reach up to worship God

Reach out to welcome and witness



To give online, please scan the QR code to the left to be taken to the give.tithe.ly website form. You can just fill out the form and click the Give button. You can also go to our website and click on the **ONLINE GIVING** button.

ST. MATTHEW EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4026 Macon Road, Columbus, Georgia 31907

(706) 561-3406 - Office Hours - Tues & Thurs 2:00-5:00 PM, Friday 9:00-1:00 PM

Pastor Taylor Burton Edwards Email: twbe@liturgyfolks.com
Phone: (765) 602-1426

Office email : office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

Southeastern Synod

www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.matthewlutheranchurch4457streams>

The Rev. Taylor Burton Edwards, Pastor
Sonja Metcalf, Parish Administrator
Lisa Pettit, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music
Penny Davis, Nursery Director