

# St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



**First Sunday of Advent  
December 3, 2023**

*Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.*

## Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

(ELW) Setting 2, Page 116

† *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: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

P: Gracious God,

C: **have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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

*"Light one candle to watch for Messiah"*

**ELW #240**

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray,

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Katherine Kelly

## First Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

- <sup>1</sup>O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
<sup>2</sup>as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
<sup>3</sup>When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
<sup>4</sup>From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
<sup>5</sup>You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
<sup>6</sup>We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
<sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
<sup>8</sup>Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
<sup>9</sup>Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Tone 4

- <sup>1</sup>Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph <sup>1</sup>like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- <sup>1</sup>on the cherubim.  
<sup>2</sup>**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, <sup>1</sup>and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and <sup>1</sup>come to help us.**  
<sup>3</sup>Restore <sup>1</sup>us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup>shall be saved.  
<sup>4</sup>**O LORD <sup>1</sup>God of hosts,  
how long will your anger fume when your <sup>1</sup>people pray?**  
<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the <sup>1</sup>bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of <sup>1</sup>tears to drink.  
<sup>6</sup>**You have made us the derision <sup>1</sup>of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh <sup>1</sup>us to scorn.**  
<sup>7</sup>Restore us, O <sup>1</sup>God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup>shall be saved.

**17 Let your hand be upon the one at <sup>1</sup> your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong <sup>1</sup> for yourself.**  
**18** And so will we never turn a- <sup>1</sup> way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- <sup>1</sup> on your name.  
**19 Restore us, O LORD <sup>1</sup> God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup> shall be saved.**

## Second Reading

**1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: The word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

† Gospel Acclamation

“ Alleluia”

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## Gospel

**Mark 13:24-37**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 13th Chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>24</sup>In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. <sup>32</sup>But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## † Hymn of the Day

*“My Lord, what a morning”*

ELW #438

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 and the Son,\*  
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**

*Choose to stand, kneel, or sit for prayers.***Prayers of Intercession**

A: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world,  
and all who await God's day of restoration.

*A brief silence.*

A: Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief. Deliver all in any need. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, stargazers, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Reveal to all that the dark can be a place of calm and comfort filled with your presence. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them...

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You have sent out your angels and gathered your faithful people from every time and place, calling them into one fellowship of saints. Bless the witness of those who dwell in your eternal presence. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**C: Amen**

# MEAL

Anthem

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Choir

*The gifts may be brought forward.*

Offering Prayer

A: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C: Amen**

† Great Thanksgiving Page 129

Holy, Holy, Holy Page 130

Advent-Epiphany of our Lord Page 132

Lord's Prayer "Our Father, who..." Page 134

Lamb of God Page 135

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
*and each person may respond Amen*

Table Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C: Amen**

† Prayer After Communion

A: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C: Amen**

## SENDING

**Blessing**

**Sending Hymn**

*"People, look east"*

**ELW #248**

**Dismissal**

A: Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**The Memorial Book Is Open Today to the Glory of God**  
**In Memory of:**  
*Margaret Fox, 2009*

**READINGS AND PSALM**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023**

Isaiah 40:1-11  
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
 2 Peter 3:8-15a  
 Mark 1:1-8



*“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*

**November 26, 2023**

**Christ the King Sunday**

ATTENDANCE — 35

(IN-PERSON— 34 , ZOOM - 1)

*Thankfully offered*

**OFFERING**

Benevolence	\$ 2,125.00
Building	\$ 100.00
Memorial	\$ 0.00
Other	\$ 275.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,500.00</b>

**Serving today, December 3, 2023**

Opener/Closer	Allena Sperry
Crucifer	Ian Jeffery
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Cecil McGouirk
Lector	Geri Regnier
Offering-bearer	Duncan Jeffery
Ushers	Sandy Craven Randy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson Catherine Sayers

**Servers for Sunday, December 10, 2023**

Opener/Closer	Carla Stickles
Crucifer	Ian Jeffery
Worship Assistant	Liz McGouirk/Raymond Lawton
Communion Assistant	Raymond Lawton
Lector	Cecil McGouirk
Offering-bearer	Duncan Jeffery
Ushers	Bill Wallace Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Geri Regnier Lisa Pettit



# 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

The Armed Forces,  
their families,  
and victims of war  
Persecuted Christians  
The ministries of  
St. Matthew  
Presiding Bishop  
Elizabeth Eaton  
Bishop Kevin  
Strickland  
Southeastern Synod  
Staff  
Pastor Taylor Burton  
Edwards  
Laura Alexander  
Zocia Barr family  
Keandra Bashful  
Carol Bingemann  
Dave Bonaker  
Pat Bonaker  
Eva Brown  
Betty Davidson  
Ken Hoag  
Myrna Hoag  
Bennie Jackson  
Mairetha Jackson  
Marga Miller  
Traudel Mosely

Debby Owen  
Dorothy Redden  
Connie Sieg  
Joan Smith  
Jim Sperry  
Carla Stickles  
Albert VanHousen II  
Margarete Walsh  
Monika Wright  
Gary Anderson  
Judy Bultman  
Kyle Carter  
Jim Chappel  
Jean Clemmons  
Xavier Danguilan  
Brandy Garnett  
Becky Goldsmith  
Estrella Gonzales  
Doris Grier  
Petra Henderson  
Beverly Huckaby  
Norma Kilby  
Ken Korn  
Laura Lester  
Robert Lowe  
Michelle Matthias  
Tim Moore  
Gary Nearhoof

Kimberly O'Malley  
Michael Owen  
Angela Paul  
Vincent Pawlowski  
Dwight Redmond  
Tiffany Richardson  
Dayna Ryan  
Yuliia Savitska  
Shirley Scott  
Ricky Skinner  
Betty Townsend  
Charlie VanHousen  
Dawn VanHousen  
Martha Zimmerman

Libya  
Maui  
Morocco  
Israel  
Ukraine  
Gaza

Gateway Church  
Pathway Worship Center  
Bi-City DUI School  
Menzie Dance Company  
Sunset Finance  
Frankie's Hair Design  
Diamond Kutz

Deadline for bulletins is **Tuesday 10:00 a.m.** prior to the Sunday.  
Deadline for January newsletter is December 20.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to St. Matthew:** Jesus Christ offers himself to all. May you be blessed as we celebrate God's love for us. All the baptized are invited to feast with us at the Lord's Table. The wearing of a mask is optional during worship and social distancing is recommended. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday.

**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 4 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.

**The Tuesday morning Bible Study** meets in the Church House from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. This class reads and talks about the scriptures for the coming Sunday.

## **Mission Outreach Opportunities:**

- **FOCUS:** Stewart Community Home  
11/19-12/10 - Socks, full size shower gels, shampoos for men & women
- Lion's Club: Glasses, sunglasses and old cell phones
- Ronald McDonald house: Pop tabs
- Flags to Retire: Bring used American flags that you no longer want or need.
- St. Anne's: Personal hygiene products (travel size), toilet paper, and non-perishable food items

Leave donations in the labeled containers in the Narthex between bathrooms.

**Remembrance Gathering:** Please come to a special Remembrance Gathering Tuesday, December 12th at 3:00 PM in the Church House. Come share your favorite Christmas memory and tradition.

**Offering Envelopes:** If you currently do NOT receive an offering envelope booklet and would like one for 2024 OR you DO receive one and would NOT like one for 2024, please notify either Katherine Kelly or the church office via email at [office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com](mailto:office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com).

**Christmas Poinsettias:** It is that time of the year! If you would like to order Christmas Poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one, please pick up, fill out and turn in a form (located in the Narthex) by December 10th.

## ***Save the Date***

- **December 3rd 11:30 AM** - Birthday Sunday after worship
- **December 5th 6:00 PM** - Tuesday Night Supper Club
- **December 6th 5:30 PM** - Midweek Advent Service
- **December 9th 10:00 AM** - Decorate Christmas Trees - Practice for "The Christmas Story Through the Christmas Tree"
- **December 10th** - Turn in Poinsettia order
- **December 12th 3:00 PM** - Remembrance Gathering
- **December 17th 10:30** - Children's "The Christmas Story Through the Christmas Tree" performance
- **December 21st 5:00 PM** - Council Meeting - New council members should attend.
- **December 24th 7:00 PM** - Special Music before the 7:30 PM service

**Introducing our "Warming Tree"!** Please bring the following new items to decorate our "Warming Tree" for men, women and children: gloves/mittens, scarves and hats to warm up our community. You may decorate our "Warming Tree" using clothespins in basket or lay under the tree. The tree will be up through Sunday, December 17th. Your donations will help these local organizations: Valley Rescue, Women & Childrens Center and Sara Spano Clothing Bank.

**Advent & Christmas Services**



**Midweek Worship**  
Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.  
December 6, 13, 20



**Weihnachts Service**  
Sunday, December 17  
2:00 p.m.



**Christmas Eve**  
Holy Communion Service  
Saturday, December 24  
7:30 p.m.



**Dear Heavenly Father**, you will not leave us without a blessing. Wrestle with your church and renew it for the sake of the world. Preserve our life in you, so that we faithfully name you before the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

## **St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Statement**



Reach in to grow in Christ  
Reach up to worship God  
Reach out to welcome and witness

### **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](mailto:twbe@liturgyfolks.com)

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*A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,*

*Southeastern Synod*

[www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com](http://www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com)

The Rev. Taylor Burton Edwards, Pastor

Kelly Peterson, Media Specialist

Lisa Pettit, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Sonja Metcalf, Parish Administrator

Penny Davis, Nursery Director