

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



**Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023**

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

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

"People, look East"

ELW #248

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray,

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Rose Johnson

Play "The Christmas Story Thru the Chrismon Tree"

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

- ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
- ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
- ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
- ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
- ⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
- ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 126

Tone 6

- ¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.
- ²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**
**Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great | things for them."**

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

† Gospel Acclamation

“ Alleluia”

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Gospel

John 1:6-8, 19-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st Chapter.

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

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

"Make straight the way of the Lord,"

as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon

Apocalypse as Restoration

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

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: Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

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

C: receive our prayer.

A: With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. 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

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 *"Rejoice, rejoice, believers"* **ELW #244**

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:

Griseldis "Chris" Grogg, 2006

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Luke 1:46b-55
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38



*"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 10, 2023
Second Sunday of Advent

ATTENDANCE — 55
 (IN-PERSON— 54 , ZOOM - 1)

Thankfully offered

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 2,641.00
Building	\$ 30.00
Memorial	\$ 0.00
Other	\$ 330.00
Total	\$ 3,001.00

Serving today, December 17, 2023

Opener/Closer	Rose Johnson
Crucifer	Ian Jeffery
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Geri Regnier
Lector	Amy Hoag
Offering-bearer	Duncan Jeffery
Ushers	Connie Sieg Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Allena Sperry Donna Doughty

Servers for Sunday, December 24, 2023

	<u>AM Service</u>	<u>PM Service</u>
Opener/Closer	Bill Wallace	Lisa Pettit
Crucifer	Ian Jeffery	
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson	Matt Bonaker
Communion Assistant	Shannon Gardner	Rose Johnson
Lector	Rachel Zarnke	Dave Bonaker
Offering-bearer	Duncan Jeffery	
Ushers	Sean Jeffery Amanda Jeffery	Bill Wallace Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Debby Ullman Catherine Sayers	Debby Ullman Catherine Sayers

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

The Eilands Event Center
Bargain Furniture
Dollar General
Chevron
Citgo
Grace Apostolic Church
Landmark

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:

- 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, January 9th at 3:00 PM in the Church House. Come share your favorite Christmas memory and tradition.



Thank you for your generosity in providing items for the Stewart Community Home! It is greatly appreciated!

Save the Date

- **December 17th 10:30** - Children's "The Christmas Story Through the Chrismon Tree" performance
- **December 17th 3:00 PM** - Weihnachts (German) Service
- **December 20th 5:30 PM** - Midweek Advent Worship
- **December 21st 5:00 PM** - Council Meeting - New council members should attend. Church House.

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 TODAY, 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
3:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Holy Communion Service
Sunday, December 24
Special Music at 7:00
Service at 7:30 p.m.



*New Years
Eve
Winter Wonderland
Party*

*December 31st
12:00 PM, following church in Fellowship Hall*

*Heavy hors d'oeuvres
and finger foods*

*Sign up sheet in Narthex for food,
decorating, serving, and clean up.
Decorating on Saturday, December
30th at 10:00.*

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

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Office email: office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

Southeastern Synod

www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com

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Lisa Pettit, Sexton

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music

Sonja Metcalf, Parish Administrator

Penny Davis, Nursery Director