

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

(ELW) Setting 5, Page 156

† Congregation stands as able

GATHERING

Prelude

Sandra Nearhoof

†

P: The grace of our Lord +Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

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: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of +Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: **Amen**

Gathering Hymn

"What child is this"

ELW #296

Kyrie

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Gloria in Excelsis

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Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray,

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Donna Doughty

First Reading

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

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.
^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 148

Tone 6

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;
praise God | in the heights.
²**Praise the LORD, | all you angels;
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**
³Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;
sing praise, all you | shining stars.
⁴**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**
⁵Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
who commanded, and they | were created,
⁶**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not | pass away.**
⁷Praise the LORD | from the earth,
you sea monsters | and all deeps;
⁸**fire and hail, | snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;**
⁹mountains | and all hills,
fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰**wild beasts | and all cattle,
creeping things and | flying birds;**
¹¹sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,
princes and all rulers | of the world;
¹²**young | men and maidens,
old and | young together.**

¹³Let them praise the name ^l of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over ^l earth and heaven.
¹⁴The LORD has raised up strength for the people
and praise for all ^l faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. ^l Hallelujah!

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

† Gospel Acclamation

" Alleluia"

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Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd Chapter.

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

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak

about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon

The Unfolding

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

† Hymn of the Day

"Lo, how a rose e'er blooming"

ELW #272

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: Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

A: You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

C: Amen

MEAL

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

A: God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

C: Amen

† Great Thanksgiving Page 161

Holy, Holy, Holy Page 162

Acclamation 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.

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: God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn "Let all together praise our God" **ELW #287**

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024

Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
 Ephesians 3:1-12
 Matthew 2:1-12



“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 24, 2023
Nativity of our Lord,
Christmas Eve (Morning)

ATTENDANCE — 41
 (IN-PERSON— 39 , ZOOM - 2)

Thankfully offered

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 13,115.00
Building	\$ 30.00
Memorial	\$ 0.00
Other	\$ 120.00
Total	\$ 13,265.00

December 24, 2023
Nativity of our Lord,
Christmas Eve (Evening)

ATTENDANCE — 56
 (IN-PERSON— 55 , ZOOM - 1)

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$ 1,615.00
Building	\$ 0.00
Memorial	\$ 0.00
Other	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 1,615.00

**The Memorial Book Is Open Today to
 the Glory of God**

In Memory of:

Sarah Brunjes, 2009

Serving December 31, 2023

Opener/Closer	Donna Doughty
Worship Assistant	Rose Johnson
Communion Assistant	Liz McGouirk
Lector	Randy Craven
Ushers	Katherine Kelly Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Allena Sperry Donna Doughty

Serving January 7, 2024

Opener/Closer	Donna Doughty
Worship Assistant	Lisa Pettit
Communion Assistant	Donna Doughty
Lector	Joyce Moore
Ushers	Sandy Craven Randy Craven
Altar Guild	Rose Johnson 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 Stickle
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
Morrocco
Israel
Ukraine
Gaza

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

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 the Remembrance Gathering Tuesday, January 9th at 3:00 PM in the Church House. This will be your last opportunity to share your favorite Christmas memory and/or tradition.



Join us for the New Year's Eve Winter Wonderland Party right after the church service today in the Fellowship Hall!

Save the Date

- **December 31 11:30 AM** - New Year's Eve Winter Wonderland Party in the Fellowship Hall - immediately following the service
- **January 9th 3:00 PM** - Remembrance Gathering Church House



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

Office email: office@stmatthewcolumbusga.com

A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

Southeastern Synod

www.stmatthewcolumbusga.com

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

Sandra Nearhoof, Minister of Music
Penny Davis, Nursery Director