

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



*And the Word
became flesh and
lived among us*

Second Sunday of Christmas January 4, 2026

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

† *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

“All My Heart Again Rejoices”

ELW #273

Kyrie

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. **Amen.**

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Children's Message

Katherine Kelly

First Reading

Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷ Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, “Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.” ⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the

blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here.⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back; I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path where they shall not stumble, for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock."¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

L: The word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 147:12-20

Tone 9

¹² Worship the LORD, ¹ O Jerusalem;
praise your ¹ God, O Zion,
**13 who has strengthened the bars ¹ of your gates
and has blessed your chil- ¹ dren within you.**
¹⁴ God has established peace ¹ on your borders
and satisfies you with the ¹ finest wheat.
**15 God sends out a command ¹ to the earth,
a word that runs ¹ very swiftly.**
¹⁶ God gives ¹ snow like wool,
scattering ¹ frost like ashes.
**17 God scatters ¹ hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand a- ¹ gainst God's cold?**
¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the ¹ word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the ¹ waters flow.
**19 God declares the ¹ word to Jacob,
statutes and judg- ¹ ments to Israel.**
²⁰ The LORD has not done so to any ¹ other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. ¹ Hallelujah!

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set

forth in Christ,¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit;¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

 Gospel Acclamation

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Gospel

John 1:10-18

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

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

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon

"Born to Make Us God's Children"

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards

 Hymn of the Day *"Of the Father's Love Begotten"* **ELW #295**

Reception of New Member Isabelle Clark

ELW #234

You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

A: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

A: O God, you reveal yourself wherever your people are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them....Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

MEAL

Anthem

"Arise, Shine Your Light Has Come"

Choir

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

A: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our

Savior.
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

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

Prayer after Communion

A: Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

C: Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Hymn *"Love Has Come"* **ELW #292**

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:

Eva Brown, 2024

READINGS AND PSALM
SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17



"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 28, 2025
First Sunday of Christmas

ATTENDANCE — 81

(IN-PERSON — 58, YOUTUBE — 23)

2025 BUDGET-\$177,962

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$	6,390.00
Building	\$	500.00
Memorial	\$	250.00
Other	\$	0.00
Total	\$	7,140.00

December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve Service

ATTENDANCE — 80

OFFERING

Benevolence	\$	665.00
Other	\$	200.00
Total	\$	865.00

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

Serving January 4, 2026

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

Serving January 11, 2026

Opener/Closer	Lisa & Matt Pettit
Worship Assistant	Shannon Gardner
Communion Assistant	Allena Sperry
Lector	Dave Bonaker
Ushers	Jim Sperry
Altar Guild	Bill Wallace
	Nancy Gates
	Terri Niederhammer
	Catherine Sayers
Live Streaming	Paul Hicks

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."

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	Somali Refugees
Randy Craven	Michelle Matthias	Flood victims in Washington
Myrna & Ken Hoag	Brady Meeks	Brown University
Marga Miller	Tim Moore	Jewish community in Australia
Charlotte Moore	Debi Nelson	People of Cambodia
Traudel Moseley	Vincent Pawlowski	Master-Kleen
Debby Owen	Beth Price	Title Max
Dorothy Redden	Mark Purushotham	JD Wings
Gary Anderson	Tiffany Richardson	Beaute' Matrix
Eric & Tinisha Bryant	Dayna Ryan	5 Fourteen
Jean Clemons	Shirley Scott	DQ
Nancy Edmundson	Dou Shizhen	
Lynne Funck	Ricky Skinner	
Brandy Garnett	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:

- All unused all occasion and holiday cards
- Lion's Club: Glasses, sunglasses and old cell phones
- Family House of West GA: Pop tabs
- Flags to Retire: Used flags to dispose of properly
- St. Anne's: Feminine hygiene products, Personal hygiene products (travel size)
- SafeHouse/St. Benedict's 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 on the 4th Friday of each month beginning in January 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, January 5th at 11:00 AM in Luther Hall. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers.



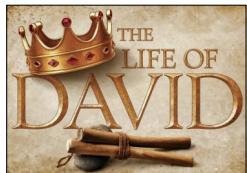
February 1, 2026 - Tackle Hunger Potluck! Please sign up on the list in the Narthex to bring your tailgate favorite! Food and monetary donations going to Brown Bag of Columbus.

Save the Date

- January 5th - 11:00 am - Chair Yoga - Luther Hall
- January 6th - 10:15 - Bible Study - Church House
- January 6th - 11:30 am - Take down Christmas Decorations
- January 14th - 6:00 - Interfaith Bible Study - Luther Hall
- January 15th - 5:00 - Council Meeting - Fellowship Hall
- January 29th - 9:00 - Care Bag Packing



We need your help on Tuesday, January 6th at 11:30 am to take down the beautiful Christmas decorations that we have enjoyed. The more help we can get, the quicker we can get it all done!



Interfaith Bible Study on King David begins January 14th at 6 PM in Luther Hall led by Rabbi Beth Schwartz and Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards.



Chair Yoga resumes on January 5th at 11:00 am in Luther Hall.



Ever wonder what to do with leftover holiday wrappings? We will be collecting holiday wrappings, paper, ribbon, gift bags and bows. Please place those in the basket in the Narthex.



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