

# Second Sunday in Lent

## Holy Communion

9:00 a.m., March 16, 2025



### Welcome to worship this morning!

We are glad you're here! Please know that **children** are welcome to remain in worship; they are also welcome to take a break in our "Kid's Korner" in the Gathering Space where the service audio is played through speakers. **Bathrooms** are located down the hall, past the church office. **Hymns** are printed in the red book (ELW) available in the pew rack.

All who desire the sacrament of Holy Communion are welcome; you may also come forward to receive a blessing. During the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers will direct the congregation to kneel at the altar rail. The pastor will distribute communion wafers, which you may intinct (dip) into the red wine, or white grape juice, held by communion assistants. Please **do not sip** from the chalices at this time. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit in your seat or the pastor can deliver the sacrament to you.

You may also use a pre-filled communion kit, available at the usher's table.

All are welcome!

PRELUDE: *Adagio*

Johann Sebastian Bach

WELCOME

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

I invite you into a prayerful posture of kneeling, standing, or sitting.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate One,  
you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,  
but our lives do not always reflect you  
and your love for the world.  
We do not show others the tender compassion  
you have shown to us.  
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality  
you grant to all people.  
We oppress others,  
even though you have set us free again and again.  
We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.  
Transform our lives  
and guide us again in the way of the cross.  
Amen.

Beloved in Christ,  
God's arms are always stretched open wide  
to welcome the wandering ones home.  
In † Christ your sins are forgiven.  
You have a place in God's house forever.  
Amen.

OPENING HYMN: *The God of Abraham Praise*

ELW 831 (v. 1-4)

## GREETING

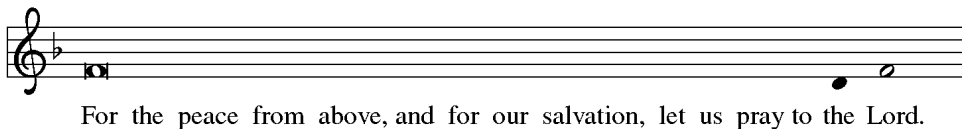
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
And also with you.

# KYRIE

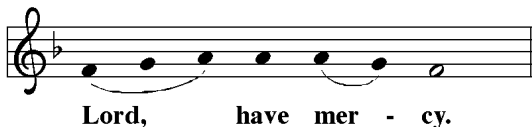
# ELW Setting 3



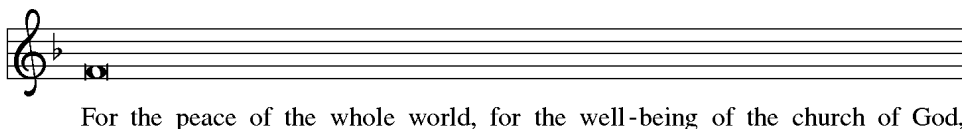
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



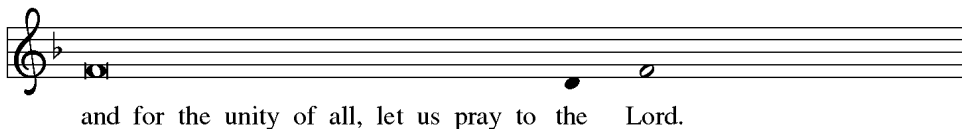
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



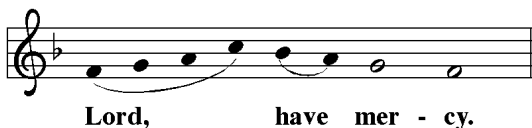
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



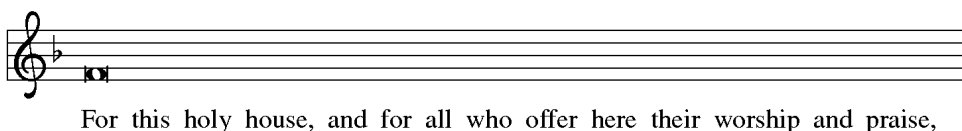
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



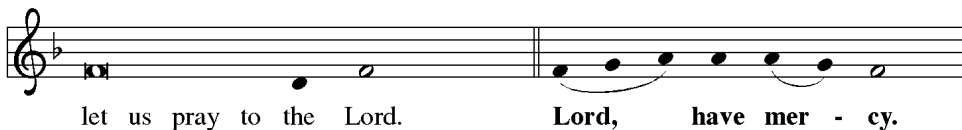
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



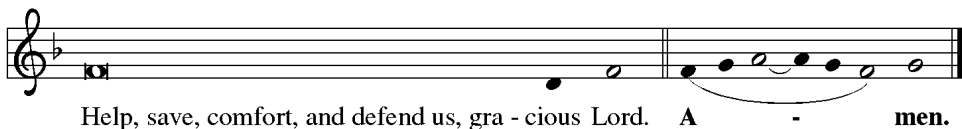
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## FIRST READING: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

*God promises a childless and doubting Abram that he will have a child, that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars, and that the land of Canaan will be their inheritance.*

*Abram's trust in God is sealed with a covenant-making ceremony, a sign of God's promise.*

A reading from the book of Genesis:

<sup>1</sup> After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." <sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." <sup>4</sup> But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup> He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>6</sup> And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> Then he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." <sup>8</sup> But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" <sup>9</sup> He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." <sup>10</sup> He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. <sup>11</sup> And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him...

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**CHILDREN’S SERMON**

Pastor Brian

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

ELW Setting 5



Glo - ry and praise to you, O Lord Je - sus Christ.

**HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 13:31-35**

*Neither Herod’s plotting nor Jerusalem’s resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.*

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus,] “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. <sup>33</sup> Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

**SERMON:**

Pastor Brian

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth***

ELW 735

## APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. I invite you into a prayerful posture of kneeling, standing, or sitting.

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, you long to gather your church under your wings. Bless the churches of Jerusalem, and all persecuted churches, that your people may take heart and stand firm as they witness and minister in your name. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Loving Creator, you give shelter to living things as numerous as the stars. Strengthen the voice of prophets who call humanity to faithful care for the planet, that they would not be silenced but heeded as your messengers. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the covenant, you raised up leaders like Abraham, Sarah, and Paul to show your people what it means to rely on your promises. Guide today's leaders to work for justice and safeguard the world for future generations. Bring just and lasting peace to the Holy Land, Ukraine, and all areas experiencing the terrible reality of war. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Divine Protector, you are the stronghold of our life. Care tenderly for those who are ill in body or mind, and for people living in fear or need. May all know they are not alone. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Eternal Savior, we pray for this congregation of St. Matthew. Bless our life together, inspire us to do your work in the world, and provide us the gifts and resources to live out your mission. We pray for the children of this congregation, that you gather them like a hen gathers her brood under her wings. Make your presence known to them and guide them to grow more deeply in relationship with you. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Lord of Life, you are our light and our salvation. We give thanks for the saints who have gone before us. Help us to trust in you as they did and to live according to their example. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## **OFFERING**

*At this time, ushers will pass the offering plate if you desire to give a financial gift. Donations may also be given online at [stmatthewavon.org/give](http://stmatthewavon.org/give), using the QR code in this bulletin, or mailed directly to the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness!*

**OFFERTORY: *Thy Holy Wings*****Carolina Sandell Berg & Gracia Grindal**

Thy holy wings, O Savior, spread gently over me,  
 and let me rest securely through good and ill in thee.  
 Oh, be my strength and portion, my rock and hiding place,  
 and let my ev'ry moment be lived within thy grace.

Oh, let me nestle near thee, within thy downy breast  
 where I will find sweet comfort and peace within thy nest.  
 Oh, close thy wings around me and keep me safely there,  
 for I am but a newborn and need thy tender care.

Thy Holy Wings, Gracia Grindal © 1983, Gracia Grindal, admin. Selah Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

**PRESENTATION HYMN: *As the Grains of Wheat*****ELW 465**

*All rise as the gifts are brought forward.*

*Refrain*

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were  
 gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from  
 all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.  
 As this cup of bless - ing is shared with - in our midst,  
 may we share the pres - ence of your love.

*Refrain*

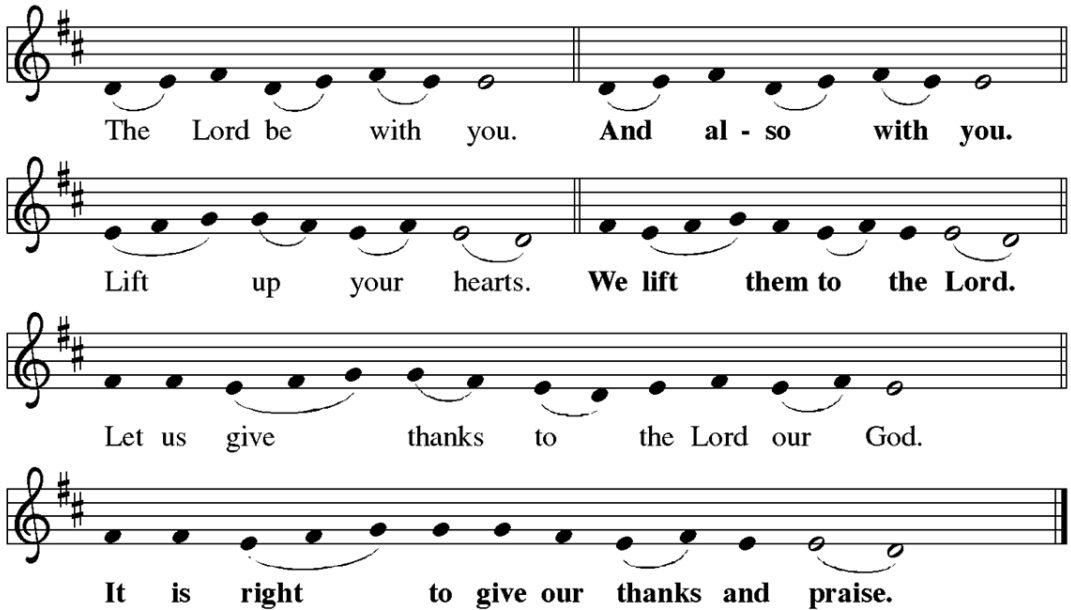
Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Music: Marty Haugen; Text and Music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.



## OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious Provider,  
you set your immense treasures among us,  
opening your heart to the world.  
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,  
deepen our commitment to sharing those  
treasures with others,  
through our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

## HOLY COMMUNION




The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.  
You call your people to cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,  
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.


And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## SANCTUS


ELW Setting 5




Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,




heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,  
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,  
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*At this time, ushers will direct the congregation to approach the altar where you may kneel or stand. You will receive a communion wafer from the pastor, which you are invited to intinct (dip) into the red wine or white grape juice held by the communion assistant. Please do not sip from the chalices. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit in your seat or the pastor will deliver the sacrament to your seat.*

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

### **THE DISTRIBUTION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

# AGNUS DEI

ELW Setting 5

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

## COMMUNION HYMN: *Around You, O Lord Jesus*

ELW 468

### BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous Host,  
you have shared your feast with us and made us new.  
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,  
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,  
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

As you go on your way may Christ go with you.  
May he go before you to show you the way,  
Behind you to encourage you,  
Beside you to befriend you,  
Above you to watch over,  
And within you to give you peace. † Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: *God of Grace and God of Glory*

ELW 705

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

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Today's Altar Flowers are provided for the glory of God!

## TODAY'S ADULT FORUM

Today's Adult Forum will focus on Lutheran nonprofit organizations. Pastor Brian and Dan Smolnik will highlight the work of several Lutheran charities. These organizations do excellent work serving our neighbors in need. Their ministry has been affected a great deal by recent stop-work orders, federal funding cuts, the government's refusal to pay for work already completed, and lies reported by those associated with the federal government. Come learn about the work of organizations like Lutheran Family Services, Global Refuge, and Ascentria (formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England) and explore ways we at St. Matthew might partner with them in this time of unprecedented need.

## MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

**Altar Guild:** Robin Lindquist & Lynn Metz

**Assisting Minister:** Andrew Kessler

**Acolyte:** Elizabeth Kessler

**Cantor:** Roy Zurell

**Lector:** Roy Zurell

**Usher:** Matthew Coslett

**Live Stream:** Greg Boyd

**Coffee Hour:** Melissa & Jason Lindquist

## STAFF

**Pastor:** The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok – [pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org)

**Associate Pastor:** The Rev. Ryan Heckman – [revryan@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:revryan@stmatthewavon.org)

**Director of Music:** Sarah Schiener-Redenz – [music@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:music@stmatthewavon.org)

**Office Administrator:** Paul Martin – [office@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:office@stmatthewavon.org) or (860) 673-3301

**Sexton:** Roy Zurell – contact the office

## VISIT US ONLINE

**Website:** [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)

**YouTube:** @StMatthewAvon

**Facebook.com:** SaintMatthewLutheranChurch **Instagram:** @stmatthewlutheranavon

## THE WEEK AHEAD

<b>Sunday</b>	9am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion		10:20am: Sunday School & Adult Forum	10:20am: Grief Support Group
<b>Tuesday</b>	10am: A.A. (Open to All)	2pm: Choir Rehearsal		7pm: Church Council Mtg.
<b>Wednesday</b>	9:30am & 5:15pm: W.W			
<b>Thursday</b>	10am: Bible Study	2pm: Centering Prayer	6pm: Midweek Lenten Service	Following Service: Lenten Book Discussion
<b>Saturday</b>	4pm: Music at Greenwood: Bach's Birthday Bash			
<b>Sunday</b>	9am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion		10:20am: Sunday School & Adult Forum	10:20am: Grief Support Group

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LENTEN MIDWEEK BOOK DISCUSSION SIGN-UP

#### **Following midweek service**

Throughout the 2025 Lenten season, Pastor Brian and Rev Ryan will lead a study of Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*, a short treatise on Jesus's ministry to the poor and oppressed. The book cover describes the book like this: "Thurman lifts Jesus up as a partner in the pain of the oppressed, and the gospel as a manual of resistance for the poor and disenfranchised. In this view, the example of [Jesus's] life shows us that hatred does not empower—it decays. Only by recognizing fear, deception, contempt, and love of one another can God's justice prevail."

We will continue meeting Thursday evenings after our 6:00pm Lenten midweek prayer service with the songs of Taizé on 3/20, 3/27, 4/3, and 4/10. **If you ordered a book, please see Pastor Brian after service so he can give you your copy.** We hope to see many of you there!

### **GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP**

#### **Starting Sunday, March 16th Following Worship**

Grief Support Group will begin meeting on Sunday, March 16 at 10:15am following the Service. If you have experienced loss and want to receive support or help others by sharing your experience, please join us. **We will meet in the Conference Room for four weeks: March, 16, 23, 30 and April 6.** This is support, not counseling, If you have any questions, please call or text Ellen Ericson at 860-305-4996, or [eegregory3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eegregory3@sbcglobal.net).

### **MUSIC AT GREENWOOD: SAVE THE DATE!**

#### **Next Saturday, March 22nd, 4:00 p.m.**

We are excited to commence our 2025 concert season with a Bach Birthday Bash! In celebration of J.S. Bach's 340th birthday, various instruments and small ensembles, both traditional and unconventional, will play a selection of the great composer's music. After the program, the celebration will continue with a reception of birthday cake and light appetizers. An offering will be received at the door (suggested donation: \$10). We hope to see you there!

### **NCAA March Madness Brackets!**

Today is Selection Sunday for the NCAA Tournament! Check out Friday's Constant Contact email for links to our St. Matthew pool for both the men's and women's tournaments. Good luck!

**Christians in the Holy Land Presentation at Hartford Seminary:  
Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 5:00 p.m.**

The New England Synod is delighted to welcome staff from the Environmental Education Center (EEC), a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Mr. Simon Awad, director of the EEC and two of his colleagues will be touring four different synods during their trip in March and April, starting with the New England Synod on March 23rd. There will be a presentation and time for Q&A at each of the locations listed. We encourage all who are able to avail themselves of this opportunity to hear firsthand of the work this important organization is doing in the midst of unthinkable conditions.

Join Pastor Brian, Rev Ryan, and members of St. Matthew who are attending Tuesday evening's presentation at Hartford International University (formerly Hartford Seminary). If you are interested in attending and would like to carpool please let one of the pastors know or call the church office. We will meet at St. Matthew 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday March 25 and plan to leave at 4:15 p.m. for the event.

**THRIVENT ACTION TEAM SIGNUP**

Thrivent Financial provides two action team cards of \$250 to members for charitable activities every year. If you are a Thrivent member you have access to this member benefit! We invite Thrivent members to check out the events list on the church bulletin board, and to sign your name next to an event you would like sponsor with a \$250 action team. We will help you with applying for the action team card if you do not know how. Thank you for your support of St. Matthew's ministry activities!