

Christ the King Sunday

Holy Communion

9:00 a.m., November 26, 2023



Welcome to worship this morning!

If you are new to the congregation, please know that **children** are welcome to remain in worship, or take a break in our “Kid’s Korner” within 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.

PRELUDE: *Grand Chœur in C*

Théodore Salomé

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

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. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
I invite you to kneel or remain standing.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,
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.

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.
Amen.

OPENING HYMN: *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!*

ELW 634 (v. 1-3)

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

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

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through 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: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the Lord will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The Lord will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

A reading from the book of Ezekiel:

¹¹Thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

²⁰Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²²I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

²³I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Brian

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.

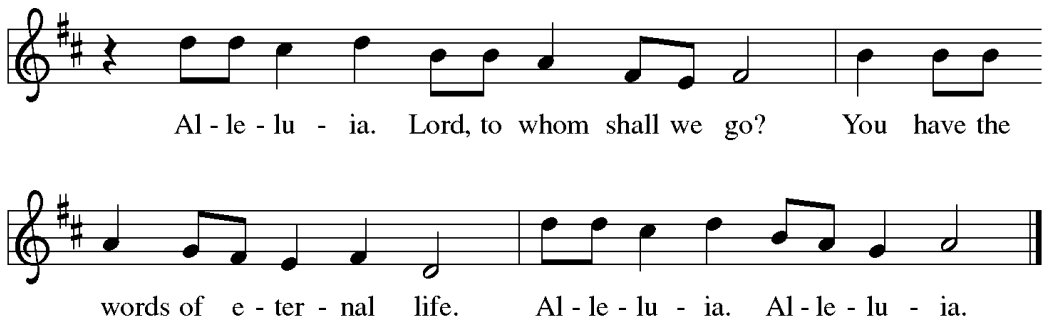
A reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Brian

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

Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. I invite you kneel or remain standing.

A brief silence.

Holy God, from Christ we receive our call to feed, clothe, and welcome. Direct your church to respond to this call with faithfulness and generous love. We pray for the work of ELCA World Hunger, the Good Gifts campaign, and partnerships with global feeding ministries. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Christ, the rock of our salvation, we are brought into union with all of creation. With mountains, seas, dry lands, and animals of the field, we seek your guidance and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Christ we know merciful judgment. Guide rulers of every nation in ways of humble leadership and wise decision-making. Allow aid to come to all who are underserved and care to any who are neglected. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Christ we feel the depth of your love and care toward us. Nourish all who hunger, connect any who are isolated, and surround all who experience rejection or abuse. We pray for those who suffer the terror of war, especially in Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, and Gaza. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Christ we are made the people of his pasture. Inspire the outreach and social ministries of this congregation. We especially pray for our partnership with Grace Lutheran, GHIAA, and ELCA World Hunger. We pray for all people who serve and attend to the needs of others. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

For what else shall we pray...? (Worshippers may raise other prayers, aloud or silently)

We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

At this time, ushers will pass the offering plate if you desire to give a financial gift. Donations may also be given online on our website (stmatthewavon.org), or mailed to the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness!

OFFERTORY: *Jubilate Deo*

Dale Wood

O sing to the Lord with a jubilant voice.
Glory to God in the highest!
O serve him with gladness, before him rejoice.
Praise to the Lord in the highest!
The Lord is our God, our Creator, not we.
Glory to God in the highest!
The sheep of his pasture we ever shall be.
Praise to the Lord in the highest!

O enter his gates with thanksgiving and praise.
Glory to God in the highest!
To honor his name thankful voices we raise.
Praise to the Lord in the highest!
For good is the Lord, and his mercy is sure.
Glory to God in the highest!
To all generations his truth shall endure.
Glory to God! Glory to God!
Praise to the Lord in the highest!

Jubilate Deo, Dale Wood © 1971, Augsburg Publishing House. All rights reserved.

DOXOLOGY

All rise as the communion elements are brought forward.

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

God of field and forest, sea and sky,
you are the giver of all good things.
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,
and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

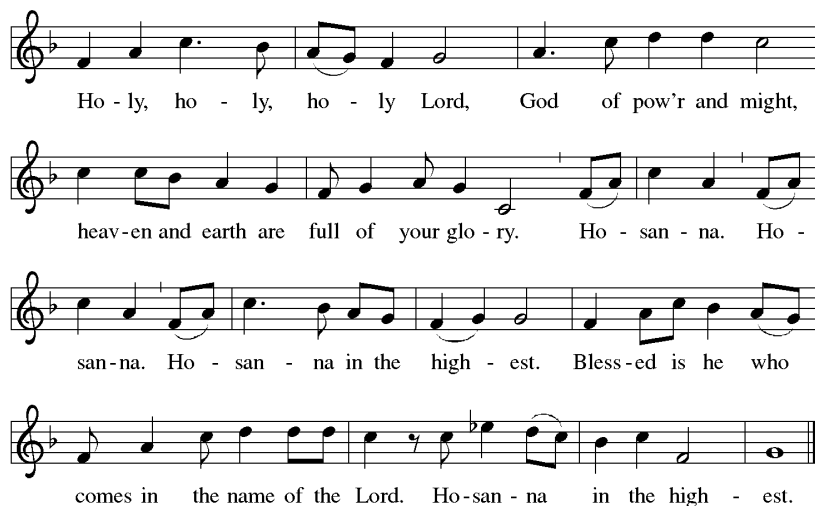
And also with you.

We lift them to the Lord.

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;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

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:



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. Ho -
san-na. 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.

GREAT AMEN

“Amen” is sung over and over to the tune of “Amazing Grace”

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 at this time. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit in your seat or the pastor will deliver the sacrament to your seat.

Christ invites you to this table.

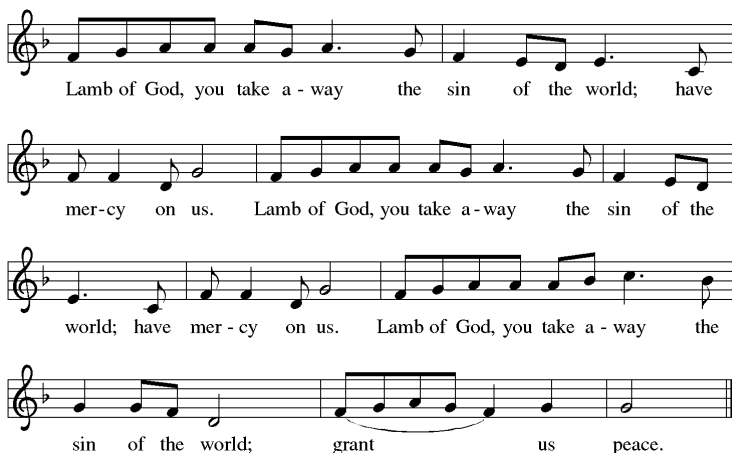
Come, taste and see.

THE DISTRIBUTION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

AGNUS DEI



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.

COMMUNION HYMN: *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

ELW 502

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

We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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,
Above you to watch over, and within you ☩ to give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

ELW 855

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Oh, Worship the King*

Robert A. Hobby

Today's Altar flowers are given by George Spoering, in memory of Lisa Spoering.

Please join us in the Hall of the Evangelists after the service this Sunday for coffee, cider, and lots of wonderful treats!

MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

Ushers: Kevin Reichler

Acolyte: Brooke Mehler

Lector: Ben Wright

Assisting Minister & Communion Assistant: Will Abbott

Live Stream: Greg Boyd

Altar Guild: Deb Brodeur

STAFF

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok – pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org

Director of Music: Sarah Schiener-Redenz – music@stmatthewavon.org

Director of Christian Education: Ryan Heckman – education@stmatthewavon.org

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

Sexton: Roy Zurell – contact the office

VISIT US ONLINE

Website: www.stmatthewavon.org

YouTube: @StMatthewAvon

Facebook: facebook.com/SaintMatthewLutheranChurch

Instagram: @stmatthewlutheranavon

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday	NO Adult Forum, Sunday School, or Confirmation Class HAPPY THANKSGIVING!		
Monday	OFFICE CLOSED		
Wednesday	9:30 am & 5:15 pm: Weight Watchers	7:00 pm O.A.	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Thursday	2:00 pm: Centering Prayer		
Sunday	9:00 a.m.: Sanctuary Worship with Holy Communion	10:20 am: Advent Workshop Intergenerational Event	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MITTEN TREE

It is indeed time to fill the **Mitten Tree** once again. Any gloves, scarves, hats, and of course mittens will be donated to **Gifts of Love in Avon and Grace Lutheran Church in Hartford**. The tree will be set up in the **Gathering Space**. Please help us fill the those branches, if you can. Thank you!

ELCA GOOD GIFTS PROGRAM

Embrace the spirit of giving this holiday season with the **ELCA Good Gifts program**—a meaningful way to make a lasting impact on communities in need. Join our congregation in the joy of giving by choosing from a diverse array of life-changing gifts, ranging from livestock to educational supplies, that directly benefit individuals and families around the world. With each thoughtful selection, you're not just gifting an item; you're contributing to sustainable solutions and empowering communities. Let's come together to make a difference and share the true essence of the season. Participate in the **ELCA Good Gifts program**, and let the light of compassion shine brightly in our hearts this holiday season.

If you'd like to know more about the program, please look for the periodicals placed in the Gathering Space, or visit: goodgifts.elca.org

2024 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

New Orleans

Mark your calendars for the ELCA Youth Gathering! It will be **July 16-20, 2024** and St. Matthew is inviting all 8th-12th graders to consider going to this extraordinary event! The Youth Gathering takes place every three years and it draws more than 30,000 young Lutherans from around the country to one place to worship, dance, learn about their faith, and serve the local community. It is transformative!

Ryan Heckman, Director of Christian Education, is planning to lead a group of young people to the Youth Gathering. There will be more details in the coming weeks - including an information session. For now, we wanted to make sure you marked your calendars.

If your family is interested in the Youth Gathering you can contact Ryan directly at education@stmatthewavon.org or give him a call at the church to express your interest!

POINSETTIA SEASON!

Get into the festive spirit and help us adorn our Christmas Eve services with the beauty of poinsettias! Starting today, we are opening sign-ups for those interested in purchasing these lovely plants for \$20 each. Your contributions will enhance the holiday ambiance. Don't miss this chance to participate in our holiday traditions; the sign-up deadline is December 12th, so secure your poinsettias and let the Christmas spirit bloom!

COFFEE HOUR

December Sign-Up

The sign-up sheet for the next month of Coffee Hour has been posted in the Gathering Space. If you wish to help out with this delicious ministry, please consider signing-up on Sunday!

St. Matthew Mission Statement:

St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.

In Christ, We Are Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives.