

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Communion



9:00 a.m., August 25, 2024

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.

We practice **open communion** at St. Matthew, meaning all who desire the sacrament of Holy Communion are welcome. If you prefer, you may also come forward for a blessing. During the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers will direct the congregation forward to receive communion while kneeling or standing at the altar rail. The pastor will distribute communion wafers, which you may intinct (dip) into red wine, or white grape juice, held by communion assistants. Please **do not sip** from the chalices. Gluten free wafers are also available. The pastor will deliver the sacrament to anyone unable to come forward. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit, available at the usher's table.

All are welcome!

PRELUDE: *I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table*

Jacob B. Weber

WELCOME

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, †
and of the Holy Spirit. **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.**

I invite you to kneel or remain standing.

A brief silence is observed for self-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: *When Morning Gilds the Skies*

ELW 853

GREETING

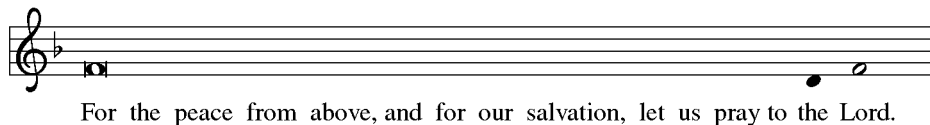
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

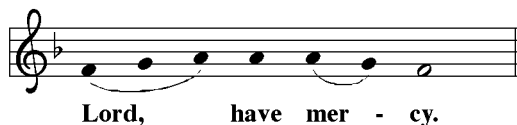
KYRIE



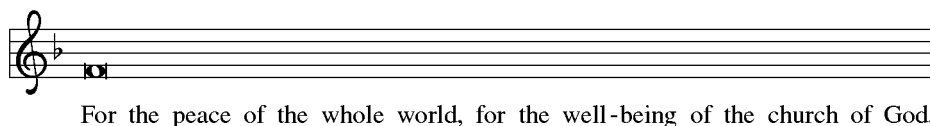
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



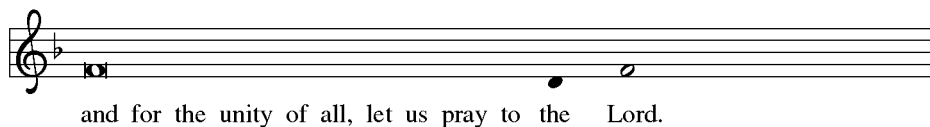
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



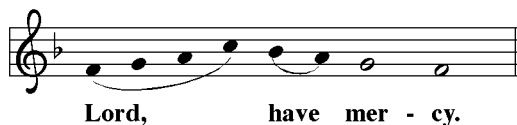
Lord, have mer - cy.



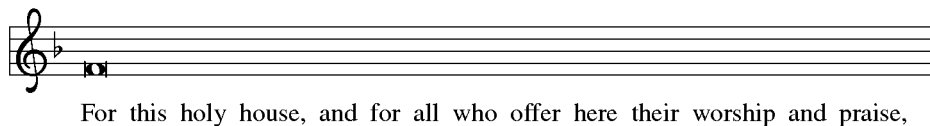
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



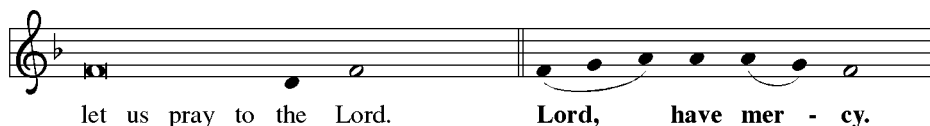
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



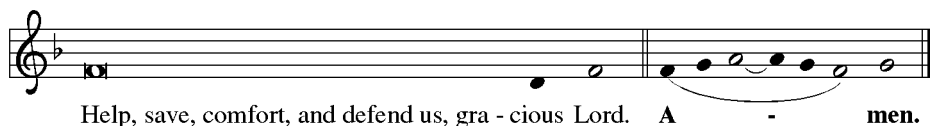
Lord, have mer - cy.



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

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

In the Near East, covenant means “agreement” or “alliance.” It describes relationships and is the primary word used to characterize the relationship between God and Israel. By delivering Israel, God has already begun the relationship. Joshua calls upon the people to respond.

A reading from Joshua:

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ^{2a}And Joshua said to all the people, ¹⁴“Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

¹⁶Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 6:10-20

Like a general giving a rousing speech to troops before battle, this letter closes by calling on Christians to be equipped for spiritual warfare against evil. The full armor of God includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the gift of salvation, and the word of God inspired by the Spirit.

A reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

¹⁰Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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: John 6:56-69

The “hard saying” that offends Jesus’ disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter, on the other hand, knows something about the scarcity of living, gracious words. He asks the most important question: “To whom shall we go?”

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said,] ⁵⁶“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON:

Pastor Ryan

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Bread of Life from Heaven*

ELW 474

APOSTLE'S 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

Calling on the spirit of Wisdom to guide our hearts and our minds, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. I invite you to kneel or remain standing.

A brief silence.

Holy God, you have the words of eternal life. Lead the church to put its trust in Jesus, the living Word. Direct preachers, teachers, writers, and all the baptized in faithful speech and bold witness. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Creator God, we and all creation are sustained by your Word. We pray for all who remind us of our interconnectedness with all living things. Prosper the work of conservation organizations, ELCA advocacy, and local climate justice advocates. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of wisdom, as our nation navigates another election cycle, guide our leaders to act justly for the sake of the world. Bring about fruitful conversation among your people and bring about change where you see fit. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of restoration, bring healing and wholeness to all who cry to you. Where pain is sharp, bring a sense of comfort and relief. Where grief runs deep, bring your tender mercy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of new life, protect students and teachers for a new school year. Bring an end to school shootings and cycles of violence. Move us to do all that is necessary to ensure a safe future for our children. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of every generation, we remember with thanksgiving all who have completed their earthly pilgrimage. Strengthen us in our baptismal callings to serve you faithfully until our journey's end. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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 on our website (stmatthewavon.org), or mailed to the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness!

OFFERTORY

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.

1 As this cup of bless - ing is shared with - in our midst,
 2 Let this be a fore - taste of all that is to come when

Refrain



may we share the pres - ence of your love.
 all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: AS THE GRAINS, Marty Haugen

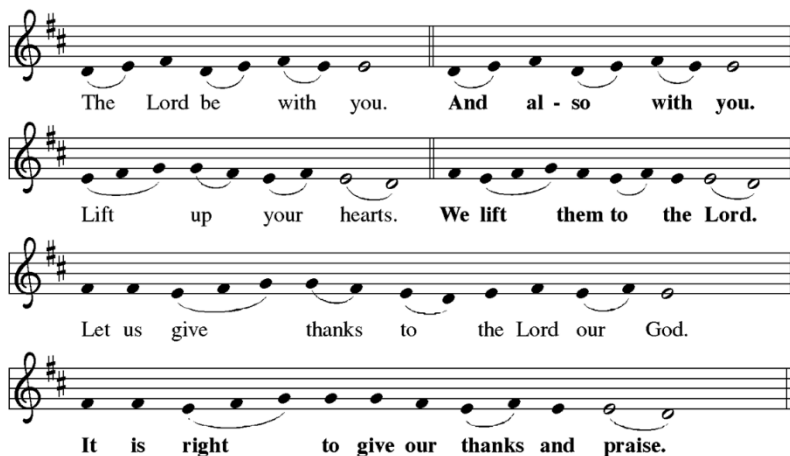
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OFFERING PRAYER


Jesus, Bread of life,
 you have set this table with your very self,
 and called us to the feast of plenty.
 Gather what has been sown among us,
 and strengthen us in this meal.
 Make us to be what we receive here,
 your body for the life of the world.
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;
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, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n 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.

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, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN: *Blessed Assurance*

ELW 638

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

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.
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: *O Jesus, I Have Promised*

ELW 810

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

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Today's Altar Flowers are given in loving memory of Linda Reichler.

MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

Assisting Minister: Robin Lindquist

Ushers: Kevin Reichler

Altar Guild: Paula Cunningham & Doreen O'Leary

Coffee Hour: Karen Wright & Anne Fenn

Lector: Ben Wright

Live Stream: Greg Boyd

Cantor: Roy Zurell

STAFF

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok – pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org
Director of Music: Sarah Schiener-Redenz – music@stmatthewavon.org
Director of Christian Ed. The Rev. Ryan Heckman – revryan@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 **Facebook.com/**[SaintMatthewLutheranChurch](https://www.facebook.com/SaintMatthewLutheranChurch)
YouTube: [@StMatthewAvon](https://www.youtube.com/@StMatthewAvon) **Instagram:** [@stmatthewlutheranavon](https://www.instagram.com/stmatthewlutheranavon)

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday	9:00 am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion			
Tuesday	10:00 am: A.A. (Open to All)	6:00 pm: Worship & Music Mtg.		
Wednesday	9:30 am & 5:15 pm: W.W	7:00 pm: O.A.	7:00 pm: Christian Ed. Committee Mtg.	7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal
Thursday	2:00 pm: Centering Prayer			
Sunday	9:00 am: Outdoor Worship w/ Holy Communion			

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SMLC ANNUAL FANTASY FOOTBALL LEAGUE!

This year, we're excited to shake things up by hosting the draft at the Parsonage on Thursday, Sept. 5 at 6:00 pm. Come enjoy food, snacks, drinks, and fellowship as we draft our teams. For those that are unable to attend in-person, an online option will also be available simultaneously.

We're also introducing a "Best Ball" league format, so there's no need to worry about setting your lineup each week—the app will automatically count your best scoring players! Sign up in the Gathering Space or email the office to compete. All are welcome, including non-members. See you there!

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION OPEN

Sunday School will be starting its 2024-25 season this September and that means registration is officially OPEN!

You can pick up registration materials starting TODAY outside the main sanctuary doors. Registration forms are due to Pastor Ryan by Rally Sunday, September 8th. Turn them into the front office or directly to Pastor Ryan. Sunday School Orientation will take place with families already registered and those interested on Sunday, September 15th after worship and our first class will be Sunday, Sept. 22.

ADULTS: Are you interested in being a Classroom Helper this year? Classroom Helpers will assist our teachers by being an extra set of eyes, ears, and hands in the classroom each Sunday. Your main responsibility is to be a joyful presence in the classroom and to help the kids with their project/activity. Let Pastor Ryan know if you're interested in being a part of the Sunday School in this important way! If you have questions reach out to Pastor Ryan at revryan@stmatthewavon.org

CONFIRMATION REGISTRATION OPEN

Confirmation is an exciting and fun educational opportunity and Pastor Brian and Pastor Ryan will start up classes again coming this September!

You can pick up registration materials starting Sunday August 18th outside the main sanctuary doors. Registration forms are due to Pastor Ryan by Rally Sunday, September 8th. You can turn them into the front office (Pastor Ryan's mailbox is on the counter near the office door) or directly to Pastor Ryan. If you have any questions about Confirmation at St. Matthew, you can reach out to Pastor Ryan at revryan@stmatthewavon.org

Music at Greenwood: SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, September 14th, 4:00 p.m.

The fourth concert in our 2024 season will feature St. Matthew's organist, Sarah Schiener-Redenz. Sarah will play a one-hour program of music by Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, and others, displaying the variety of sounds that the pipe organ can produce. After the concert, please stay for a reception of light appetizers. An offering will be received at the door. We hope to see you there!

CALLING ALL SINGERS!

It is almost time for the St. Matthew Choir to start meeting again. We will hold our first rehearsal of the season on Wednesday, August 28th, at 7:00 p.m. If you are at all curious about what it is like to be a choir member, now is the perfect time to find out. Anyone who enjoys singing is invited to join us!

SMLC WOMEN:

Tuesday, Sept. 10th | 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Please sign up in the Gathering Space to attend our first Women's Fellowship!

Don't bring a thing – just come and enjoy coffee and dessert and a time of getting to know one another better!

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.