

St. Matthew's
CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Third Sunday in Advent

December 14, 2025

WELS
Christ's Love, Our Calling.

Welcome to St. Matthew's!

We are delighted that you have joined us for worship today! It is our prayer that God would fill you with His grace and peace as we worship our Lord and Savior Jesus. If you have questions about St. Matthew's or would like to speak to one of the pastors, please feel free to reach out to us using the contact information on the back cover.

IMMINENT ARRIVAL

IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF THE MESSIAH

The Messiah is an important person. "Messiah" is the same word as "Christ" or "Anointed One." He is someone who has been anticipated for a long time. Now we look at a time when his arrival is imminent!

The historic Christian Church gave Latin titles to each Sunday. They titled the Third Sunday in Advent "Gaudete," which means "Rejoice!" As we reach the midway point of Advent, we ask Christ to empower us to do just that. We rejoice because God fulfills all his promises in Jesus.

ADVENT WREATH

The **Advent Wreath** is a blessed tradition of Advent. Each week we will light one more candle to represent a different aspect of the Advent and Christmas story. The candle in the center is called the Christ Candle and will be lit on Christmas Day. The first candle reminds us how God has kept all his promises. With the second candle we hear God's call to repent. Today we light the pink candle as we rejoice to hear the announcement that our sins are forgiven through this coming child.



For Your Convenience

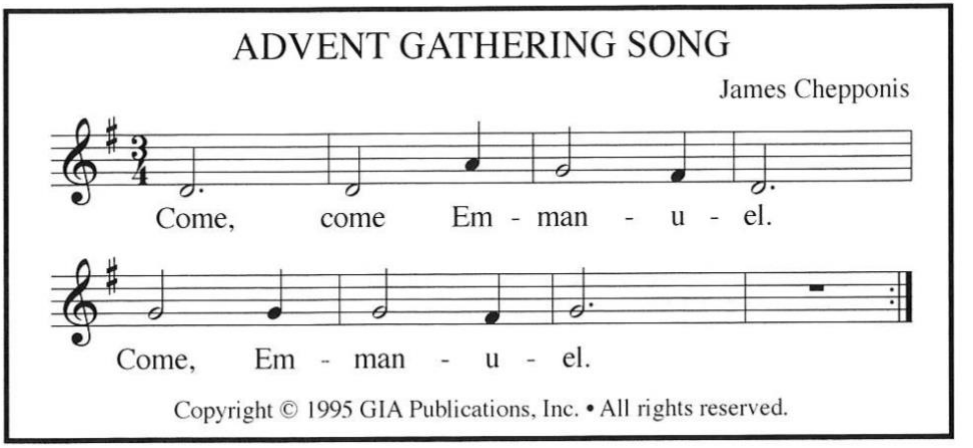
- ◊ Restrooms are located down the hallway on the left.
- ◊ A Parents' room is available in the back of the sanctuary for those with small children.
- ◊ A Mother's room, located in the parents' room, offers privacy for nursing mothers.
- ◊ Large Print Service Folders are available from an usher upon request.
- ◊ Please silence your cell phones before worship.
- ◊ View services on Charter 985 on Thursdays at 12PM and 7PM or Sundays at 10AM. You can also visit https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=st+matthews+oconomowoc
- ◊ St. Matthew's is on Instagram. You can follow us @St.MatthewsOconomowoc.

The Order of Worship for
Third Sunday in Advent
December 14, 2025

Advent Gathering Rite

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The following refrain repeats as the cantor sings the verses below.



1. See the glory of God and *come*…
2. Oh be strong, fear not and *come*…
3. For our God comes to save us, so *come*…
4. Oh be patient, the Lord will *come*…
5. Bring good news to the poor and *come*…
6. For the way is prepared, so *come*…
7.

Confession

As we prepare for the advent of our Savior, we join to humbly confess our sin:
Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Congregation sings refrain once before cantor sings

Cantor sings Lord, have mercy upon us and *come*...
Christ have mercy upon us and *come*...
Lord, have mercy upon us and *come*...

Absolution

God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

All sing the refrain one final time together

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts, and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The Word

First Reading — Isaiah 35:1-10

Isaiah tells us that the coming of the Messiah would change everything.

[1]The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and
blossom. Like the crocus, [2]it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for
joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they
will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

[3]Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; [4]say to those with
fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with
vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."

[5]Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
[6]Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will
gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. [7]The burning sand will become
a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass
and reeds and papyrus will grow.

[8]And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for
those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not
go about on it. [9]No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found
there. But only the redeemed will walk there, [10]and those the LORD has rescued will
return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 146C — Praise the LORD, Sing Hallelujah

The melody found in the gray Psalter book.

Second Reading *James 5:7-11*

James points to Job as an example of perseverance in the face of suffering.

7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer
waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and
spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.
9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The
Judge is standing at the door!
10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the
prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed
those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what
the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem (Sunday) **Gaudete**

Choral group

Gospel (Sermon Text) *Matthew 11:2-11*

John's disciples wanted to verify that Jesus was the Messiah.

2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his
disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone
else?"
4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind
receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the
dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who
does not stumble on account of me."
7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John:
"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not,
what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine
clothes are in kings' palaces. 9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell
you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written:

" 'I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

[11]Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Hymn 324 — O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

Sermon — What are You Expecting to See?

Pastor Steven Hillmer

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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian 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.

Connection Cards and Offerings

We are delighted you have joined us for worship today and we would love to stay connected with you. To help us do so, please fill out the Connection Card in the seat back. You may place it in the offering plate as the offering is gathered or hand it to one of the ushers. You also have the ability to record your worship or give a gift using the appropriate QR code below. Those who have downloaded the St. Matthew's App can check-in and give offerings directly through the app. You may also text GIVE to 833-921-6451.

Guest Form



St. Matthew's App



Give Online



New Member Welcome

Austin Campbell; Dave, Wyatt Fontaine; Patricia France; Dugan, Marie, Reagan & Harper Hettich; Leo Holzinger; Elizabeth Isham; Michael, Amanda, Olivia, Logan Johnson; Philip Kussmann; Matt, Kristin, Gracelynn & Colton Lange; Stephanie Maahs; Zachary Nelsen; Shawn Rossmann; Christine Schindler; Chad Schraufnagel; Dan, Erin, Chase & Eden Silkey

Prayer of the Church

The Sacrament

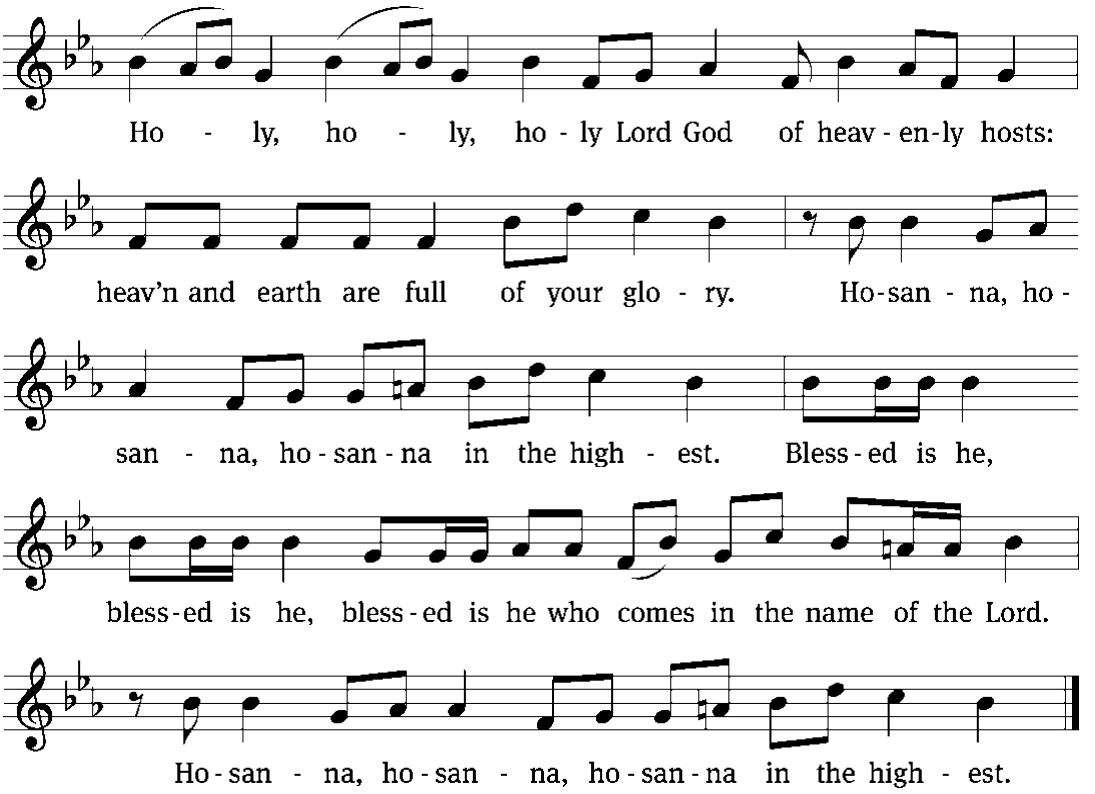
Preface

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.
It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy *CW 167*



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

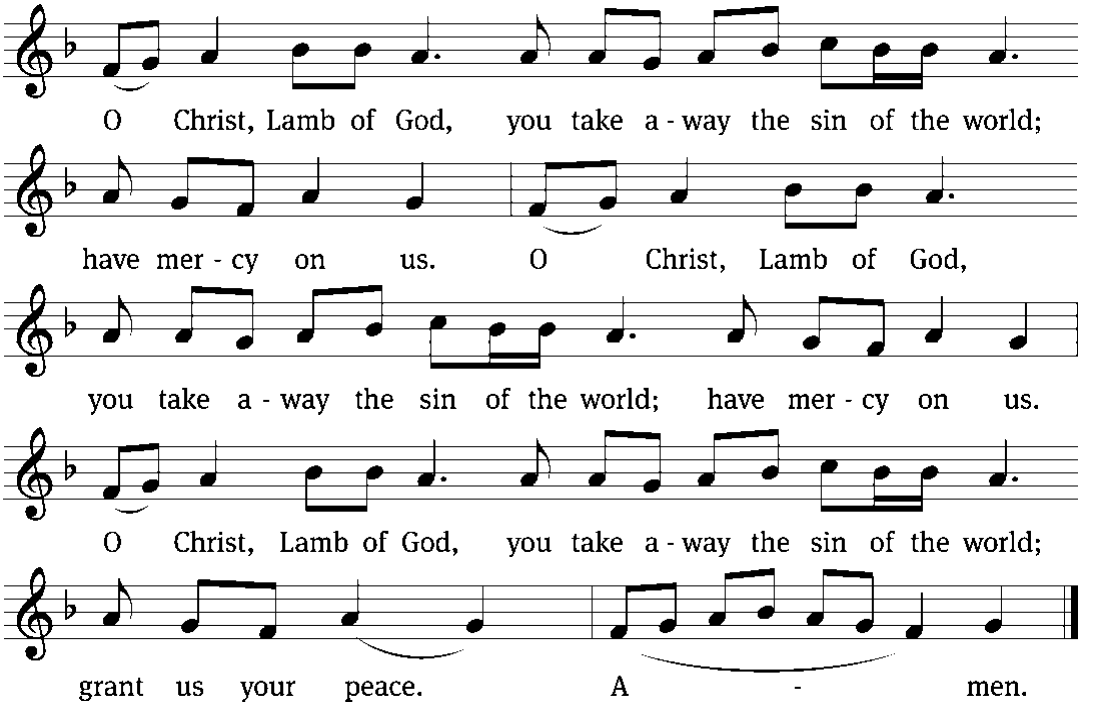
Words of Institution

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

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God



We celebrate the Lord's Supper today. In his Word, God makes it clear that Holy Communion is to be shared by people who proclaim a common faith (1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Without judging anyone's hearts, we invite those who share in our confession by their membership in our congregation or another congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and who are properly prepared (1 Corinthians 11:27-29) to receive the Sacrament. See page 295 in the front of Christian Worship for a guide for preparation. Guests, please speak with one of the pastors about instruction in our Christian faith and this Sacrament so you will be ready to partake of this wonderful meal in full unity with us after that instruction. Thank you for respecting the way we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Distribution – Communion distribution procedures will be announced by the Pastor. Please follow the direction of the ushers. Cups of non-alcoholic wine (light in color) are in the center of each tray.

Distribution Hymn 358 **Of the Father's Love Begotten**

Distribution Hymn 670 **I Come, O Savior, to Your Table**

Personal Prayer after communion: *Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for nourishing me in this sacrament with your body and blood. You have given me forgiveness, life, and salvation. Let me always remain in you as a branch remains in the vine. Send me out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.*

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Prayer

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.
Amen.

Closing Hymn 313 Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

In our Prayers: May our Lord bless and keep **Anna Birnshein** who is having surgery this coming Tuesday.

Bible Study Opportunities

Sunday Adult Bible Study @ 9:15am
Our Adult Bible Class is on a historical journey generation by generation, seeing how God has blessed WELS over these past 175 years! For parents with young children, childcare is available for children ages 0-3 in the Pre-K2 room so that those parents can attend class.

Sunday School and Teen Study @ 9:15am
Sunday School is for children in PreK-6th grade. Teen Bible Study is open to 7th-12th grade. All are welcome so please invite your children's friends to join us as well! Sunday School has one more lesson on the Christmas account before taking a two-week break (resuming January 4). The Teen Study is discussing Jesus, the Light of the world, and how various lights around this time of the year remind us of the true Light.

Thursday "Women in the Word" Bible Class
We are looking at "How to Study the Bible". If you have studied the Bible for years this is a great refresher and will provide some new insights into studying Scripture. Join us on Thursday mornings at 8:30 a.m. in the Gathering Space.

Men's Bible Breakfast – 2nd Saturdays of the Month
Calling all men to come for a great breakfast and a study of God's Word. Breakfast starts at 7:30am on the second Saturday of each month. Pastor Bigelow is leading the topic, "Connecting Sinai to Calvary."

Grounded in God
SHINE Women's Ministry would like to invite all St. Matthew's women and friends to join us for Coffee and Devotion, "Grounded in God". Join us in the Gathering Space at Church at 7:45 a.m., conveniently after school drop-off. Children are welcome!

Acknowledgments
Setting One from Christian Worship
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Thank you for Serving our Savior and Us		
	This Weekend	**Next Weekend –** December 20 & 21
Ushers	**Saturday** – Andy Andress **Early –** Eric Wegner **Late –** Eric Ziel	**Wednesday 4pm –** Joel Watson **Wednesday 6:30 pm –** Jason Cox **Saturday** – Scott Heint **Early –** Tim Taubenheim **Late –** Andy Rosenau
Greeters	**Early** – Stu & Deb Schramm **Late** – Andy & Carrie Rosenau	**Early** – John & Jill Fields **Late** –
Hospitality	**Saturday –** Dan & Liz Schmidt **Early –** Tim & Carolyn Thiele **Late –** Jon & Ginny Kehren **LES 1pm –** Char Bouche	**Saturday** – Dwight & Janet Sandvold **Early –** Gary & Karen Haertel **Late –** Tim & Sandy Torgersen **LES 1pm –** Char Bouche
Organist	Char Bouche	**Wednesday –** Joy Elowski **Sunday –** Pastor Jon Kehren
Special Music	Rejoice!	**Wednesday –** Ring Praise **Sunday –** Handbells
Projection	**Saturday** – Emily Stewart **Early –** Ethan Bergh **Late –** Grace Heins	**Wednesday 4pm –** Matthias Uttech **Wednesday 6:30 pm –** Toby Brandenstein **Saturday** – Dan Metzger **Early –** Jon/Henry Peterson **Late –** Josh Charais
Sound	**Saturday** – John Stewart **Early –** Joel Aldinger **Late –** Joel Aldinger	**Wednesday 4pm –** Heather Bigelow **Wednesday 6:30 pm –** Scott Heins **Saturday** – Char Bouche **Early –** Julia Watson **Late –** Charlie Bagdassian
Livestream	Nathan Bergh	**Wednesday –** Mike Bouche **Sunday –** Jason Cox

This Week at St. Matthew's		
Saturday	5:30 pm	Communion Service
Sunday	8 & 10:30 am 9:15 am 1:00 pm	Communion Service Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; Teen Bible Study LES Christmas Service (Grades PreK – 2nd)
Monday	6:30 pm	Bible Information Class
Tuesday	7:45 am	Grounded in God
Wednesday	10:00 am 4 & 6:30 pm 5:00 pm 5:00 pm	Shorehaven Services Advent Service Advent Meal Non-School Catechism
Thursday	8:30 am 6:00 pm 7:00 pm 8:00 pm	Women in the Word Rejoice! Choir and Church Council Handbell Choir

Friday	7:00 pm	Choir
Saturday	5, 5:45 & 6:30 pm	**NO Worship Service** Live Nativity
Sunday	8 & 10:30 am 9:15 am 1:00 pm	Worship Service Adult Bible Study; Sunday School; Teen Bible Study LES Christmas Service (Grades 3-8)

Highlights and Announcements

Giving That Makes Ministry Possible
"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." — Matthew 6:21
Giving is the outward sign of an inward trust. In Christ, we've received everything by grace, and our gifts are a joyful response. Through your generosity, the Spirit multiplies our offerings into worship, care, service, and learning. God uses ordinary generosity to do extraordinary things—comforting the weary, forming young disciples, and sending the Gospel into our community. This is the impact of faithful stewardship—giving that reflects the heart of Jesus. May God shape our hearts to give cheerfully and confidently, knowing that He provides for every need.

— **Board of Stewardship**

New Online Store
Get ready for Christmas with St. Matthew's! We've teamed up with EZ Promotions to bring you an extra online store option—*20% of all purchases* go back to St. Matthew's. Find St. Matthew's, Cardinal, and First Steps gear for the whole family! Order at https://bit.ly/SMezstore

Live Nativity: **Saturday, December 20 -** Performances: 5:00, 5:45, & 6:30 PM.
Volunteers & Cookie Donations Needed for Live Nativity!
Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas at St. Matthew's Live Nativity with live animals, music, and a heartfelt Nativity reenactment. **We need volunteers and cookie donations!** Sign up to help or provide cookies to make the evening special. Use the QR Code to signup.

Christmas For Two: Strengthen Your Marriage in 2026
Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift for your spouse? Register for St. Matthew's Marriage Retreat on Saturday, February 14, 2026. The church is covering the cost of the CliftonStrengths assessment, a $25 value per person. Upgrade options are available for those who want a deeper dive. **Mark your calendars** and register at https://bit.ly/SMmarriage or use the QR Code.

Lift Up Our Cardinals: DONATE TO SOAR 2026!
St. Matthew's School is looking forward to **Soar: A Night Benefiting Cardinal Scholars on Saturday, March 7, 2026**! This special evening supports our students through a fun night of fellowship and giving. Make sure to mark your calendars! We're currently seeking **donations** such as gift baskets, event tickets, unique experiences, or services that can be featured in our fundraising activities. Every contribution helps our Cardinals continue to learn, grow, and thrive. If you or your business would like to donate or sponsor the event, please contact us at soar@smls.org. Thank you!

Tickets to SOAR are Now on Sale!
Spend a festive evening at ***Rustic Manor on Saturday, March 7,*** enjoying complimentary beer, wine, and savory small plates — all in support of our Cardinal Scholars and the St. Matthew's community.
Space is limited. Reserve your spot today! https://auctria.events/SOAR2026

St. Matthew's Christmas Project
This year, St. Matthew's is partnering with **Make-A-Wish Wisconsin**! We're collecting **new, unwrapped toys** to help bring joy to children's wish journeys. Donation boxes are located at the church and school **now through January 5**. *Let's share the hope and excitement of the season with those who need it most!* Use the QR Code for the wish list or to donate online.

St Matthew's Ski Club 2025-26 Season
Ski Club is back! Students ages **7–18** can join our Alpine Valley ski club. A **$30 Club Card** includes one free lesson and discounts on lift tickets, rentals, and lessons.
Sign up for **St. Matthew's Ski Club 2025–2026:** https://bit.ly/SMski
Club Nights (3 PM): Dec 19, Jan 5 & 19, Feb 9 & 27
December Orders Now Open: Friday, Dec 19 – Order by Dec 15. Questions? Contact **Kristi Albert kalbert74@gmail.com 262-617-6468**

Senior Fellowship
Senior Fellowship will meet on **Wednesday, December 17 at noon** for our annual Christmas potluck followed by devotion and games. We meet in the church Gathering Area. Enjoy an afternoon of fun and fellowship! Questions? Contact Dan Feuerstahler at 920-245-3006.

OUR MISSION *COMPELLED BY THE LOVE OF CHRIST,*

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School seek to reach out to our families, community and world, using Law and Gospel to make disciples, growing and nurturing them in their Christian faith and life.

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St. Matthew's CHURCH AND SCHOOL

First Steps CHILD CARE CENTER

WORSHIP SERVICES SATURDAY: 5:30 PM
SUNDAY: 8:00 & 10:30 AM

Christian Education For All
SUNDAY 9:15 AM

Phone :

Church: 262.912.6060
School: 262.912.6364
First Steps: 262.912.6338

Welcome Visitors:
Please fill out the connection card in pew or scan

SCAN ME

Location :
1650 Brown St, Oconomowoc

Social Media:
@StMatthewsOconomowoc

Website : SMLS.ORG