Christmas Day



St. Matthew's
CHURCH AND SCHOOL

DECEMBER 25, 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.

CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN

HOLY INFANT SO TENDER AND MILD

From eternity, Jesus has been God, holy and majestic. When we look tenderly at the holy infant, we are looking at the same God who once told the prophet Moses, "No one may see me and live." Yet, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds all saw their holy God and survived. How? God became human, hiding his glory within flesh, so that he could come to us without instilling fear or dread.

A famous theologian once said, "We are to think of the Lord's birth, where the Word became flesh, not as a past event which we recall, but as a present reality on which we gaze." It's not that Christ the Savior was born. It's that Christ the Savior is born.

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
Nativity of our Lord
December 25, 2025

---

354 **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

Please stand for v.4

Invocation

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

Dialogue of Praise

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our Salvation.
O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth, You have set your glory above the heavens.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords, to him who alone does great wonders, who by his understanding made the heavens, who spread out the earth upon the waters, who made the great lights—the sun, to govern the day, the moon to govern the night.
Great is the Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

But our iniquities have separated us from God; our sins have hidden his face from us, so that he will not hear. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. We look for deliverance, but it is far away.
For our offenses are many in his sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our sins against him in thought, word, and action.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our sins.
From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord our Righteousness."
Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Your sins are forgiven.
Let the name of the Lord be praised forever and ever. Alleluia!

Anthem of Praise — Joy to the World/Glory to God

Choir

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, grant that the birth of your only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old bondage under the yolk of sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The Word

First Reading — Isaiah 52:7-10

The prophet foretold that the Lord would dwell among us and do what was necessary to bring the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

7 How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;
together they shout for joy.

When the LORD returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.
9Burst into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
10The LORD will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem — Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Choir

Second Reading — *Hebrews 1:1-9*

In the past God sent angels and prophets as messengers to his people. Now God speaks to us directly through his Son.

1In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in
various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed
heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3The Son is the radiance
of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his
powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand
of the Majesty in heaven. 4So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he
has inherited is superior to theirs.
5For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father"?
Or again,
"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son"?
6And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,
"Let all God's angels worship him."

[7]In speaking of the angels he says,
"He makes his angels spirits,
and his servants flames of fire."
[8]But about the Son he says,
"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
[9]You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy."

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn Response 333 v. 3 — O Little Town of Bethlehem

3 **How silently, how silently**
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893, abr., alt.
Text: Public domain

The Christmas Gospel (Sermon Text) — ***John 1:1-14***

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
[2]He was with God in the beginning. [3]Through him all things were made; without him
nothing was made that has been made. [4]In him was life, and that life was the light of all
mankind. [5]The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
[6]There was a man sent from God whose name was John. [7]He came as a witness to
testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. [8]He himself was not
the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

[9]The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. [10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. [11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. [12]Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— [13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn 358 — Of the Father's Love Begotten

v. 1, 4, 5 – All
v. 2 – Women; v. 3 – Men

Sermon — Through the Child We Become a child!

Pastor Philip Bigelow



Confession of Faith — *Excerpts from the Athanasian Creed*

The Athanasian Creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. One of the errors this creed defends against is the denial that Jesus is true God and true man in one person. How fitting it is to confess our faith on Christmas that Jesus is true God and true man, our Savior!

It is necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh.
Now this is the true Christian faith:

We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man. He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his

humanity; and though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one, one not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; one indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person; for just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there will come to judge the living and the dead. This is the true Christian faith.

Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.

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



Prayer of the Church

On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophesies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise.
Unto us a Child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though he is the all-powerful Lord of all, he is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.
Help us always believe that this precious Child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.

In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this day presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning this Child.

Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.

Special prayers and intercessions

As the angels sang out their praise, move us to also sing out our praise to you, today and every day, as the joy of Christmas remains in our hearts.
Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

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.

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.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose wonderful and mysterious birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name.

360 v1 Behold, a Branch is Growing

1 **Behold, a branch is growing of loveliest form and grace!**
As prophets sang, foreknowing, it springs from Jesse's race
and now begins to flow'r in midst of coldest winter,
at deepest midnight hour.

Text: German, 16th cent.; tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845–1925
Text: Public domain

Confession

What privilege is ours this wonderous morning, to ponder the great mystery of God taking on human flesh, to live in our place, to die in our place, to conquer sin, Satan and death itself. Praise be to God that this glorious message is no longer a mystery, but the very bedrock of our faith – for in Jesus Christ, the Promised Messiah, we have salvation.

In his great love, our Savior invites us to share in the wonderous mystery, that his very body and blood are here present in simple bread and wine, given and poured out for us, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we prepare our hearts, let us acknowledge and confess our sins.

Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Absolution

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. At Christmas, he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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.

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.

360 v4 Behold, a Branch is Growing

4 **O Savior, child of Mary,**
who felt our human woes,
O Savior, King of glory,
who conquered all our foes,
bring us at last, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day.

Text: German, 16th cent.; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, alt.
Text: Public domain

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 Hymns 343 Once in Royal David's City

340 Away in a Manger

344 What Child Is This

346 Angels We Have Heard on High

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

May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be upon and remain with you always.
Amen.

Closing Hymn 363:1-3 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice



On behalf of all the faculty and staff at St. Matthew's, we wish you all a most Blessed Christmas. May our God gracious gift of a Savior continue to fill you with all peace and joy today and in the New Year!



We are both humbled and honored by all the gracious gifts and cards that you have shared with us. Thank you so very much. It continues to be a joy to serve our Lord and you with Word and Sacrament and we look forward to each day our Lord gives us to continue sharing God's love!

Pastor Philip & Heather Bigelow
Isaiah, Elijah and Caleb

Pastor Steven and Jennifer Hillmer
Ben, Matthew, Silas and Jude

Pastor Mark and Anne Voss
Max, Simon and Henry

Reminder for Worship this Weekend

A Festival Service of Scripture and Song

Dec. 27	**Saturday Worship – Christmas 1**	**5:30pm**
Dec. 28	**Sunday Morning – Christmas 1**	**8:00 & 10:30am**
	No Bible classes this Sunday; No NY Eve service	

Serving in Worship

Presiding Minister	Pastor Philip Bigelow
Church Choir Director	Mrs. Joy Elowski
Organist	Mrs. Char Bouche

Highlights and Announcements

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.

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.

Save the Date: Women's Retreat – February 28, 2026
Join us for a day of fellowship and spiritual growth at our annual Women's Retreat! This year's theme, **"Renewed Minds, Transformed Lives"** (Romans 12:2), invites us to experience God's transformative power. **Early Bird Registration opens January 1**!

Support Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM)
Donate empty, clean pill bottles with labels removed. They will be sent by LWMS to CAMM in Malawi and Zambia. **Drop-off box:** Located on the table near the church office. *Learn more at www.camm.us*

SCAM EMAIL Reminder
Please be aware of scam emails that appear to come from St. Matthew's pastors or staff. **St. Matthew's pastor or staff member will never ask you for money or gift cards.**
A quick check: hover over the sender's email—if it does not end in **@smls.org**, it is not from us. When in doubt, call the person directly or contact the church or school office.

New Online Store
St. Matthew's has 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





Acknowledgments
Setting One from Christian Worship
Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.TM Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.
Liturgical and musical settings of Scripture based on text from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.TM Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.
Software distributed in partnership with Northwestern Publishing House.
Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2024 Concordia Publishing House.
The following are used by permission under CCLI Church Copyright License no. 2688981 and CCLI Streaming License no. CSPL055104.

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.

PHILIP BIGELOW
Pastor
pbigelow@smls.org

STEVEN HILLMER
Pastor
shillmer@smls.org

MARK VOSS
Pastor
mvoss@smls.org

TOM PLITZUWEIT
Principal
tplitzuweit@smls.org

JULIE NEHR
School Admin Assistant
jnehr@smls.org

JENNIFER MANSSEN
Church Office Manager
jmanssen@smls.org

GEORGE ZAFEROS
Business Administrator
gzaferos@smls.org

CONNIE ABRAM
Communication Manager
cabram@smls.org

AMBER TERRY
First Steps Director
aterry@smls.org

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