

St. Matthew's
CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Holy Thursday

April 2, 2026

WELS
Christ's Love, Our Calling.

Welcome to St. Matthew's!

We are delighted that you have joined us for worship. 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 one of them.

WELCOME in the name of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. May God fill you with His peace as we see our Savior give himself for the sins of the world.



Holy Thursday has often gone by the title, Maundy Thursday, which reflects Jesus' *novum mandatum* or "new commandment" to "love one another." Such expression of love to one another flows from the love Jesus has shown to us. The Institution of the Lord's Supper sets forth the depth of Jesus' love and gives power to the Church to live out his command.

We need to be washed clean in the blood of Jesus. Our own need can distract and overwhelm us with the details of our sin and our guilt. Blood always gets our attention, but it can make us feel uneasy. Jesus wants to lift our eyes above all that to his marvelous promise of forgiveness. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. The Lord's Supper gives us a glimpse of the heavenly feast where we will eat of the eternal manna and drink from the river of God's delights forever.

Holy Thursday marks the end of Lent proper. The service begins with the exhortation regarding the end of Lent. The action of ceremonially stripping the altar prepares the chancel and the congregation for Good Friday.

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
Holy Thursday

April 2, 2026

Opening Hymn 425 **Go to Dark Gethsemane**

Instruction for the End of Lent

In this Lenten season, we have heard again how our Lord walked the path of suffering which led him to the cross for our salvation. We have also heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, death, and the devil – all that keeps us from loving God and one another. This is the struggle to which we were committed at Baptism; God's forgiveness and the power of his Spirit to amend our lives continue with us because of his love for us in Jesus our Savior.

Within the family of the Church, God never wearies of giving peace and new life. In the absolution, we receive forgiveness as if from God himself. This absolution we should not doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thus forgiven before God in heaven, for it comes to us in the name and by the command of our Lord.

We who receive God's love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other, as Jesus became our servant.

In Holy Communion, the members of Christ's body participate most intimately in his love. Remembering our Lord's Last Supper with his disciples, we eat the bread and drink the cup of this meal. Together we receive the Lord's gift of his body and blood for forgiveness and participate in the new covenant that makes us one with him and one another. The Lord's Supper is the promise of the great banquet we will share with all the faithful when our Lord returns, the joyous culmination of our reconciliation with God and each other.

Please stand

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

Almighty God, merciful Father,
I confess to you that I have not loved you with all my heart.
In what I have done and left undone,
I have pursued my ways instead of your ways.
I have not loved my brothers and sisters as myself.
For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.
I am truly sorry for my sins.
I repent of them.
I beg for your mercy, O Lord.

Silence for meditation and personal confession.

Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us.
Cleanse me from my sins.
Release me from my guilt.
Grant me your Holy Spirit to amend my sinful life.

The almighty God has been merciful to us and has sent his Son to die for all. For his sake, God forgives our sins and calls us from darkness to his marvelous light. 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.

Exhortation

Our Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven us and reconciled us to God and has promised us the power to forgive and love each other. Relying on his promise, therefore, be reconciled with one another.
Brothers and sisters, may the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, in our words, and in our actions.

Prayer of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, you give us your true body and blood as a remembrance of your suffering and death on a cross. Grant us so firmly to believe your words and promise that we may always partake of this sacrament to our eternal good; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Please be seated.

First Reading — Exodus 24:1-11

[1]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and
Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, [2]but Moses
alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not
come up with him."

[3]When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded
with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." [4]Moses then wrote down
everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set
up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. [5]Then he sent young
Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship
offerings to the LORD. [6]Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half
he splashed against the altar. [7]Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the
people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

[8]Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of
the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

[9]Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up [10]and
saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli,
as bright blue as the sky. [11]But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the
Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem — Glorious Day

Rejoice!

Second Reading *1 Corinthians 11:23-28*

[23]For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, [24]and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." [25]In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26]For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[27]So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. [28]Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel (Sermon Text) *John 13:1-15,34*

[1]It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

[2]The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. [3]Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; [4]so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5]After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

[6]He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

[7]Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

[8]"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

[9]"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

[10]Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." [11]For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

[12]When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. [13]“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. [14]Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. [15]I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

[34]“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

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

Please be seated.

Hymn of the Day 417 — It Was a Dark and Dismal Night

Sermon — Love to the End

Pastor Philip Bigelow

Prayer of the Church for Holy Thursday

Lord God, heavenly Father, author of the everlasting covenant and giver of the cup of salvation,
We gather in your courts to offer you our sacrifice of thanksgiving.

For fulfilling your promise to establish a new covenant through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ,
We give you humble thanks.

As our Lord Jesus Christ gave thanks to you when he broke the bread, as he gave thanks to you when he took the cup,
We also give you thanks.

Precious Savior, both Priest and offering, awe and wonder fill our hearts as we partake of your body, broken for us, and your blood, shed for us.
We praise you, bless you, and adore you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In our poverty of righteousness, we have nothing to offer. Without your tremendous sacrifice, we would still be in our sins,
But through your sacrament of the New Testament, we are assured that our iniquities are forgiven and our sins are no longer remembered.

O Holy Spirit, dwell within us as we remember our Lord's death in this sacrament. Enter our hearts to strengthen our faith and fill us with gratitude for your great mercy.
Move us to encourage one another to love and to do good works.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

As our Lord served his disciples by washing their feet, so may we also humbly serve one another.
Help us live our lives as sacrifices of thanksgiving to him who first loved us. 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



The Sacrament

Stand

Preface *CW 165*

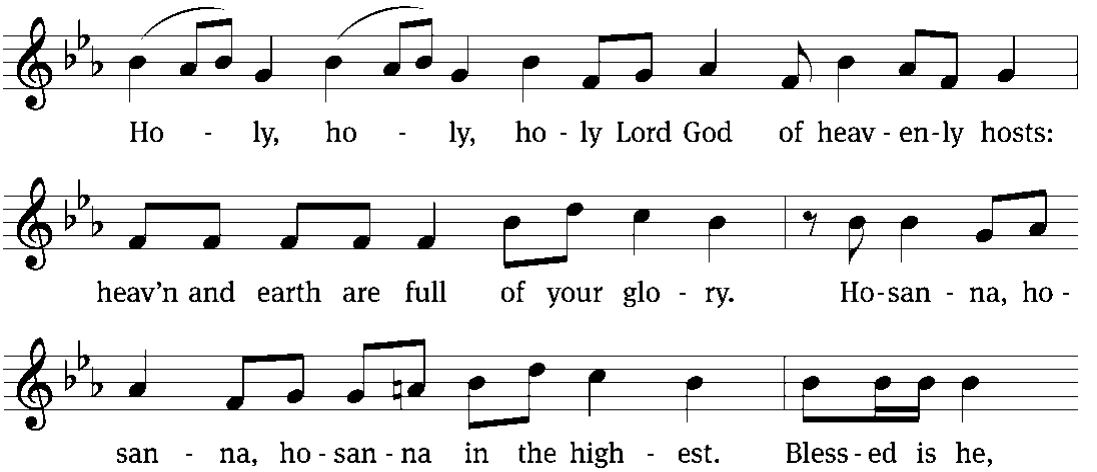
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

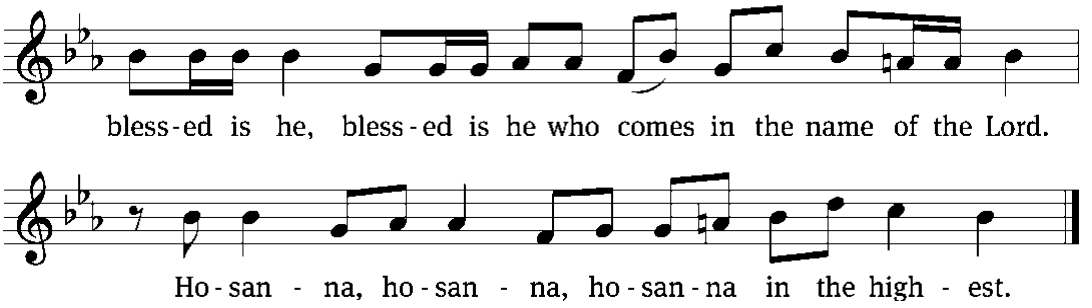
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

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, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. 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*





Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

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

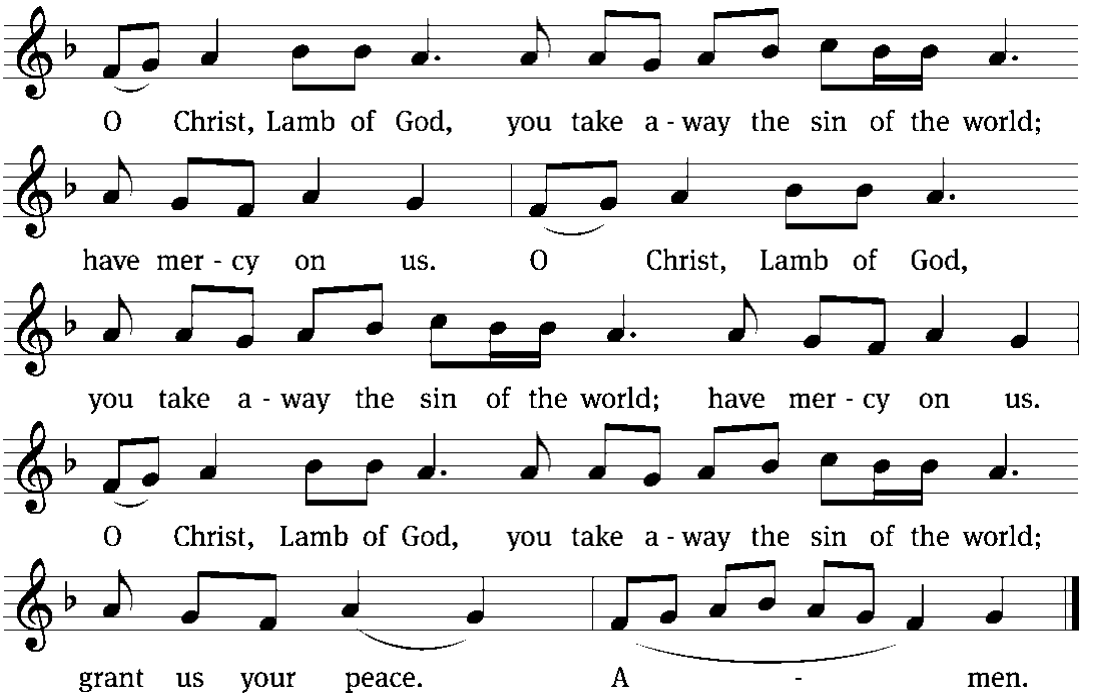
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

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

CW 169



Distribution Hymn 652 **Lord Have Mercy**
Led by Rejoice!

Distribution Hymn 659 **Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior**

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 and are reserved for people who will be taking them because of health concerns.

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.

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

After the Last Supper, less than 24 hours remained in the earthly life of our Lord. Events moved rapidly:

prayer in Gethsemane
betrayal by Judas
arrest, mock trial, painful beating,
the trudge to Golgotha and execution.

As his life was stripped from him, so we strip our altar and chancel to symbolize his purposeful, redemptive suffering and death for us.

We remove all signs of ***life***, symbolized by our plants, to remind us of how our Savior gave up his life for the sins of the world.

We remove all signs of ***light***, symbolized by our candles, to remind us of Jesus' life ebbing away and of the darkness that covered the earth while our Savior suffered.

We remove the ***communion vessels*** which bring to us his ***true body and blood***, to remind us that for three days his body was also removed from sight and placed in a tomb.

We remove our ***altar coverings*** to remind us of how our Lord also was stripped and nailed to a tree.

We remove ***all signs of our earthly worship*** to focus our attention solely on the cross of Christ, pondering the awesome mystery of his eternal love for us.

The Stripping of the Altar

- *As the Altar is stripped, there is a Tuba Solo by Lane Wendorf.*

There are no closing announcements.
Please observe silence as you dismiss yourself in preparation for the events that take place on Maundy Thursday evening and Good Friday.

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Good Friday Tenebrae:	*1:00pm & 6:30pm*
Sunrise Service	*6:00am*
Festival Services	*8:00am & 10:30am*
Easter Breakfast	*7:00am – 10:00am*

Join us as we celebrate our Savior's Victory and the gift of Salvation!

Worship Leader: Pastor Philip Bigelow
Organist: Becky Aldinger
Special Music: Rejoice!

SPECIAL VOTER'S MEETING – April 12
All voting members are encouraged to attend a Special Voters' Meeting on Sunday, April 12, immediately following the late service. Please plan to stay and be part of this important discussion.

The Body and Blood
of Christ

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

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@StMatthewsOconomowoc

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