



**Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

250 Woodside Road  
Riverside, Illinois 60546  
Telephone: (708) 442-5250  
Parsonage: (708) 442-0238  
Fax: (708) 442-5264

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m.- Noon

Web page: [www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org)

Email address: [www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org/service](mailto:www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org/service)

**Dennis J. Lauritsen, Pastor**  
**David B. Richards, Parish Musician**  
**Karen Rouleau, Administrative Assistant**



**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*During the Prayers of Intercession, you are invited to add your own prayer(s) either in speech or in silence as indicated by the line: "Other intercessions may be added here." You may wish to use this insert to write down your prayer(s) which you may then offer aloud during that time. If you wish to have your prayers added to the Prayer of the Church during the coming weeks, please remove and place this card in the offering plate.*

---

---

---

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 ✚ 10:15 a.m.

*“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.*

---

**HOLY COMMUNION**  
***EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING TEN, PAGES 203-209***

**GATHERING**

---

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND \*ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts.

**Faithful God, we confess that we have been unfaithful to you. Like dry leaves and withered grass, our lives are blown about by our sins and the powers of evil around us. Restore us, O God; let the light of your face shine on us, and we shall be saved. Amen**

God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. In the name of + Jesus Christ, I bring you this good news: You are free from all that imprisons you; your sins are forgiven; God heals your broken hearts. Live in peace and harmony as you wait for the day of God. **Amen**

\*GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, and the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

\*LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Holy are you, God of the brokenhearted and oppressed; you promised to send your chosen One who gives a garland instead of ashes to those who mourn; who brings down the powerful and lifts the lowly. As we light these candles, open our lips to testify to the true light coming into the world who enlightens everyone. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the desert.

**Reveal your truth to us, and fill our mouths with shouts of joy that declare the great things you have done for us. Amen**

\*KYRIE



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
 Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
 Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

## WORD

---

*God speaks to us in Scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM (*Prayed in unison by the congregation.*)

Psalm 126

**When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.**

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;**

**then it was said among the nations,**

**“The Lord has done great things for them.”**

**The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.**

**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like the watercourses in the Negeb.**

**May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.**

**Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves.**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

page 205



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

## \*GOSPEL READING

John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Holy Gospel according to St. John...  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John's Gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

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

**\*CREED**

God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ, living together in trust and hope we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need, remembering especially... Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered in speech or silence.*

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved people whose lives testified to your radiant love, especially those we name... Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

\*PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

\*DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

\*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

\*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.



## \*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

**All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, 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**

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Now share in the feast of salvation.

**\*BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

**SENDING**

---

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**\*BLESSING**

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

**\*SENDING HYMN**

*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*

ELW 553

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

## SERVING IN THE LITURGY

---

PREACHING AND PRESIDING MINISTER

Dennis Lauritsen, pastor

ASSISTING MINISTER

Emily Bittner

MUSIC MINISTER

David Richards

SERVICE LEADER

Brandon Michaels

LECTOR

Kristine Boike

GREETERS

Walter and Judith Cudecki

USHER

Walter Cudecki

ALTAR CARE AND SACRISTANS

Jane Lauritsen and Fred Kuzel

## IN THE PRAYERS

**Members of the Congregation:** Anne Gavac, Helen Gaydusek, Karole Gaydusek, Elaine Haase, Bettye Harden, Marge Lemere, Luddy Kovalsky, Mildred Mendel, Lois Mika, George Pagurko, Mildred Riban, Mary Sasuta and Mary Sordel. **Friends and Relatives of the Congregation:** Betty Bartel, Wally Bisping, Dan and Mary Costello, Eric Dennison, Marilyn Dunne, Tom Duran, Barbara Dykes, Denise Fricano, Ron Kelly, Nicole Kisiel, Mary Kmet, Rev. James Kuemmerle, Lenyce Lawrenson, Delores Linden, Darlene Loughlin, Mary Frances Mason, Michele Mason, Julie Mroz, Donald Neal, Pat Pileggi, Gail Purcell, Mary Lee Rosland, Sandy Rossella, Stevie Singer, Peter Spilotro, Kathy Stenson, Gertrude Tarbox and Janie Tarbox.

**If you would like to order a poinsettia** to help decorate the chancel of the sanctuary for the Christmas liturgies, a sign-up sheet is posted in the dining hall. You may also contact the church office to place your order. The cost per plant is \$17. The deadline for payment and sign-up is tomorrow.

**Oplatky**, a traditional wafer used at Christmastime in Central and Eastern European countries, is available today and throughout the season of Advent. A donation of \$1.50 per package (½ dozen) is appreciated. The *oplatky* is available on a table near the kitchen serving window or through the church office during the week.

**Offering envelopes for 2024** are available for pick up today in the lower hallway adjacent to the dining hall. Please pick up envelopes for friends or relatives who are unable to do so. **Financial donations** made to the congregation need to be received in the church office no later than Thursday, December 28<sup>th</sup> in order to be included in your end of the year financial statement. **Calendars for the new year**, compliments of Hitzeman Funeral Home, are available at both entrances to the sanctuary and on tables in the dining hall. Please take copies for your household and for friends and neighbors.

Please join us this afternoon at 2 o'clock for a concert by **The Baroque String Ensemble** from Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire. The hour long performance includes music by Vivaldi, Bach, Handel, Corelli and Telemann and features such period instruments as harpsichord, theorbo and violone. A free will offering is welcome.

**Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering  
December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

<i>Weekly Budgeted Offering for 2023:</i>	\$2,524.00
<i>Offering Received for the Above Categories:</i>	\$.00
<i>Shortage:</i>	\$.00

## **GIVE WITNESS AND REJOICE**

The third Sunday of Advent—also known as Gaudete (rejoice)—is one in which the church has rejoiced as the advent of the Messiah draws nearer. Whether or not you mark this Sunday with a pink candle on the wreath, the texts for the day echo this rejoicing, this “we’re almost there” excitement, in a multitude of ways. Isaiah couples images of a people restored with images of weddings and springtime and oak trees. The psalmist offers up images of a harvest festival, and Paul urges us to rejoice “always.”

John the Baptist, in his own way, calls for rejoicing by his acknowledgment that he is not what we are waiting for. John, like us, has a mission to bear witness, but when he says “I am not,” we hear a clear contrast to all the ways Jesus will identify himself with the Father: “I am the bread of life.” “I am the resurrection.” “I am the good shepherd.” All these things Jesus will be for God’s people, but John’s job is simply to bear witness to the light.

How do we bear witness, while still waiting? Or can joy in the midst of waiting be that very witness? In Advent we are not called to act as though we do not know how this story ends, as though Jesus’ birth and life, death and resurrection, are still before us. But we do know that sense of longing for God’s salvation to be fulfilled, and the temptation to imagine that we have to save ourselves, instead of waiting for God’s purposes to be worked out in God’s time. John reminds us that there can be joy in taking our proper place, pointing to Jesus without needing to be Jesus.

**Advent and Christmas**  
at Sts. Peter and Paul



**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**and Christmas Eve**

10:15 a.m., Liturgy of Holy Communion  
with Children's Presentation

7:15 p.m., Liturgy of Holy Communion  
with String Ensemble, Hand Bells  
and Candlelight

**Christmas Day**

at Ascension Lutheran Church  
400 Nuttall Road in Riverside

10:00 a.m. Lessons and Carols  
with Holy Communion  
(No liturgy here on Christmas Day)

Save the Date  
Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 12 noon



For more details, contact  
Shirley Kostelny at 630-968-5204

## UPCOMING COMMEMORATION

*Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552  
Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>*

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.



