



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

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.*

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CHRISTMAS EVE  
December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 ✚ 7:15 p.m.

*In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.*

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**HOLY COMMUNION**  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP**

**GATHERING**

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

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC                      *Christmas String Medley*

**\*CHRISTMAS CALL TO WORSHIP**

Here is the emptiness of my night  
    **may it be filled with your glory**  
Here are the silences of my heart  
    **may they be filled with your songs**

Here is the watchfulness of my eyes  
    **may they be opened to wonder**  
Here is the listening of my soul  
    **may it hear the joy of your love**

Here is the hopefulness of my journey  
    **may it lead me swift to your side**  
Here is the searching of my anxious mind  
    **may it find rest in your peace**

Here is the wood and straw of my days  
    **may they be a bed for your presence**  
And here is the humble cave of my life  
    **may it be your home, gentle Savior.**

*by lectionary poet Andrew King*

## \*GREETING

The grace that is Christ's gift to us, the love of God, and the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our 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 9:2-7

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people.*

The people who walked in darkness  
 have seen a great light;  
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
 on them light has shined.  
 You have multiplied the nation,  
 you have increased its joy;  
 they rejoice before you  
 as with joy at the harvest,  
 as people exult when dividing plunder.  
 For the yoke of their burden,  
 and the bar across their shoulders,  
 the rod of their oppressor,  
 you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
 For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
 and all the garments rolled in blood  
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

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

SECOND READING

Titus 2:11-14

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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



## \*GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1-14

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke...

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

The gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

**\*CREED**

*Hand-held candles are lit and remain so though the prayers.*

**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;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
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.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic 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**

## \*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As heaven and earth rejoice, let us pray for the needs of the church and all the world.

Your great compassion, O God, has increased our joy. Give us gratitude each day for your light and the bread of life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Because of your generosity, the trees clap their hands, the deep waters teem with varied creatures, and the stars burn with distant fire. Make us grateful for all that you call us to nurture and protect. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Because you know our need for order, you give us nations, cities, and neighborhoods. Help us to welcome the expertise of leaders, to uphold their good direction, and to oppose what harms the vulnerable. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Because you are a God of healing and renewal, you make whole what is broken. We beg your mercy on all who find this time of year a burden. Strengthen the grieving and comfort those who struggle with addictions. We pray especially for those we name aloud or in silence... . Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

By the power of the Holy Spirit, you have given us to each other. Give us hearts that remember your Christmas gifts beyond this night. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those before us who witnessed to your presence, taught us to pray, and strengthened us in the truth, especially those we name in speech and silence..., and all with whom we share the feast of eternal life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through 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.*

CHORAL ANTHEM

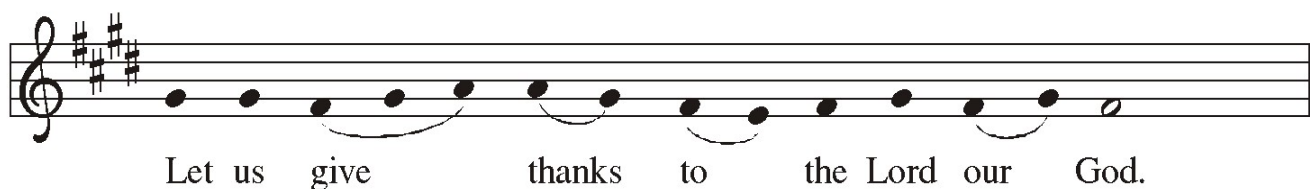
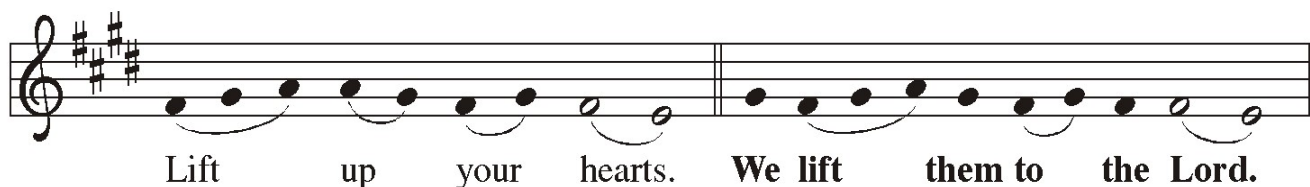
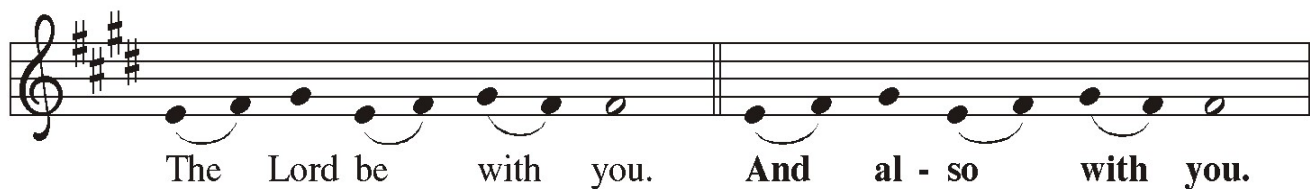
*Midnight Noel*

arr. Mark Hayes

## \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

## \*DIALOGUE

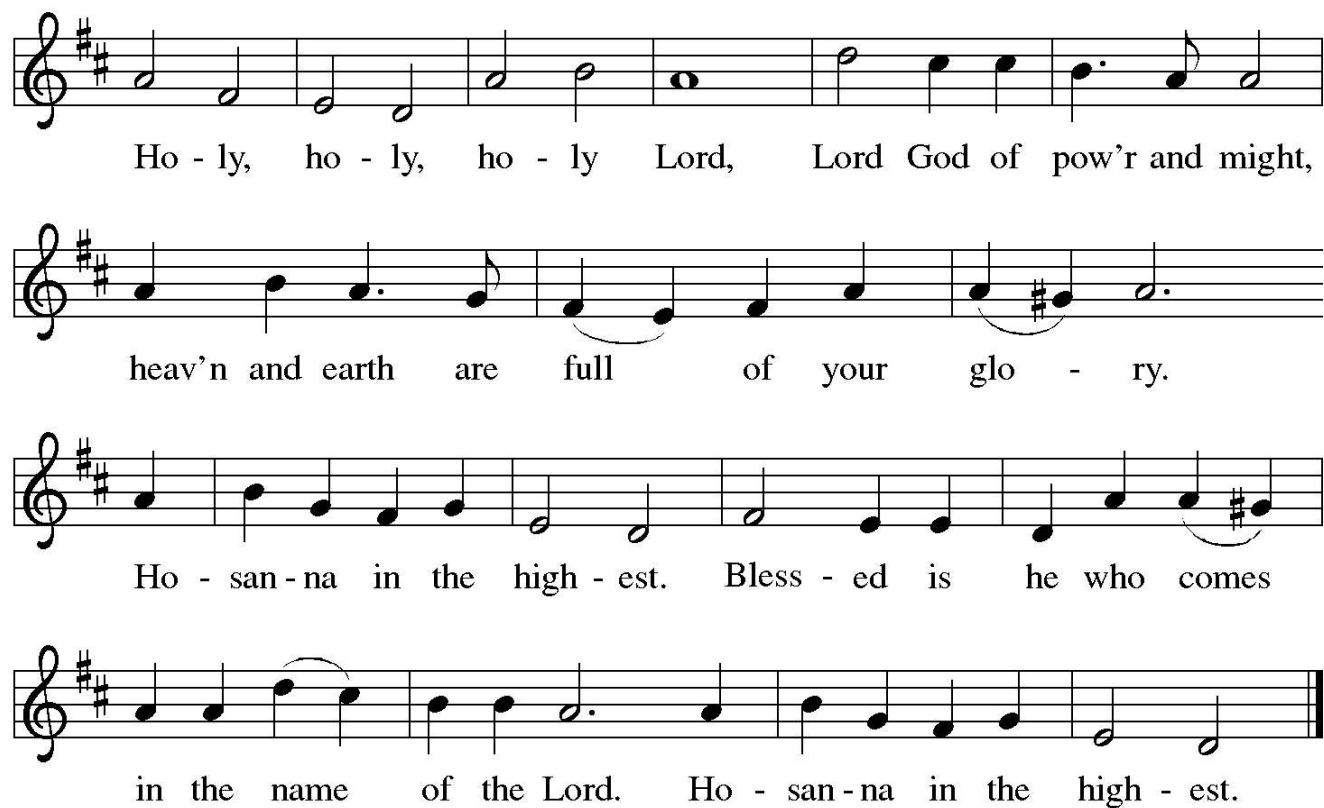


## \*PREFACE FOR CHRISTMAS

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, 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.

## \*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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**

The Word was made flesh. Alleluia, alleluia.

**And dwelt among us. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**The Word was made flesh. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**DISTRIBUTION**

**\*BLESSING**

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

**\*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray. Almighty and Eternal God, on this night you gave us Christ the Son to save us. As you sent the One foretold, send us now with good news for all people. Let the gladness of this feast have no end as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

**SENDING**

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

**\*BLESSING**

May Christ, who by his incarnation  
has filled us with grace and truth,  
give you peace this Christmas and always.  
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever. **Amen**

**\*SENDING HYMN**

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

ELW 281

*As the hymn begins, hand-held candles will be lit from the side aisles.*

**\*DISMISSAL**

Glory to God in the highest!  
**Peace to God's people on earth!**  
Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.  
**Thanks be to God.**



# SERVING IN THE LITURGY

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PREACHING AND PRESIDING MINISTER

Dennis Lauritsen, pastor

ASSISTING MINISTER

Beverly Tarbox

MUSIC MINISTER

David Richards

SERVICE LEADER

Brandon Michaels

HANDBELL COORDINATOR

Linda Painter

VIOLINIST

Olivia Lauritsen

VIOLIST

Paris Roake

CELLIST

Isabelle Boike

LECTOR

Tom Myers

GREETERS

Philip and Linda Painter

LIVE STREAM

John Broussard

USHER

Janet Broussard

ALTAR CARE AND SACRISTANS

Jane Lauritsen and Fred Kuzel

## HOLY NIGHT



Thousands upon thousands of candles will be lit tonight in worship, remembering that silent night when our Lord was born. Each candle, whether held by a nine-year-old or a ninety-year-old, will reflect a prayer for hope: Hope that life will be what it is promised to be in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper, in the best of times the community of Christ is gathered. Hope that forgiveness in Christ will wash away the pain of broken relationships, broken hearts, broken lives. Hope that by Jesus' cross and

resurrection, death will truly be no more. Hope that through him, illness will grow into health. Hope that through him, love will overcome hate, goodness will indeed triumph over evil, poverty and hunger will one day end.

Raise your candle high tonight! Look around and see all the light around you, ahead of you, behind you. It's more than a sentimental evening, made up of memories of Christmases past. It's the stuff of life and death going on here. For all that is promised in Christ is given in him. When he promises in baptism that you will be made new, he gives what he says. Your own life will bear witness to this transforming love! When he promises in the Supper that you are forgiven, the sin that would weigh you down is removed. When Christ promises to be in the midst of even two or three who gather in his name, whether they are experiencing joy or sorrow, he is there, renewing community, giving community, birthing community. Look at the light you hold. The candle in your hand bears witness to the One who opens the future for you and for the world itself. It is a holy night. We are not left to ourselves. The Savior is here, in the child of this night.