



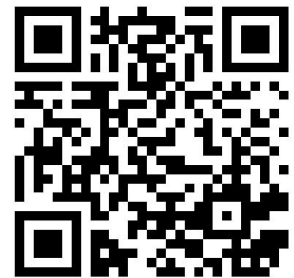
**Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

250 Woodside Road
Riverside, Illinois 60546
Telephone: (708) 442-5250

Web page: www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org

Rev. Ken Johnson
Interim Pastor
708-442-8511

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 21st, 2025 ✚ 10:15 a.m.

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

HOLY COMMUNION

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING TEN, PAGES 203-209

GATHERING

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

WELCOME AND PRELUDE

"Largo" from *Winter*

Vivaldi

***ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.
+ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

*GATHERING HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254

*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 FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Holy are you, God of steadfast love and faithfulness; you promised to make a covenant with your chosen ones, to establish the throne of your servant David forever. As we light these candles, open our hearts to the mystery of the incarnation revealed to your servant Mary and plant your Word in us that it may grow and prosper. Show us your favor, O Rock of our salvation.
Reveal your love to us, and strengthen us for service in your name. 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

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

The Gospel of our Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Michael Rothaar

*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

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill especially... . God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Other prayers may be added here in speech and silence.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service, especially... . Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
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

Of the Father's Heart Begotten
arr. Suzanne Guldemann

OFFERING OF GIFTS

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **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, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

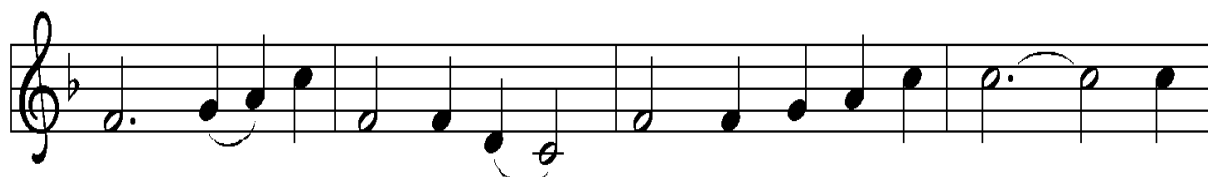
*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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

Here is life. God is with us. Come receive what God has promised.

DISTRIBUTION

Christmas Angels

Anne Crosby Gaudet

*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 our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

*BENEDICTION

May God who comes among us,
Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.
Amen.

*SENDING HYMN

Joy to the World

ELW 267

*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Lourdes Hymn

setting Janis Wilson

SERVING IN THE LITURGY

PREACHING AND PRESIDING MINISTER

ASSISTING MINISTER

MUSIC MINISTER

HARPIST

SERVICE LEADER

LECTORS

GREETERS

USHER

LIVE STREAM

ALTAR CARE AND SACRISTAN

Rev. Michael Rothaar

John Broussard

David Richards

Beverly Tarbox

Carrie Watkiss

Paul and Carrie Watkiss

John and Shirley Kostelny

John Kostelny

Charles Matthies

Fred Kuzel

Christmas
at Sts. Peter and Paul



Christmas Eve
7:15 p.m., Festival Liturgy of
Holy Communion with 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)

PRAYER LIST

Members of the Congregation: Elaine Haase, Staci Harden, Luddy Kovalsky, Rev. James Kuemmerle, Fred Kuzel, Lois Mika, Mary Sasuta, Edward Sefara, and Gregg Valek. ***Friends and Relatives of the Congregation:*** Ann Boor, Rich Caliendo, Dan Costello, Becky Dice, Tom Doran, Barbara Dykes, Melissa Foe, Drew Janos, Ron Kelly, Michael Kerney, Jeff Kubik, Lisa Martin, Artem Molovkina, Eric Nehmzow, Greg Schaefer, Peter Spilotro, Marta Vrtichova, Geoff Vana, and Tom Zajac.

Welcome and thank you to **Rev. Michael Rothaar** for serving as the preaching and presiding minister in the liturgy this morning during our time of transition.

Homebound members wishing a visit from Pastor Ken Johnson can use the contact information below to arrange an in-person or phone visit. Pastor Johnson will serve as the presiding minister at our services on the second Sunday of the month as well as Christmas Eve. In the event of a pastoral emergency Pastor Johnson can be reached via e-mail or mobile phone at Ken6168@sbcglobal.net of 773-947-4488, or his home at 708-442-8511.

Please note the church office **will be open** 9 am til noon on Monday and Tuesday, December 22nd and 23rd and Monday and Tuesday, December 29th and 30th. Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy new year to all!

—Karen Rouleau, Administrative Assistant

Offering envelopes for 2026 are available for pick beginning 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 Tuesday, December 30th in order to be included in your end of the year financial statement. Also, **2026 calendars**, compliments of Hitzeman Funeral Home, are available at both entrances to the sanctuary and on tables in the dining hall. Please take copies for yourself, friends and neighbors.

Oplatky, a traditional wafer used at Christmastime in Central and Eastern European countries, is available 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



**“Will there really be a ‘Morning’”?
by Emily Dickinson**

*Will there really be a “Morning”?
Is there such a thing as “Day”?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?*

*Has it feet like Water lilies?
Has it feathers like a Bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?*

*Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
Oh some Wise Man from the skies!
Please to tell a little Pilgrim
Where the place called “Morning” lies.*

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Friday, December 26, 2025

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Saturday, December 27, 2025

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering December 14th, 2025

<i>Weekly Budgeted Offering for 2025:</i>	\$2,615.00
<i>Offering Received for the Above Categories:</i>	\$2,555.00
<i>Shortage:</i>	\$ 60.00

Donations are welcome via Zelle at donations@stspeterandpaulriverside.org.