



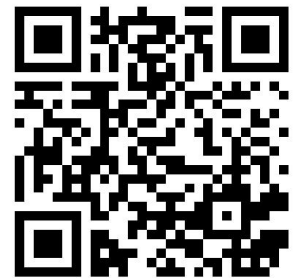
**Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

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.

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
December 28th, 2025 ✚ 10:15 a.m.

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

HOLY COMMUNION
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP

GATHERING

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

WELCOME AND PRELUDE

Fantasia on Greensleeves

Vaughan-Williams

***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

*GATHERING HYMN

What Child is This

ELW 296

*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. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own
powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from
harm and adversity, 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 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

ELW 172

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

Music: Caribbean traditional

***GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 2:13-23

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew...

Glory to you, O Lord.

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Marnie Rourke

***CREED**

**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**

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. We pray especially for... . Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered in speech and silence.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones, especially...
Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting
in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you,
O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ
our Savior.

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.

OFFERING OF THE GIFTS

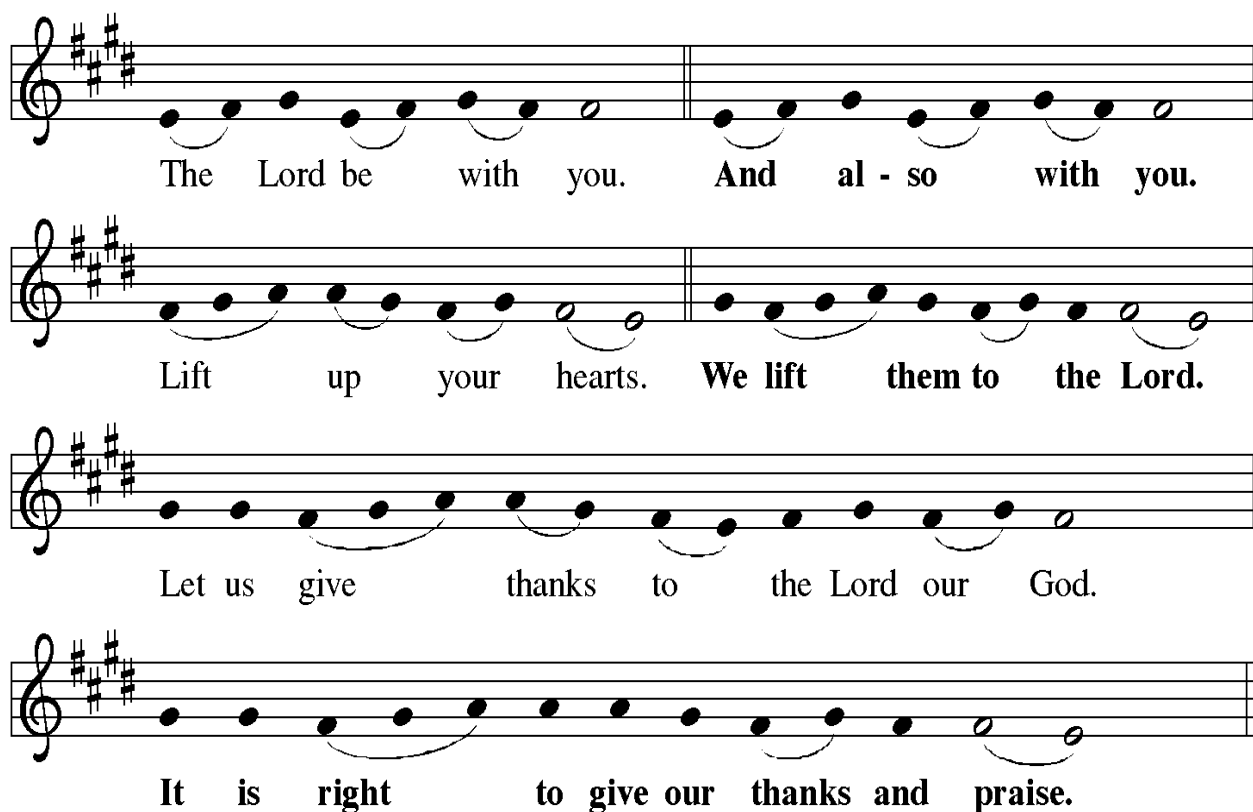
***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the
blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ
our Savior.

Amen.



*DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

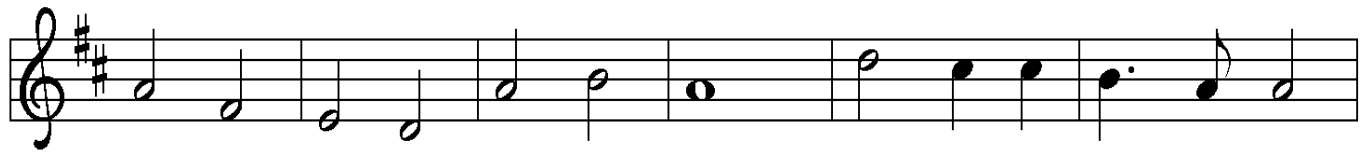
It is right to give our thanks and praise.



*PREFACE FOR CHRISTMAS

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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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



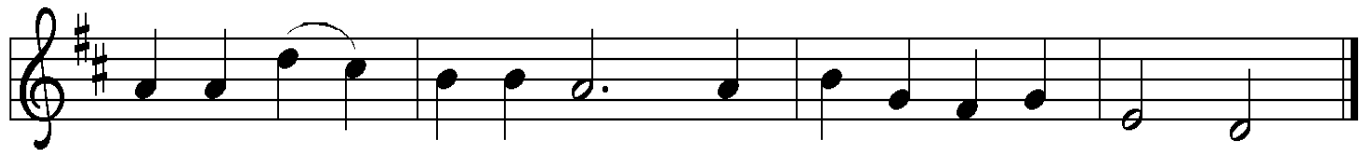
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



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**

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

***BLESSING**

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

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Amen.

SENDING

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

***BENEDICTION**

The triune God, glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
+ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

Go Tell It on the Mountain

ELW 290

***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.

POSTLUDE

Go Tell It

setting John Carter

SERVING IN THE LITURGY

PREACHING AND PRESIDING MINISTER

Rev. Marnie Rourke

ASSISTING MINISTER

Tom Myers

MUSIC MINISTER

David Richards

SERVICE LEADER

Carrie Watkiss

LECTOR

Joanne Sefara

GREETER

Karyn Bute

LIVE STREAM

John Broussard

USHER

Janet Broussard

ALTAR CARE AND SACRISTANS

Fred Kuzel

PRAYER LIST

Members of the Congregation: Elaine Haase, Staci Harden, Luddy Kovalsky, Rev. James Kuemmerle, 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 back and thank you to **Rev. Marnie Rourke** for serving as the preaching and presiding minister in the liturgy this morning during our time of transition.

Homebound members wishing a visit from Interim 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. 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 29th and 30th. Wishes for a healthy and 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 this 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.

Thank you!

Thank you to the following households who purchased poinsettias to decorate the chancel of the sanctuary for our Christmas services. Poinsettia plants may be taken home next Sunday, January 4th.

Ruth Bakalich
William Boor
Fred Kuzel
Esther Meksto
The Mocek Family

Martin and Ann Pennino
Mark and Liz Rouck
The Slahor Family
The Watkiss Family



UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Sunday, December 28, 2025

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

Name of Jesus

Thursday, January 1, 2026

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Friday, January 2, 2026

Loehe was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in the holy communion, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.

Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering December 21st, 2025

<i>Weekly Budgeted Offering for 2025:</i>	\$2,615.00
<i>Offering Received for the Above Categories:</i>	\$5,969.00
<i>Surplus:</i>	\$3,354.00

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

