

Zion Lutheran Church

925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois

March 30, 2025 at 9:15am

www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Shelter of God

PRELUDE "Glorify Thy Name" arr. By Mark Hayes
The Holy Spirit calls and gathers us together as the people of God

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love. Compassionate One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Red Hymnal #807



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



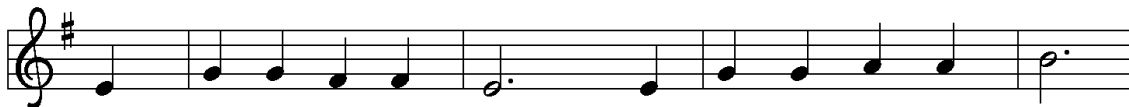
teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE (*Kyrie eleison means "Lord, have mercy"*) Red Hymnal pg #203



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!

SONG OF PRAISE "Lord God, We Praise You"

Red Hymnal #558



1 Lord God, we praise you, now the night is o - ver, ac - tive and
2 Mon - arch of all things, fit us for your man - sions; ban - ish our
3 All - ho - ly Fa - ther, Son, and e - qual Spir - it, Trin - i - ty



watch - ful, stand - ing here be - fore you; sing - ing, we of - fer
weak - ness, health and whole - ness send - ing; bring us to heav - en,
bless - ed, send us your sal - va - tion; yours is the glo - ry,



prayer and med - i - ta - tion; thus we a - dore you.
where your saints u - nit - ed joy with - out end - ing.
gleam - ing and re - sound - ing through all cre - a - tion.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE WORD

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

FIRST READING Joshua 5:9-12

⁹The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of God gives us shelter.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 32

(Congregation reads the bold)

¹Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

²**Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

³While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

⁴**For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.”
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

⁶**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you
in time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸**“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
I will guide you with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you.”

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of God gives us shelter.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION “Let Your Steadfast Love” Red Hymnal Page #189



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 15th Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry

and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' ”

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON Pastor Michael Thomas

SERMON SONG “Build A Longer Table”



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
 2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
 3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
 4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
 where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
 Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
 Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
 For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
 When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
 So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
 Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
 Christ tears down our fenc - es; all are wel - come here.
 None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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 THE CHURCH

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

MUSIC & OFFERING

Special Music

Burmese Choir

Offering envelopes are available in the pews at your seat to designate gifts toward the ministries of Zion. The Offering Box is by the prayer table.

You can also go online at www.zionrockford.com or you can click on the QR code.



TABLE BLESSING "This Is Christ's Body"



This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with



mer-cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y,



bro-ken and blest. Heal us and make us one.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Let us pray. Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

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 God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

Please come forward for communion today up front. Receive the wafer with an open hand.

The cups of wine are red and juice is in the center and the juice is clear.

There are individual communion cups at the prayer table. Dispose of them in the lobby.

COMMUNION SONGS "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling"



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

“Restore In Us, O God”

Red Hymnal #328



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

Let us pray: Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection, you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection that we may show your glory to all the world. Through Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

THE SENDING

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

SENDING SONG "My Life Flows On In Endless Song" Red Hymnal #763



1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion,
2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu - sic ring - ing.
3 What though my joys and com - forts die? The Lord my Sav - ior liv - eth.
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing!



I catch the sweet, though far - off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing - ing?
What though the dark - ness gath - er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing - ing?

Refrain



No storm can shake my in - most calm while to that Rock I'm cling - ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav - en and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?

SENDING

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE "My Life Flows On In Endless Song"

2025 Midtown Midweek Lenten at Noon

Turning Toward God's Abundance

EXERCISE CLASS BEFORE AT 11:00AM LED BY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES

April 2 at First L.C. at Noon with lunch afterwards
Preacher: Student Pastor Rachel Perkins

April 9 at Emmanuel L.C. at Noon with lunch afterwards
Preacher: Pastor Bill Dahlberg (No exercise class today)

WORSHIP LEADER'S TODAY

Assisting Minister Student Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama
Communion Asst. Diane Wegner
Fellowship:
Media: Cameron Kellermann
Music: Jodi Beach
Readers: Deb Gortowski and Pastor Uk
Sound: Deangelo Brunson
Usher: Charlie Dahlberg & Kamyra Brunson

WORSHIP LEADERS

Would you like to be a Communion Assistant, Reader, Sound, Usher, Greeter or Worship Host? You could have the assignment on the first, second, third or fourth Sunday of each month at the 9:15am worship service. Please talk with Pastor or let the church office know if you are available, interested or have a question.

WOMEN OF ZION

During the month of April we are requesting donations of **Peanut Butter and Jelly** for distribution at the Cornucopia Food Pantry. There is a great need for these items! A grocery cart is in the Narthex for donations, or you can bring them to the church office. You can donate to Cornucopia on our church website and we pass along the donation to the pantry organization.

-Thanks so much! The WOZ board

WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE

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ALABAMA STORY

ARTIST ENSEMBLE THEATER

BASED ON A TRUED STORY OF A 1959 CENSORSHIP OF A CHILDREN'S BOOK IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH



APRIL 6, 2025
2:00PM

TICKETS: \$28 FOR ADULTS &
\$10 FOR STUDENTS



HELD AT ROCKFORD UNIVERSITY

THIS TRIP IS SPONSORED BY ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE
925 FIFTH AVENUE - ROCKFORD, IL 61104 - 815.964.4609 - WWW.ZIONROCKFORD.COM

BAHAI TEMPLE TRIP

INTERFAITH EXPERIENCE TO WILMETTE, IL



MAY 31, 2025
8:00AM-4:00PM

TICKETS: \$50 FOR ADULTS &
\$20 FOR STUDENTS
(PAYS FOR BUS & LUNCH)

SPONSORED BY ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE
925 FIFTH AVENUE - ROCKFORD, IL 61104 - WWW.ZIONROCKFORD.COM

PRAYER CORNER! WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:



- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Thomas, Student Pastor Rachel Perkins, Pastor Emeritus Denver Bitner, the Zion Church Council, Pastor Caleb Uk of the Burmese congregation; the Zion Staff, Zion Outreach Board, Staff and Programs of Patriots Gateway Center, Katie's Cup and Zion Development Corporation.
- ◇ Pastor Cosmas Mujungu of Sepuka Parish (Tanzania)
- ◇ Pastor Selvakumar and Arcot Lutheran Church in India and Pastor Mytch Dorvilier in Senegal.
- ◇ For the Northern Illinois Synod; North Conference churches; Midtown Lutheran Parish, faculty and students of Rockford Lutheran Schools, Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries.
- ◇ For those who grieve the loss of loved ones: Family of Bob Campbell
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Phyllis Brynteson, Colette Buchert, Linda Callahan, Yolanda Churchill, Jim Duhigg, Jolyn Hess, Megan Libey, Deb Tolodxi, Neal Tolodxi, Linda Reinhardt, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Jeanne Thomas, Brian Veitch, Mary Wedel, and Gary Wegner, Jr.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of thanksgiving to share, please notify Pastor Mike or Student Pastor Rachel. The prayer room is upstairs to the left of the sanctuary and is available during office hours and on Sunday before and after worship services.

PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

Sunday	9:15am	Worship
Monday	9:30am	Book Study—Multipurpose room
Tuesday	8:30am	RVC Class—Marander Room
Wednesday	8:00am	Book Study—Stockholm Inn
	8:30am	RVC Class—Marander Room
	12:00pm	Midtown Lenten Worship—First Lutheran
	4:00pm	WOW—Fellowship Hall
Thursday	8:00am	Katie's Cup Executive Board
	8:30am	RVC Class—Marander Room
Saturday	9:00am	Cars & Coffee—RPS Parking Lot Across from Katie's Cup
	1:00pm	Ruthie's Kitchen
Sunday	9:15am	Worship
	10:30am	Forum: NAMI presenter Jeanette Towns

UPCOMING

April 13	10:30am	Palm Sunday Breakfast (tickets \$10 for adults and \$8 for children)
April 17	Noon	Maundy Thursday Taize Worship Service in the Atrium
April 18	Noon	Good Friday Swedish Service
	7:00pm	Good Friday Music Tenebrae
	8:00pm	Jesus Christ Superstar Singalong at Katie's Cup (free—donations at door)
April 19	1:00pm	Easter Egg Hunt (Gateway Park) - Donations welcomed
April 20	9:15am	Easter Sunday Worship
April 27	10:20am	Forum: Wabongo Leadership Council Joshua Patterson
April 28	1:00pm	Bag Fluffing

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* Pattern of Worship—resource from ELW pages 91-93

^ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/come-let-us-adore-him-advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2024>