

Zion Lutheran Church
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois
December 17, 2023 at 9:15am

www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



PRELUDE

Edie Hill, Harpist

WELCOME

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world.

Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations rise:
join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

2. Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the’incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

3. Hail the heav’n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Son of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

CALL TO WORSHIP

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

And also with you.

Holy one, your light shines in the darkness calling out to us.

Have mercy upon us oh Lord.

Creator of the universe, you star leads us to see the prince of peace.

Lord, have mercy

Holy one, you have walked among us and we have seen a great light.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ has come. Christ is here. Christ will come again!

Thanks be to God.

SONG OF THE DAY “Joy to the World” (vs. 1)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come: Let earth receive her
King.

Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heaven and nature sing.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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.

THE WORD

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

FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 1Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ADVENT WREATH LITURGY ^

Surely God is our salvation;

We will trust and not be afraid,

The light shines in the darkness,

and the darkness shall not overcome the light of Christ.

We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace.

We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community, equity, and flourishing for all.

We light these candles as signs of God's shocking hope and just peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all people can gather together to worship and glorify God. Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

Zion Christmas Cantata

1. **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**
(arr. by Marty Parks)
2. **“Invocation: Come to My Heart, Lord Jesus”**
(music by Timothy R. Matthews; words by Emily E.S. Elliott)
Soloist: Mattsen Heller
3. **“The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came”**
Soloist: Jeff Campbell
4. **“Angels’ Carol”**
(by John Rutter)
5. **“Gesù Bambino”**
(music by Pietro Yon; words by Frederick H. Martens)
Soloist: Tim Krug
6. **“O Little Town of Bethlehem/Come to My Heart, Lord Jesus”**
(words & music by Phillip Brooks and Lewis Redner)
Soloist: Valerie Høglund
7. **“Joy to the World Medley”**
(arr. by Camp Kirkland)

2023 Cantata Participants

Narrators: Jim Rasch & Jack Hill

Jodi Beach – Piano

Tom Marken – Drums

Jim McDowell – Bass

Sonja Beach

Jeff Campbell

Benjamin Garner

Christine Garner

Jim Grass

Edie Hill

Jack Hill

Mattsen Heller

Valerie Hogle

Tim Krug

Jim Rasch

Kathy Rasch

Brad Roos

Pastor Michael Thomas

Tammy Thomas

Natalie Wooden

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 "Joseph's Lullaby"

Soloist: Jack Hill

(words and music by Bart Millard and Brown Bannister)

Offering envelopes are available in the pews at your seat to designate gifts toward the ministries of Zion. The Offering Box is near the back, pulpit side and you can also go online at www.zionrockford.com, or you can click on the QR code.

The Prayer Table is available for you to write a prayer request and place on the cross on the table. Prayer requests will be shared with a group of people who pray at Zion. You may take a prayer shawl from the worship space if you would like.



TABLE BLESSING

“Now In This Banquet”

*1** *2*

Now in this ban - quet, Christ is our bread;
Advent: God of our jour - neys, day - break to night:
Lent: Lord, you can o - pen hearts that are stone;

here shall all hun - gers be fed.
lead us to jus - tice and light.
live in our flesh and our bone.

Bread that is bro - ken, wine that is poured:
Grant us com - pas - sion, strength for the day,
Lead us to won - der, mys - t'ry, and grace,

love is the sign of our Lord.
wis - dom to walk in your way.
one in your lov - ing em - brace.

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.

Please peel open the top part of the communion container for the wafer.

Please peel the other side of the container for the juice.

There are baskets in the middle and the back for disposal of your communion cups.

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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you now and forever.

Amen.

THE SENDING

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

SENDING SONG “Joy to the World” (vs. 2-4)

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns:

Let men their songs employ

While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains

repeat the sounding joy,

Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;

He comes to make his blessings flow

Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,

Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness and wonder of His love,

And wonders of His love,

And wonders, wonders of His love.

SENDING

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

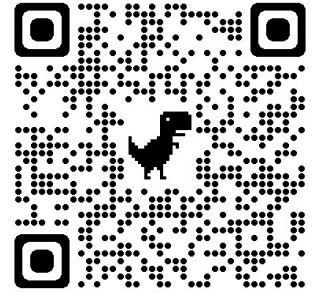
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“Carol of the Bells”

arr. by Mark Hayes

End of Year Giving - Any 2023 donations written out in check form needs to be submitted to the Church office by Thursday December 28th by noon to be allocated toward 2023 tax records. You can also donate online until December 31,2023 through the Vanco Mobile app



Gideon's Birthday for Jesus



Please prayerfully consider giving a donation to the Gideons. Tom Hartley will be in the narthex to answer any questions. Gideon's supply Bibles locally and Internationally. Please take an envelope and mail the donation directly!

WINTER FESTIVAL AND MARKET

Saturday, 9am-1pm

January 6, 2024



Music, Food, Coffee & Variety of Vendors!
Musician: "Samuel On Saxophone"

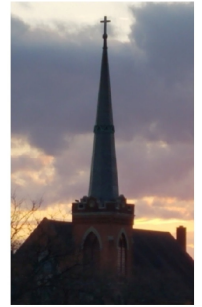


Ruthie's Kitchen

Open Saturdays
1:00-3:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church
964 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104

Because God created everyone...
NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL
BLACK LIVES MATTER
love is love
PEOPLE & PLANET OVER PROFITS
CELEBRATE DIVERSITY
Women's Rights are Human Rights
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH - ROCKFORD, IL



WELCA & Food Pantry!

Cornucopia Food is in short supply of **CEREAL** and it can't be obtained from the Food Bank. Peggy King, Cornucopia Director informs us there is a great need for **CEREAL!** A grocery cart will be in the back of the worship space for donations or you can leave them in the church office. December items: **Soup and crackers.**

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO EVERYONE AT ZION

We contribute to the Christmas Joy Fund in lieu of sending Christmas cards to our friends of Zion. This money will be given to needy children, families, and forgotten senior citizens. This year we will donate the monies to Ruthie's Closet to be used toward needed winter apparel. May you all have a Joyous New Year.

Joy Fund

2023

**DONATIONS FOR
RUTHIE'S CLOSET**
(Winter Items for those in need)
Checks made out to
Zion Lutheran Church



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

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^Adapted from Dr. Lisa Hancock, Director of Worship Arts Ministries

PRAYER CORNER! WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:



- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Thomas, Pastoral Intern 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 Elihuruma Reuben Ndoghwe of Sepuka Parish
- ◇ Pastor Selvakumar and Arcot Lutheran Church in India and Sepuka/Msisi Church in Tanzania.
- ◇ 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: Joanne Dornbush, and John Malhberg.
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Colette Buchert, Yolanda Churchill, Norma Daugherty, Jim Duhigg, Deanna Hartenberg, Vanda Nielsen, Debbie Raymond, Linda Reinhardt, Ron Simmons, Shirley Simmons, Wayne Spitzer, Neal Tolodxi, and Gene Wessman.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of thanksgiving to share, please notify Pastor Mike or Pastoral Intern 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.

THE MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM TEAM would like you to donate scarfs, gently used, knit, or crocheted. We will hang them on fences or railings around the church. We will have a little note on them saying "I'm not lost! If you are cold please take me to keep you warm." The back side says "From your friends at Zion Lutheran Church" If you have scarves to donate please drop them off in the office. Thank you



OUR WORSHIP SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

<https://www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford>

www.youtube.com/zionrockford

Please subscribe to the Zion YouTube channel

<https://twitter.com/ZionRockford>

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YouTube

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PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

Sunday	9:15am	Zion's Christmas Cantata worship
	10:30am	Church Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall
Monday	8:00am	RVC ESL—Marander Room
	9:30am	Book Study—Library
Tuesday	8:00am	RVC ESL—Marander Room
	Noon	Zion's Partners Christmas Party
	3:30pm	Building and Grounds Meeting
	5:00pm	Human Resources
	6:00pm	Church Council
Wednesday	8:00am	RVC ESL—Marander Room
	8:00am	Bible Study—Stockholm Inn
	5:00pm	WOW Christmas Party—Patriots
	5:00pm	Private Music Lessons—Choir Room
Thursday	8:00am	RVC ESL—Marander Room
	9:00am	Miss Carly's Sandwich Making—Kitchen
Friday	9:00am	Private Music Lesson—Youth Center
	4:30pm	Community Christmas Party—Patriots
Saturday	1:00pm	Ruthie's Kitchen
Sunday	9:15am	Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship
	9:30pm	Christmas Eve String Quartet Concert
	10:00pm	Christmas Eve Worship (Sunday)

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

December 25-26	OFFICE CLOSED
December 28	Bag Fluffing, 1:00pm, Youth Center
January 1	OFFICE CLOSED
January 3	WOW Leaders—Fellowship Hall
January 4	Sustainability Movement Meeting—Fellow Ship Hall
January 6	Winter Festival and Indoor Market—Katie's Cup
January 14	Celebrating Dreams, 11:00am
January 21	Annual Report Review—Zoom, 10:30am
January 28	Congregational Annual Meeting, 10:30am

ANNUAL REPORTS - For those committee chairs, partners and staff we ask you to submit your annual report in writing or email to Jolyn at zionrockford@gmail.com. Please add any photos of events you have held throughout the year! We ask for these reports to be submitted as soon as possible. If you have any questions please contact Jolyn by email or phone the office.



December 24th Advent Worship - 9:15am



Christmas Eve Worship

9:30pm String Concert
10:00pm Worship



First Sunday of Christmas Worship

December 31st at 9:15am