

Zion Lutheran Church  
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois  
December 31, 2023 at 9:15am

[www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford](http://www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford)



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

PRELUDE

“Away In A Manger”

arr. By Mark Hayes

WELCOME

### GATHERING

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

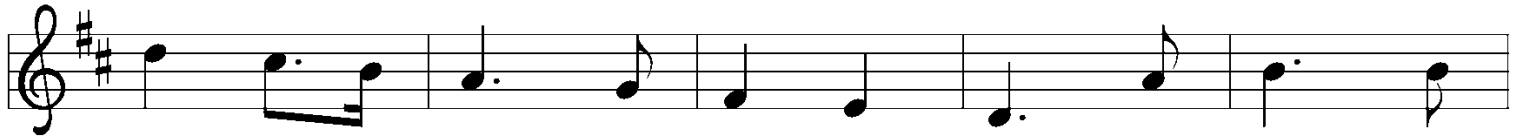
**Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin. God of life,

**you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.**

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God’s promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In + Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

**Amen.**



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our 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 61:10—62:3

<sup>10</sup>I 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. <sup>11</sup>For 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. <sup>62:1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. <sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. <sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



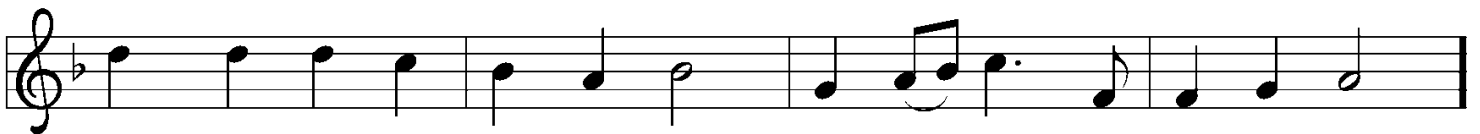
1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav’n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav’n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled.”  
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin’s womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris’n with heal - ing in his wings.

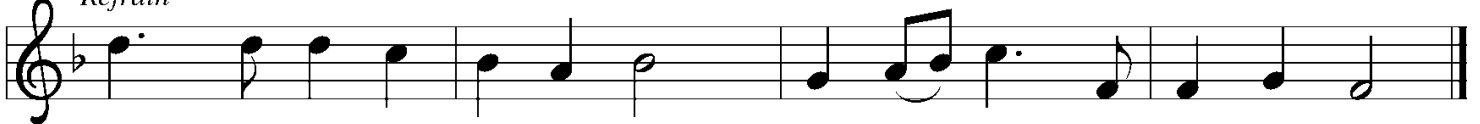


Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*Refrain*



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born king!”

SECOND READING: Galatians 4:4-7

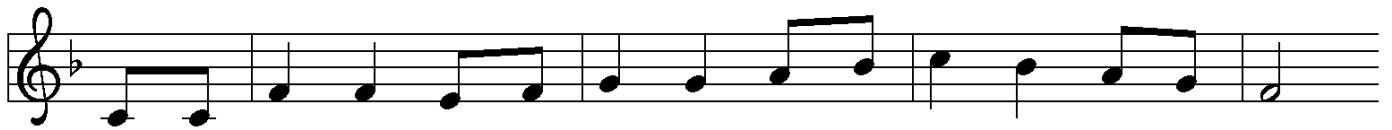
<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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

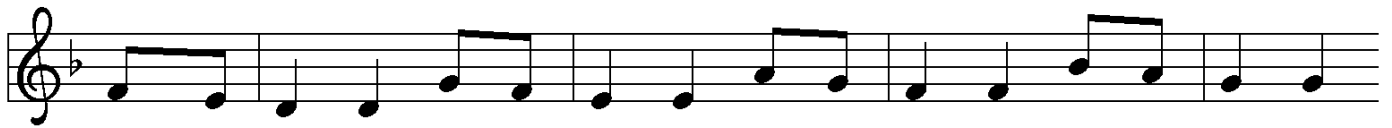
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" Red Hymnal #276



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 2nd Chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” <sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?  
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

**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

“Heirlooms”

Jodi Beach

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](http://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

“Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming”

Red Hymnal #272

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,  
it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter,  
when half-spent was the night.

## 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.*

## POST COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

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.*

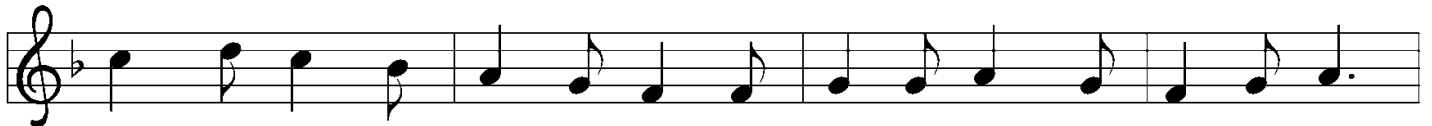
### SENDING SONG "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" Red Hymnal #288



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## SENDING

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

arr. By Mark Hayes

## 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: Bonnie Sundberg.
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Colette Buchert, Yolanda Churchill, Norma Daugherty, Jim Duhigg, Deanna Hartenberg, Vanda Nielsen, Debbie Raymond, Linda Reinhardt, Wayne Spitzer, 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.

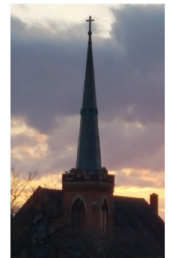


Ruthie's Kitchen

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



**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

## SUNDAY WORSHIP LEADERS

Reader     Debbie Raymond  
Musician   Jodi Beach

OUR WORSHIP SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

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

[www.youtube.com/zionrockford](http://www.youtube.com/zionrockford)

Please subscribe to the Zion YouTube channel

<https://twitter.com/ZionRockford>



## PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

Sunday	9:15am	First Sunday of Christmas Worship
Monday		OFFICE CLOSED
Tuesday		OFFICE CLOSED
Wednesday	8:00am	Bible Study—Stockholm Inn
	8:00am	Staff Breakfast
	5:00pm	WOW Leaders—Fellowship Hall
Thursday	9:00am	Miss Carly’s Sandwich Making—Kitchen
	6:00pm	Sustainability Movement Meeting—Fellowship Hall
Friday	9:00am	Private Music Lesson—Youth Center
Saturday	9:00am	Winter Festival and Indoor Market—Katie’s Cup
	1:00pm	Ruthie’s Kitchen
Sunday	9:15am	Worship

### UPCOMING SCHEDULE

January 21	10:30am	Annual Report Review
January 28	10:30am	Congregational Annual Meeting.



*Twentieth Anniversary*

## Celebrating Dreams

January 14, 2024  
Sunday at 11:00am



*“FOR EVERYONE BORN... A PLACE AT THE TABLE...”*

Celebrating the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

*Legacy Award Recipient: Janice Forrest*



Sponsored and Held at Zion Lutheran Church  
925 Fifth Avenue – Rockford, IL 61104

### 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. January items: **canned stew and chili**.

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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