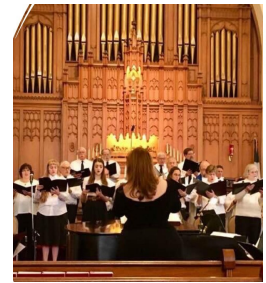


Zion Lutheran Church
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois
December 21, 2025 at 9:15am
www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Christmas Cantata



PRELUDE

Edie Hill, Harpist

The Holy Spirit calls and gathers us together as the people of God

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 SONG “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” Red Hymnal #257

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

Beloved, once again, we embark on the Advent path that points us to the coming of Jesus.

We journey together toward the day when the beginning is here.

We remember the signs and the times that heralded the arrival of the baby Jesus, God Incarnate.

We journey together toward the day when the beginning is here.

We tell the stories once again as we learn how to discern the signs and the times, watching for glimpses of God’s here-and-not-yet kingdom among us.

We journey together toward the day when the beginning is here.

Come, let us worship God who shines a light to guide us on the path to peace and flourishing for all creation.

Come, let us worship as we journey together toward the day when the beginning is here.

SONG OF PRAISE

“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 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.

ADVENT WREATH LITURGY

Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary’s womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God’s love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of Love instead of responding in fear to the world’s judgment.

We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

Light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath.

SONG

“Emmanuel”

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel;
God with us, revealed in us; His name is called Emmanuel.

(Repeat)

Zion Christmas Cantata 2025

“Tidings of Comfort and Joy!” Arr. by Lloyd Larson

“Angels’ Carol” Words and Music by John Rutter

“One Star, One Holy Night”

Duet: Lori Beach-Grass Larry Lazzaro

Words and Music by Dave Clark and Mark Hayes
arr. by Bradley Knight

“Is Your Heart Prepared For A King?”

Words and Music by Robert Lau

“In The Manger”

Words and Music by Dave Clark Arr. by Camp Kirkland

“My Jesus, I Love Thee”

by William R. Featherston arr. by Camp Kirkland

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

Latin Hymn arr. by Marty Parks

2025 Cantata Participants

Zion Cantata Choir

Lori Beach-Grass

Sonja Beach

Mike Beert

Jeff Campbell

Jim Grass

Edie Hill

Jack Hill

Beth Hoglund

Valerie Hoglund

Larry Lazzaro

Kurtis Lawler

Jim Rasch

Kathy Rasch

Pastor Michael Thomas

Tammy Thomas

Bella Torres

Haylee West

Musicians

Jodi Beach - piano

Rachel Handlin - violin

Tom Marken- drums

Jim McDowell- bass

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 PEOPLE

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.**

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

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

MUSIC OFFERING & OFFERING

"Lo, How a Rose "E're Blooming" Jeff Campbell

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 “We Are Waiting for Jesus”



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

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.**

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 to the front for communion today. 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. By the piano. Dispose of them in the lobby.*

COMMUNION SONG

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” arr by Mark Hayes

1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

“Away in A Manger” Red Hymnal #277

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

May 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.

BLESSING

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.**

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. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“Carol of the Bells”

arr. By Mark Hayes

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

WOMEN OF ZION

During the month of December we are requesting donations of **Canned fruits, peanut butter and Jelly**. (Also cereal is always in demand) 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!

End of Year—To have any contributions counted for 2025, they must be in the office by 10:00am on December 30th to be credited for 2025. If you have any questions contact the office. Thank you!

HEADS UP, 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.

WORSHIP LEADER'S TODAY

Altar Guild	Kris Sommer
Communion Asst.	Janice Forrest and Gary Zeien
Fellowship:	Bonnie Dahlberg
Music:	Jodi Beach
Usher:	Charlie Dahlberg

FREE CHRISTMAS FOOD BOX

Contact Zion Lutheran Church

815-964-4609

zionrockford@gmail.com

For A FREE Basket!

PICK-UP AT ZION
925 FIFTH AVENUE - ROCKFORD



BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church – Youth Center!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



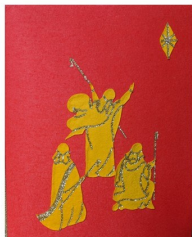
Joy Fund

DONATIONS FOR

Cornucopia
Food Pantry

Checks made out to Zion Lutheran Church

2025



Christmas Eve Worship

December 24th at 10:00 pm

9:30pm String Quartet Concert



PRAYER CORNER! WE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR:

- ◇ The ELCA, Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Stacie Fidler, Pastor Thomas, 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.
- ◇ Senior Pastor Ndeshifose Akyoo, Assisting Pastor Evan Kiula, and Assisting Pastor Yohanna Samson Ntui of Sepuka Parish (Tanzania)
- ◇ Bishop Peter Paul Thomas and Pastor Selvakumar Arcot Lutheran Church in India and Pastor Mytch Dorvilier.
- ◇ 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: Eloise Anderson, Larry Hall and Darrell Lindstrom.
- ◇ For healing: Colette Buchert, Norm Buchert, Linda Callahan, Marjorie Carlson, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eiseman, Deb Gortowski, John Hoyt, Gary Johnson, Leola LeGault, Jim McDowell, Terry Morgan, Mary Norman, Dorian Robinson, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Carl Stoutenberg, Brian Veitch, Nancy Warden, and Gary Wegner, Jr.

If you have a prayer request or a prayer of thanksgiving to share, please notify Pastor Mike. 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	Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship—Cantata
	10:15am	Fellowship
	11:00am	Burmese Worship Service—Chapel
	1:00pm	New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room
Monday	9:30am	Book Study—Multipurpose Room
	1:00pm	Christmas Box distribution (1-3pm) Youth Center
Wednesday		Office Closed
	9:30pm	String Quartet—Worship Space
	10:00pm	Christmas Eve Worship
Thursday		Office Closed
Sunday	9:15am	First Sunday of Christmas Worship
	10:15am	Fellowship
	11:00am	Burmese Worship Service—Chapel
	1:00pm	New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room

UPCOMING

December 31		Office Closed
January 1		Office Closed
January 3	1:00pm	Ruthie's Kitchen
January 4	10:30am	FORUM: Fire Alarm System
January 6	6:00pm	Church Council
January 11	11:00am	Celebrating Dreams Gospel Jamboree
January 18	10:30am	Annual Report Review
January 25	10:30am	Annual Congregational Meeting
February 18	Noon	Ash Wednesday Worship