

Zion Lutheran Church
925 5th Avenue - Rockford, Illinois
December 7, 2025 at 9:15am
www.facebook.com/zionlutheranrockford
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



PRELUDE "The King of Glory" & "Oh, Come, Oh, Come Emmanuel"
Anne Krentz Organ

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 “Prepare the Royal Highway” Red Hymnal #264

1 Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

2 God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!

Refrain

3 Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing: *Refrain*

4 His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding: *Refrain*

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.

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 heard.

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 heard.

SONG OF PRAISE

“You Are Holy”

Red Hymnal #525

You are holy, you are whole. You are always ever more
than we ever understand. You are always at hand.

Blessed are you coming near. Blessed are you coming here
to your church in wine and bread, raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy, you are wholeness, you are present.

Let the cosmos praise you, Lord!

Sing hosanna in the highest! Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna to our God!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; 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 11:1-10

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of

the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Word of God. Word of Hope.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

(Congregation reads the bold)

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
- ² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**
- ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
- ⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
- ⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**
- ⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace

till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**

¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name”; ¹⁰ and again he says, “Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”; ¹¹ and again, “Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”; ¹² and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope.” ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Word of God. Word of Hope.

Thanks be to God.

ADVENT WREATH LITURGY

Advent reminds us that we are people who share a story, the story of Jesus, who enacts peace by judging in favor of the poor and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth. We long for the day when “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

Today, we choose to live the story of peace, believing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God's creation. We light this candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to bring Light to the places the world seeks to hide until that day when all creation lives together in harmony and abundance.

Light the second candle of the Advent wreath.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Emmanuel”

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

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 24th Chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” ⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to

Abraham.¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

SERMON

Pastor Michael Thomas

SERMON SONG “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry” Red Hymnal #249

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!

2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;
make straight the way for God within, and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord, our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away like flow'rs that wither and decay.

4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more; oh, let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.

5 All praise to you, eternal Son, whose advent has our freedom won,
whom with the Father we adore, and Holy Spirit, evermore.

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.

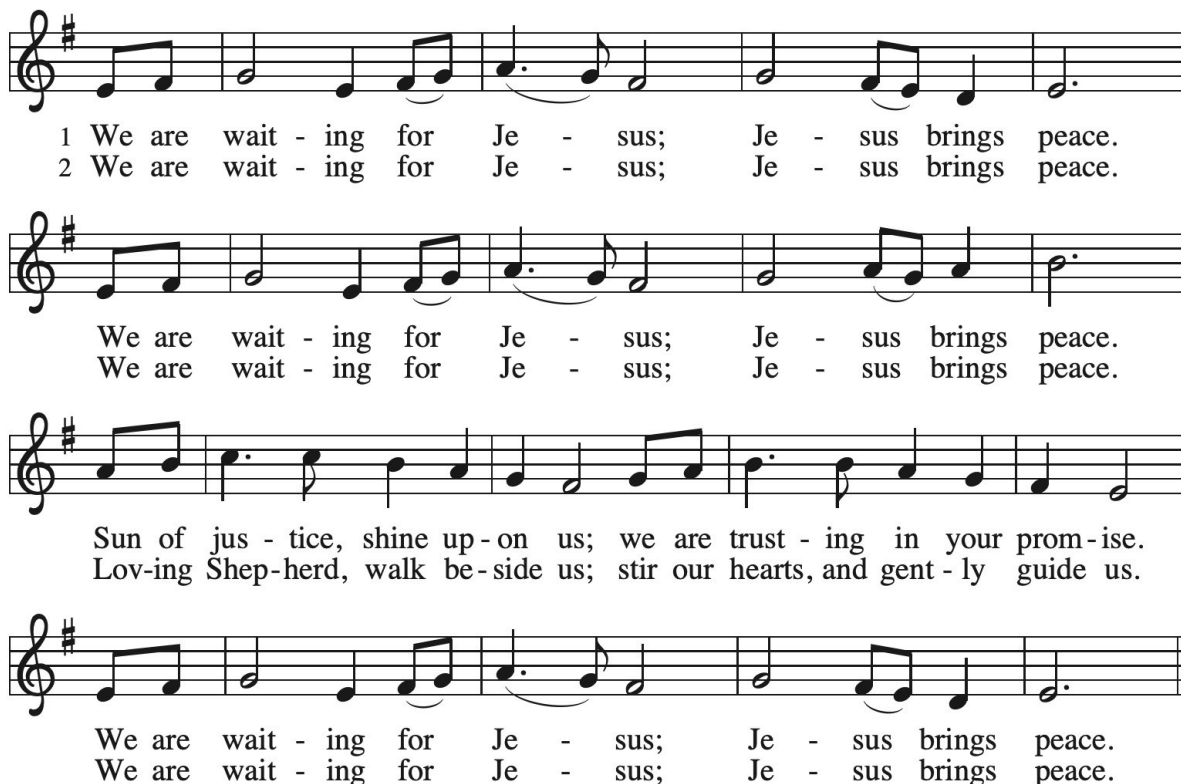
MUSIC & OFFERING "Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain"

By Carolyn Jennings

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.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

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.

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 SONGS

"The King Shall Come" Red Hymnal #260

**1 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks, when beauty gilds the eastern hills
and life to joy awakes.**

2 Not as of old a little child, to bear and fight and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun that lights the morning sky.

3 Oh, brighter than the rising morn when Christ, victorious, rose
and left the lonesome place of death, despite the rage of foes.

4 Oh, brighter than that glorious morn shall dawn upon our race
the day when Christ in splendor comes, and we shall see his face.

5 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings. Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
come quickly, King of kings.

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” Red Hymnal #254

Tune: HYFRYDOL

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

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

CHOOSE TO HOPE

Marty Haugen



1. Hope is born when we choose to be - lieve that
2. Hope will grow when we choose to be - lieve that
3. Hope will shine when we choose to be - lieve a
4. Sing out hope through the vio - lence and fear, for



love is strong - er than ha - tred.
we are sis - ters and broth - ers.
lit - tle child will lead us.
God is pres - ent be - side us.



Love is born when our hearts learn to see that
Love will grow when our hearts learn to see the
Love will shine when our hearts learn to see that
Prince of Peace, make your home with us here; your



ev - 'ry per - son is sa - cred.
life we share with each oth - er. In the
God is dwell - ing with - in us.
love and wis - dom will guide us.



times of dark - ness, in times of fear, choose to hope,



choose to love, and know that God is near.
Last time, during Advent: Em - man - u - el is near.

SENDING

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

"Heaven Is Signing for Joy"

setting John Turner



Poinsettia Garden



Help us to celebrate at Christmas this year! Help us to beautify Zion's worship space for the Advent and Christmas Season by sponsoring a poinsettia plant for our Christmas Garden. You can sponsor a flower or a gift for the pantry. Names will be listed on an insert in our Christmas Eve bulletin.

Please fill out the bottom portion of this insert, enclose your check for \$15.00/plant or designated amount for non-plant donation, and either place in the collection basket or return it to the Church office by Monday, December 7, 2025 (firm deadline). You can take your plant home after worship during the Christmas season.

You can also donate on our website at www.zionrockford.com/donate.

Your Name: _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

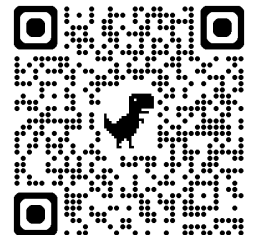
Merry Christmas to _____

Number of Plants: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

I would like to take my plant home (circle) YES - NO

Donation to Cornucopia Food Pantry: \$ _____

Donation to: _____ \$ _____



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

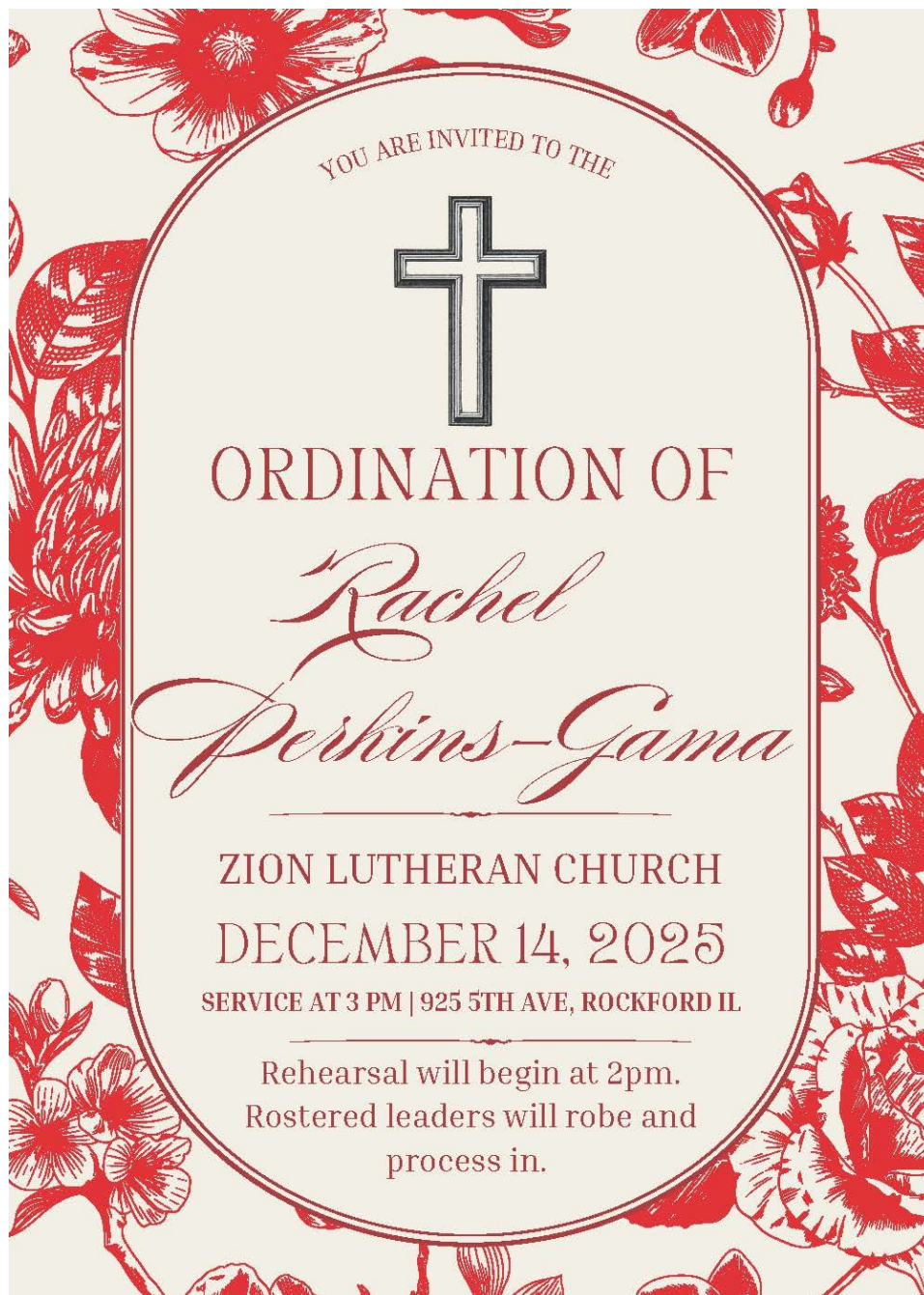
WOMEN OF ZION

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!

December 9th Tuesday 12:30 "WOZ CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON" Stockholm Inn. Everyone buys their own lunch. We will have an optional white elephant gift exchange. Mark your calendars and watch the weekly bulletins and Grapevine for further details. If you have any questions, please ask one of the WOZ board members. If you are able to join us, please let Karen

Kermgard know by December 7th so you have a seat!

Thank you, Sue Drilling, Margaret Hallin, Karen Kermgard, Kathy Rasch, Mary Franzen





"Christmas Fika"

December 7, 2025
10:15am

New Ladies Circle!

December 8, 2025
Monday at 6:00pm
At Donna Leger's House

Join us to start a new small group for women!

Any woman interested can attend or
email us of your interest at zionrockford@gmail.com!
Call Zion at 815-964-4609 for the address!

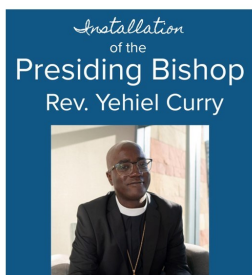
Zion Lutheran Church - 925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104



ELCA PRESIDING
BISHOP CURREY
WAS INSTALLED ON
OCTOBER 4, 2025!

Join us as we watch parts of
Bishop Yehiel Curry Installation!

December 14, 2025
10:15am in Fellowship Hall



Installation
of the
Presiding Bishop
Rev. Yehiel Curry

Christmas Cantata Worship

9:15 am
December 21, 2025



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



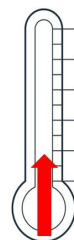
CHRISTMAS BOXES

GOAL: 150 BOXES

\$25.00 Each Box!

\$3,750.00 Needed

Checks made out to
Zion Lutheran Church



| | |
|---------------|------------|
| 150 Boxes | \$3,750.00 |
| Raised So Far | \$850.00 |
| Needed | \$2,900.00 |

BAG FLUFFING

FOR CORNUCOPIA FOOD PANTRY

Fourth Monday at 1:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church - Youth Center!

Cornucopia



Food Pantry



Zion Partners 2025 Christmas Party

WHEN: Tuesday, December 16, 2025

When: Noon - 1:30pm

WHERE: Zion Lutheran Church

WHO: Board & Staff Members of

KATIE'S CUP—PATRIOTS GATEWAY CENTER—ZION OUTREACH
ZION DEVELOPMENT—ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

RSVP to 815.964.4609 or zionrockford@gmail.com

BRING A DISH TO PASS
(White elephant gift exchange)



Christmas Eve Worship

December 24th at 10:00 pm

9:30pm String Quartet Concert



Joy Fund 2025

DONATIONS FOR

Cornucopia
Food Pantry

Checks made out to Zion Lutheran Church



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: Larry Hall and Darrell Lindstrom.
- ◇ For healing: Eloise Anderson, Colette Buchert, Norm Buchert, Linda Callahan, Yolanda Churchill, Charlie Dahlberg, Norma Daugherty, Karen Eiseman, John Hoyt, Gary Johnson, Leola LeGault, Jim McDowell, Terry Morgan, Mary Norman, Betty Jo Rodey, Wayne Spitzer, Carrie Steder, Carl Stoutenberg, Brian Veitch, 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.

WORSHIP LEADER'S TODAY

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Altar Guild | Kris Sommer |
| Communion Asst. | Janice Forrest |
| Fellowship: | Bonnie Dahlberg |
| Music: | Mary Shore |
| Reader: | Pam Bitner |
| Usher: | Charlie Dahlberg |

WORSHIP SERVICES ONLINE

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

www.youtube.com/zionrockford

Please subscribe to the Zion YouTube channel

facebook

YouTube

follow us on
twitter

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.

PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES THIS WEEK

| | | |
|-----------|---------|---|
| Sunday | 9:15am | Second Sunday of Advent Worship |
| | 10:15am | Fellowship—Christmas Fika |
| | 11:00am | Burmese Worship Service—Chapel |
| | 1:00pm | New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room |
| | 1:30pm | Christmas Caroling at Peterson Meadows |
| Monday | 9:30am | Book Study—Multipurpose Room |
| | 6:00pm | Ladie's Circle at Donna Leger's house |
| Tuesday | 8:30am | RVC ESL Class—Marander Room |
| | 12:30pm | WOZ Christmas Luncheon/White Elephant Gift Exchange—Stockholm Inn |
| | 1:30pm | Multicultural Meeting |
| Wednesday | 8:00am | Book Study—Stockholm Inn |
| | 8:30am | RVC ESL Class—Marander Room |
| Thursday | 8:30am | RSV ESL Class—Marander Room |
| | 9:00am | Annual Report Articles due |
| Saturday | 1:00pm | Ruthie's Kitchen at Patriot's Gateway Center |
| Sunday | 9:15am | Worship—Second Sunday of Advent |
| | 10:15am | Fellowship |
| | 11:00am | Burmese Worship Service—Chapel |
| | 1:00pm | New Life Worship Service-Conrad Room |
| | 3:00pm | Pastor Rachel Perkins-Gama Ordination Service—Zion |