



Join us for a **Benefit Dinner** to  
support **Kathryn Rowzee** on  
**Saturday, December 13, 4:30-7 p.m.**  
(or until we run out of food) **at**  
**Immanuel Lutheran Church** (501 8<sup>th</sup>

Ave., Rock Falls). The menu offers two different meal options:

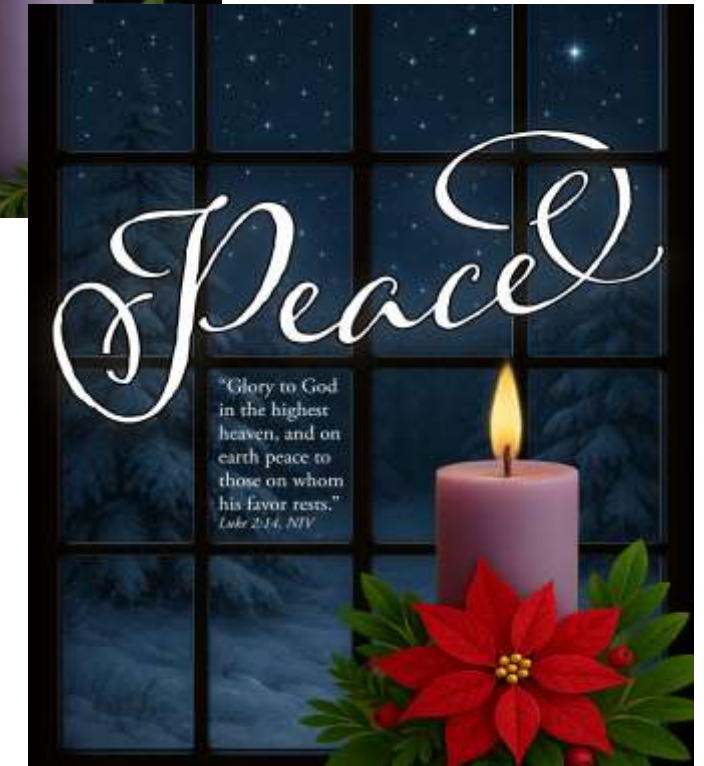
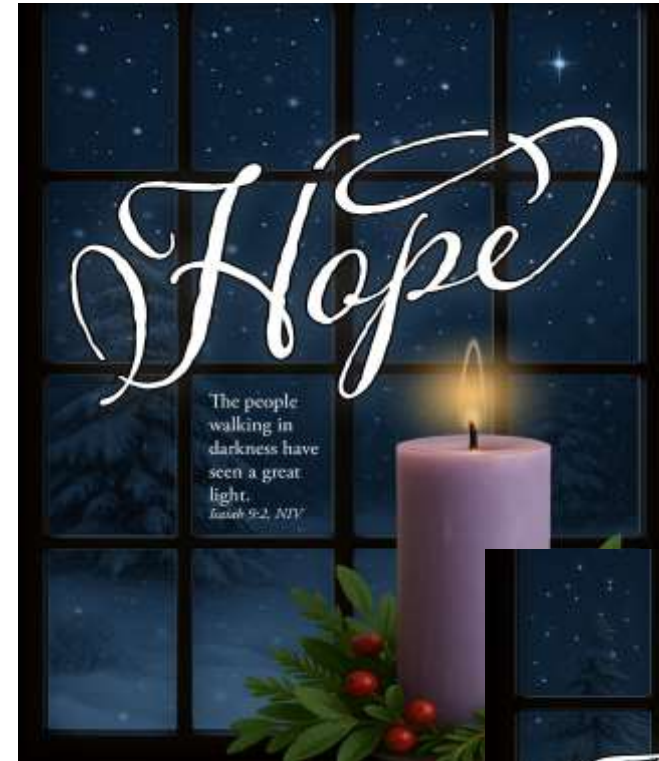
*A. Smoked Pork, Scalloped Potatoes, Salad & Dessert,*

*B. Spaghetti, Salad, Bread & Dessert.*

Both meal options come with a beverage choice of coffee,  
lemonade or water. *Carry-outs will be available.* **A free will  
offering will be received to support the medical expenses  
of Kathryn Rowzee.**

Kathryn, who studies at the University of Dubuque, is in the  
midst of high grade cancer treatment and partial loss of her  
leg. We invite you to keep Kathryn and all involved in her care  
in your prayers. **Please mark your calendars and come  
enjoy food, fellowship and support for Kathryn Rowzee  
on December 13!**

*Special thanks to Thrivent for the Thrivent Action Team Grants towards  
supplies so that donations toward Kathryn's care can be maximized!*



**Sunday, December 7, 2025**  
**9:00 a.m.**

## Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church

It is a joy to gather together for worship!

### St. Paul Purpose Statement

Living Christ centered lives so we may love all, serve our community, and share the Word.

### Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. In-person worship with Holy Communion

10:15 a.m. In-person Sunday School – September – May

### Communion

We celebrate Jesus' presence each week in Holy Communion. This is the Lord's Supper and Jesus invites us: whether you are a lifelong Lutheran, or just considering Christianity; if you are an infant or elderly; if your family has been in the United States for generations, or has only recently arrived; if you are LGBTQIA+ or straight; if you live with disabilities, chronic illness, or are able-bodied and currently healthy; if you are home-blessed or homeless; ... YOU are welcome at God's meal of grace at St. Paul.

### Accessibility

Handicap parking, entrance, wheelchair, and restrooms are available. Sound amplifiers and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher for assistance.

### Children's Offering

The December children's offering will be for the God's Global Barnyard through the ELCA Good Gifts. A gift to God's Global Barnyard will be used where needed most to support livestock, agriculture and other sustainable-development projects, which help farmers and families with the resources they need to thrive.

Pastor Mark Luepke, Part-time Interim

[pastormark@stpaulsterling.com](mailto:pastormark@stpaulsterling.com)

1701 16th Ave. Sterling, IL 61081

815-625-3069

Church email: [stpaulsterling@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulsterling@comcast.net)

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## First & Second Sunday of Advent

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

### Prelude

*"Veni, Emmanuel"*

arr. Marilyn Biery

### Welcome/Announcements

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

**All: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Long-expected God,

**All: 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.**

P: 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.

**All: Amen.**

Gathering Hymn  
“All Earth Is Hopeful”  
ELW #266

1 All earth is hope-ful, the Sav-ior comes at last!  
2 Peo-ple of Is-rael, you heard the proph-et tell:  
3 Moun-tains and val-leys will have to be pre-pared;  
4 We first saw Je-sus a ba-by in a crib.

Fur-rows lie o-pen for God's cre-a-tive task: this, the  
"A-vir-gin moth-er will bear Em-man-u-el"; she con-  
new high-ways o-pened, new pro-to-cols de-clared. Al-most  
This same Lord Je-sus to-day has come to live in our

la-bor of peo-ple who strug-gle to see how  
ceived him, "God with us," our broth-er, whose birth re-  
here! God is near-ing, in beau-ty and grace! All  
world; he is pres-ent, in neigh-bors we see our

God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bod-y free.  
stores hope and cour-age to chil-dren of this earth.  
clear ev-'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!  
Je-sus is with us, and ev-er sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946.  
Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé  
Spanish text and tune © 1993 and English text © 1995 Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, admin. OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.

GREETING

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

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together:  
All: 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.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader: As we light the first candle of Advent, we remember the hope that Christ brings into the world. The first candle reminds us that we live in hope because of God's promises.  
All: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

The first candle is lit.

Leader: May the light of hope shine brightly in our lives and guide us to the coming of Christ.

Leader: The second Sunday of Advent is a time to reflect on the peace that comes through Christ. We light the candle of peace to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

People: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

The second candle is lit.

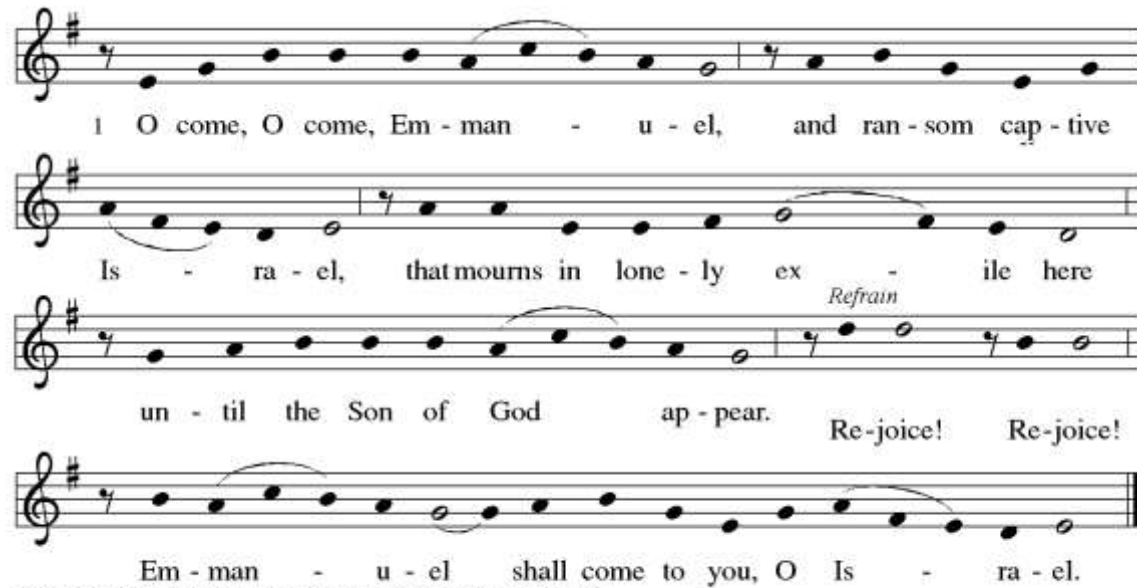
Leader: May the light of peace guide our hearts as we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

All: We light these candles of hope and peace, trusting in God's promises.

## Advent Song

### “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

ELW #257 vs 1 only



Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.  
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

### First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

<sup>1</sup> A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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,

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

<sup>11</sup> Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup> the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup> let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### Gospel Acclamation



## **Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> 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.’ ”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> 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.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord,

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children’s Message**

## **Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples,] <sup>36</sup> “About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>42</sup> Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord,

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

“The Revelation of the Lord”

**Welcome of New Member**

Keegan Strabala-Bright

Hymn of the Day  
“On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry”  
ELW # 249



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounce - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the  
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge  
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us  
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in, and let us all our  
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite  
Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

Nicene Creed

P: Trusting in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, let us profess our faith through the words of the Nicene Creed:

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

P: God of grace.

All: hear our prayer.

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

All: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: And also with you!

P: Let us share a sign of Christ’s peace in whatever way you are comfortable.



## MEAL

### Offering

*“Once He Came in Blessing”*

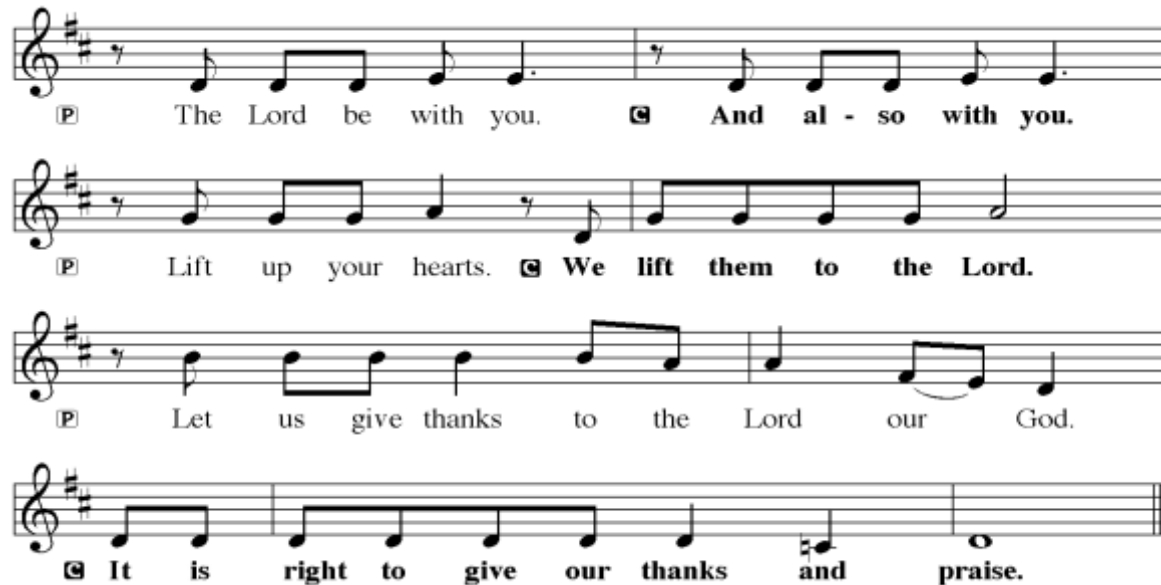
stg. Michael Burkhardt

### Offering Prayer

P: 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.

**All: Amen.**

### The Great Thanksgiving



The Great Thanksgiving musical notation consists of four staves in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are: [P] The Lord be with you. [C] And al - so with you. [P] Lift up your hearts. [C] We lift them to the Lord. [P] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. [C] It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### *“Holy, Holy, Holy”*



“Holy, Holy, Holy” musical notation consists of five staves in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### The Words of Institution

#### Lord’s Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All: 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**

P: There is a place for you at the table of God. Come, receive the food that does not perish, a taste of life eternal.

**Communion**

**Communion Music**

***“Lamb of God”***



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;

have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;

have mer-cy on us, havemer-cy on us, have mer - cy.

Lamb of God, you take a- way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

***“Creator of the Stars of Night”***

arr. Henrietta Atkin

**Prayer after Communion**

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God’s grace.

**All: Amen.**

P: 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.

**All: Amen.**

P: I invite you to rise in body or spirit to receive a blessing.

**Blessing**

P: 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.

**All: Amen.**



## Sending Song

### “Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW #264



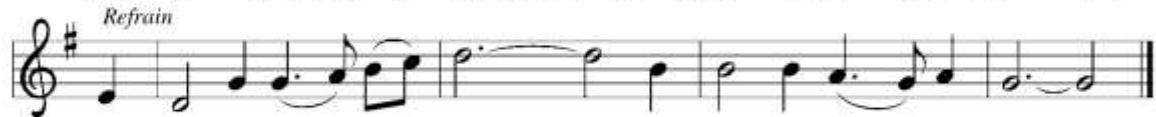
1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

## Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

stg. Paul Manz

**We Remember in Prayer;** those hospitalized this week: Lori Dewey; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Maggie N., John Renner, the Woodworth family, Michelle Klinger, Pastor Bree, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Dylan Wescott, Phyllis Jacobson, and Betty Steinke

**Coffee Fellowship will be served** following worship this morning in the Fellowship Hall hosted by Audrey & Cathy Cox. All are welcome!

## Worship Assistants:

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Mary Ordean

Acolytes – Ordean family

Greeters – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Ushers – Mel Johnson, Donna Kendall

Advent Readers – Platz family

Reader – Marilyn Geiger

Sound – Greg Zeigler

Communion Assistant – Greg Zeigler

Altar Guild – Debbie O'Brien, Diane Yoeckel

## Musicians:

Julie Woessner DeJonge

Dawn Zeigler

## Next Week – December 14

### Worship Assistants

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Dan Bartel

Acolytes – Bartel family

Greeters – Bartel family

Ushers – John Renner, Diane Yoeckel

Advent Readers – *Volunteer needed*

Reader – Carolyn Duncan

Sound – Bradyn Arians

Communion Assistant – Chad Arians

Altar Guild – Debbie O'Brien, Diane Yoeckel

Coffee Fellowship – *Volunteer needed*