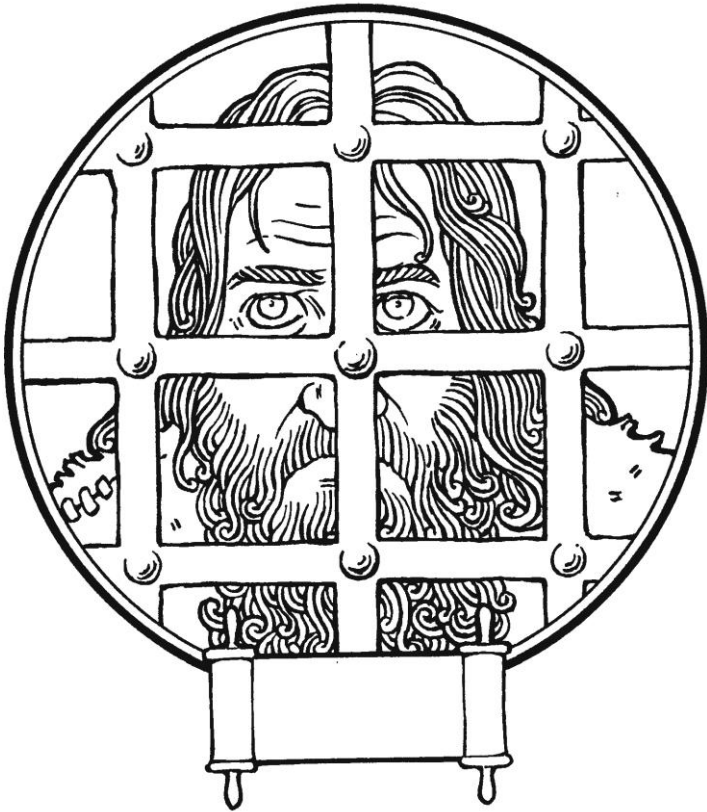


# THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT



**DECEMBER 14, 2025**

**ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS)**

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✠ THE SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

INTROIT PSALM 71:14-18; ANTIPHON: PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I will say, Rejoice.

**I will hope continually  
and will praise you yet more and more.**

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of  
salvation all the day,  
for their number is past my knowledge.

**With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come;  
I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.**

O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

**So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake  
me,**

**until I proclaim your might to another generation, your  
power to all those to come.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I will say, Rejoice.

KYRIE P. 204

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

**[P]** The Lord be with you.

**[C]** And also with you.

**[P]** Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and  
to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious  
visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**[C]** Amen.

## OLD TESTAMENT

## ISAIAH 35:1-10

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." <sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup>And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## GRADUAL

## ZECHARIAH 9:9, PSALM 118:26, ALT.

**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.**

## EPISTLE

## JAMES 5:7-11

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets

who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

**ALLELUIA AND VERSE**

**P. 205**

**HOLY GOSPEL**

**MATTHEW 11:2-15**

**P** The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

**G** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." <sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you." <sup>11</sup>Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup>From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup>For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup>and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup>He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**G** Praise to You, O Christ.

**NICENE CREED**

**P. 206**

**HYMN OF THE DAY "HARK! A THRILLING VOICE IS SOUNDING" 345**  
**SERMON**

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

**P** Lord, in your Mercy,

**C** Hear our Prayer.

### **In Our Prayers:**

+ Scott Christenson	+ Stewart Ruwersma, Sr.
+ Donna Hagen	+ Adam Barlau
+ Melanie Schoenfeld	+ Dan Gueningsman
+ Maya Radtke	+ Evelyn Dial
+ Jeremy Radtke	+ Angela Litzau
+ Darian Litzau	+ Tracy Albers
+ Karen Strei	+ Call Process for Associate Pastor

## OFFERING/OFFERING PRAYER

### **✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠ P. 208-210**

The Sacrament is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that our Lord, as He says, gives not only bread and wine, but His true body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, to repentant, reconciled believers in Christ. Our Lord Jesus invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us (Matt. 26:26-28; 1Cor. 11:23-29; Matt.6:15).

We practice closed communion. Why? (1 Cor. 10:16-17). Because our Lord says those who eat and drink His body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm. If not yet instructed, in doubt, or holding a confession differing from that of the LCMS, you are lovingly asked not to commune at this time. Pastor is happy to make an appointment to discuss adult catechesis or questions you have regarding the Sacrament of the Altar.

**Examination Questions:** Please prepare by asking yourself — Am I sorry for my sins? Do I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior from sin? Do I believe that I am receiving the body and blood of Christ along with the bread and wine? Will I try, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live a more God-pleasing life?

Prayers for “Before communing” and “Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament” are printed on the front cover of the hymnal.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“HAIL TO THE LORD’S ANOINTED”	398
“O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU”	334 (T:442)
“SOUL, ADORN YOURSELF WITH GLADNESS”	636
NUNC DIMITTIS	P. 211
BENEDICAMUS & BENEDICTION	P. 212
CLOSING HYMN “COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS”	338

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

<u>Attendance Last Week</u> Sunday: 187 Sunday School/Youth: 40 Bible Study: 20	<u>Organist:</u> Lynn Mueller <u>Scripture Reader:</u> Pastor Barlau
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CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **ACT** will be selling baked goods in the church lobby after the children's Christmas program TODAY December 14!
2. **STAGE TAKE-DOWN** will happen today at 11:15 after the Children's Christmas program. Many hands make quick work. Thank you so much!
3. **ADVENT-** Join us for advent services on Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup>. Service times will be 5:30 and 7:00 PM. A meal will be served from 6:15-6:45 PM. **(Please note that the December 17<sup>th</sup> Services and meal will be held at St. Peter Lutheran Church.)**
4. **SPECIAL THANK YOU** to all who came to help decorate the church and basement for Christmas- Deb Bahr, Angie Christen, Barb Kegler, Amy Bettcher, Jen Bebo and her girls, Kim Schauer and her boys, Addisyn Lind, Miriam and Naomi Barlau and the Lester Prairie Ambassadors! We sure appreciated your help! Lajeane and the LWML Ladies.
5. **HONORING DCE ELLIE-** Our church family would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to **DCE Ellie** as she concludes her **dedicated service** to our congregation. Ellie has blessed us with her leadership, faith, and compassion—especially through her work with our youth, families, and ministries. Her commitment to sharing Christ’s love has made a lasting impact on our church and

on the many lives she has touched. As Ellie begins a new chapter, we pray for God's guidance and abundant blessings over her future endeavors. We invite the congregation to join us in thanking her for her service and celebrating the meaningful ministry she has shared with us. **Please join us for refreshments and cake between services on December 28th.**

**6. DONATIONS REQUESTED-** We will be collecting new or gently used toys and quilts for the Marie Sandvick center. Please donate to the box in the basement before our sandwich making event on Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**7. THANK YOU** you to those who donated hats, gloves and mittens for Lester Prairie School. Could use more gloves/mittens. If you find "good deals" after Christmas, you can still donate anytime. Just drop them off on the LWML table.

**8. LWML -** Christmas greeting cards are available for purchase on the LWML table for \$1.00 each. There are new choices available. As always, proceeds support the Mission projects. Thank you.

**9. RED STOCKINGS!** The Red Stocking is up to collect coins you have been collecting this year. Empty your stocking into the large red stocking hanging in the Upper Narthex. Take your stocking and begin filling it for the next collection. If you don't have a stocking, take one from the basket, along with the instructions, and start filling it. You can also just drop in coins now. These monies will go for National and Mn. So. District missions. Thank you!

**10. HYGIENE KITS-** LWML will be collecting items for these kits through Christmas. They will be assembled and sent to Orphan Grain Train. The tree is located in the lower narthex. Take a tag from the tree and bring item(s) (unwrapped) and place in the bin under the table. You can bring as many items as you would like from one tag. Monetary donations can be placed in the can. Do not bring items not on the tags. Orphan Grain Train is very specific in what they can use. Thank you for sharing what you have with those who have nothing.

**11. LIVING NATIVITY-** Harvest Community Church (Lester Prairie) is hosting a live nativity Sunday, December 14th from 2 pm to 6 pm. We are offering drive through and walk through experiences, caroling, family photos, and refreshments.

**12. SCHEDULE- December 21:** Ushers: 1<sup>st</sup> Service- Kent Landin, Steven Dietel, Larry Roth; 2<sup>nd</sup> Service: Gregg Machemehl, Chris Schultz, Neil Hecksel, Nick Rasset; Acolytes: 1<sup>st</sup> Service- A. Lind, B. Peterson; 2<sup>nd</sup> Service: B. Mike, L. Dressler; Greeters- 1<sup>st</sup> Service: John & Julie Lange; 2<sup>nd</sup> Service: Craig & Tracy Jackson; Scripture Reader: Evelyn Dial; Flowers: Jane Holasek/Shirley Minnick; Worship Bags: Elaine Peterson

### ***Calendar of Events***

<b>Sun. Dec. 14</b>	8:00 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 10:30 a.m.  After 2 <sup>nd</sup> service	<b>WORSHIP W/ CONT. LINE COMM.</b> Sun. School/Adult Bible Study/ACT <b>SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM</b> Stage take-down ACT Bake Sale
Mon. Dec. 15	Noon	Deadline for Lamplighter
Tues. Dec 16	7:30 p.m.	Dartball Away vs. Watertown
Wed. Dec 17	Noon  5:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Deadline for Bulletin Release Time/Confirmation Classes <b>ADVENT SERVICE AT ST. PETER</b> Advent Meal at St. Peter <b>ADVENT SERVICE AT ST. PETER</b>
Thurs. Dec 18	8:30 A.M.	Sandwich Ministry
Fri. Dec 19		Church Offices Closed
<b>Sun. Dec. 21</b>	8:00 a.m. 9:15 a.m.  10:30 a.m.	<b>WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION</b> Sunday School Gingerbread House making <b>WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION</b>

## **Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule**

**12/17** *At St. Peter Lutheran Church*

5:30 and 7:00 PM Worship

Services—"Candy Canes"

6:15-6:45 PM Advent Meal

**12/24** 3:00 & 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship—"Creche"

**12/25** 9:00 AM Christmas Day Worship—"Wrapped Presents"