

## THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, December 14, 2025, 10:00 am

**"Changing Lives through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education"**

**"Persevere With Thanksgiving"**



**PERSEVERE WITH  
THANKSGIVING**

**Music of Preparation,  
Welcome, Announcements, Greeting**

**Our Ministry:** We are a people of God who are: **"Changing Lives through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education."**

**Welcome!** The time draws near to celebrate our Savior's birth! Welcome to worship, which is part of our preparation. It's good to be here together.

**Devotions & Publications Available** are found in the main entryway. Please leave donation envelopes in the offering plate.

### ..... WORSHIP NOTES .....

**Note About Attendance Cards...**Remember that the only way we may know you are worshipping with us is by seeing your name on an attendance card. These cards may be completed as you enter for worship and will be collected after the offering. Use one card for each family that is gathered. **Please list the name of each person in worship.** (Parents, please take responsibility for signing in your children) There is a "Member" side as well as a "Guest" side. Please fill out the appropriate side and pass them to the center aisle during the gathering of the offerings. The cards are gathered after the offering has been collected.

**To Our Visitors...**Our church and school have a few nooks and crannies, so don't be afraid to ask an usher where things are. Our pastor and any member here today would also be glad to meet and assist you. A guest information packet is available in the main entryway.

**For Parents with Small Children...**We love and want children in our services as a part of God's family, to spend time with Jesus, and to learn how to worship. We want you and your children to experience our Lord's love and to have a great opportunity to worship the Lord along with all who are gathered here to praise our Savior's name.

**AS WE GATHER:** "You are the Christ," said Peter, "the Son of the living God." This confession that Jesus is the Christ of God was the rock upon which Jesus built the Church of which this congregation is but one little corner of the vineyard. As we celebrate God's goodness to this congregation in the past and as we look toward the challenges of the future, we continue to proclaim Christ as the Son of God. May God bless our communal life of proclamation and use us to gather all His sheep into His fold.

**Before worship prayer**

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new unto us every morning, and though we have not deserved Your goodness, You abundantly provide for all our wants of body and soul. Give us Your Holy Spirit that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness toward us, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.*

**Pre-Service: "Crown Him The Lord Of All"** *Handbell Choir*

**We're So Glad God Brought You Here Today!**

**Anniversary Hymn: "With Thanks, We Persevere"** *tune LSB651*

With thanks, we persevere,  
And serve our Lord each day.  
We gather and we serve Him here,  
Rejoice, with thanks, we say.

With thanks, we praise our God,  
For His great love and grace.  
He uses us to share His love,  
With every tribe and race.

We worship and we pray,  
Confess, give thanks and sing.  
We gather as God's children here,  
And let our praises ring.

We teach the love of Christ,  
In every class and grade.  
Good news is shared with parent, child,  
Hearts changed, disciples made.

With thanks, for pastors here,  
That served for countless years,  
And boldly shared God's Word and truth,  
To all whom God holds dear.

With thanks, we give to the Lord,  
For all the gifts He gives,  
Our treasures, talents, time are His,  
With thanks, we freely give!

With thanks, we persevere,  
His truth, we preach and share,  
For countless years, we still proclaim,  
God's love, salvation dear.

All praise to God most high,  
Our Father, Son, most dear,  
and Spirit, evermore we praise,  
With thanks, we persevere!

**INVOCATION, CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

P: In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C: **Amen.** *Matthew 28:19b*  
P: The Lord be with you!  
C: **And with thy spirit!**  
P: We praise God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!  
C: **We praise Him now and forever. Alleluia!** *1888 Dedication litany*

P: This is the name by which our God reveals Himself.  
**C: This is the name He has given us in baptism.**  
P: In this name, we have gathered for 165 years!  
**C: In this name, we have taught children for 160 years!**  
P: In this name, we gather and rejoice in His goodness.  
**C: In this name, we gather today to celebrate His gracious acts.**

P: Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, in our baptism, God has chosen us and made us His children. He has called us to a life of repentance. As His children, let us confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. Let us confess our sins to God our Father, . . . *1934 - 75th Anniversary*  
Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto Thee that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Thine infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Thy grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C: O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us, and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy will, and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given His only Son to die for us, and for His sake, He forgives us all our sins. To all who believe on His name He gives the power to become the children of God, and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all!

**C: Amen.**

P: Children of God, rejoice! Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.** *John 20:19-23*

P: Let us pray . . . .O blessed Lord, grant us watchful hearts to behold the mystery of Christ's coming without doubt or fear as we await the fullness of all that He promised, lest our hearts be deprived of joy and our anxieties steal away the peace He has planted in us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

*(Please be Seated)*

**Special Music: "Praise To The Lord"**

*Handbell Choir*

### THE READING OF THE WORD

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 35:1-10

*(Everlasting Joy)*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; 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. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. 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." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 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; 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. 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. 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. 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.

**Special Music: "God is Our Refuge and Strength"**

*Choir*

Stand (as you are able)

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

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

**Gospel Lesson:** Matthew 11:2-15 (*He Who Has Ears To Hear, Let Him Hear!*)

When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 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. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." 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? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' 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. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be Seated)*

**Special Music: "Away In A Manger"**

*Children's Choir*

**Children's Message**

**Sermon Hymn: "Once He Came in Blessing"**

*LSB, hymn #333*

Once He came in blessing, All our sins redressing;  
Came in likeness lowly, Son of God most holy;  
Bore the cross to save us; Hope and freedom gave us.

Now He gently leads us; With Himself He feeds us  
Precious food from heaven, Pledge of peace here given,  
Manna that will nourish Souls that they may flourish.

Soon will come that hour When with mighty power  
Christ will come in splendor And will judgment render,  
With the faithful sharing Joy beyond comparing.

Come, then, O Lord Jesus, From our sins release us.  
Keep our hearts believing, That we, grace receiving,  
Ever may confess You Till in heav'n we bless You.

**Sermon: "Good Things Are Still Happening"**

*Isaiah 35:1-10*

Stand (as you are able)

P: Let us confess our faith, using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

C: **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day  
he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the  
right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge  
the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the  
communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the  
body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

*(Please be Seated)*

**Tithes and Offerings/Attendance Cards**

**Special Music: "Great Light"**

*Choir*

**OFFERTORY - Create In Me**

*LSB, Divine Service 3, pg 192-193*

C: **(Sung) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within  
me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit**

**from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

*1 Timothy 2:1-4*

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. . . . Dear loving heavenly Father: Your loving-kindness toward us is especially evident today. We thank and praise You for creating Your Church and for giving life to this congregation and our school through the power of Your Holy Spirit. Hear now our petitions for Jesus' sake as we come to You as Your people. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: We give You thanks for the blessings You have given to our congregation during these 165 years and our school for 160 years. Work in our hearts that we may not be obstacles, but channels for the coming of Your kingdom to a lost and evil world. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: This year, O Lord, we remember Your hand at work in the life of our church school in the past. You have blessed us and guided us these many years. We thank You this day for the past, in which You have made known Your salvation time and time again. For Your past blessings, we give You thanks. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: O Lord, while we celebrate the past, we also do not forget that You are with us this very moment. For Your present blessings, we give You thanks. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: O God, even as we celebrate our past and rejoice in our present, we also look forward to the future in joy. We pray that You would continue to make Your saving acts known among us. Give us a zeal for mission. Help us to look beyond our walls to those who do not know You. Make this church and school a blessing to those around us, and embolden us to move forward with strength toward what lies ahead. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: We pray for Your children, who are at times, attacked by trials and losses. We especially pray for those who are ill and those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. We lift up before You those hospitalized this past week (*Especially, . . .*). Also be with those who continue treatment and healing at home. We pray for them and all those that we name in our hearts . . . (*Silence*). Sustain them by Your strength and protection. Preserve all of us from despair and depression caused by the circumstances of our lives. Keep us strong in faith and give us the wisdom of perspective that places all earthly concerns under Your care. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

*(Additional prayers of the congregation. Each petition concludes with. . .)*

P: . . . Lord, In Your Mercy,

**C: Hear Our Prayer.**

P: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us to pray:

**C: 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.**

*Matthew 6:9-13*

**Doxology - LSB805 - Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host:

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

*1934 - 75th Anniversary*



## **BENEDICTION**

*We are going to hear the Benediction spoken by pastors of the past and present. The pastors you will hear: Rev. George Matranga, Rev. Neil Bockelman, Rev. David Bottorff, Rev. Martin Haeger, Rev. Mark Peters, Rev. Chris Sheets, Rev. Michael Hanel, (German spoken by Rev. Joel Eden), Rev. Roger Drinnon, and Rev. Karl Koeppen.*

*Line 1 Rev. Neil Bockelman (1982-1989), Rev. Martin Haeger (1990-1999), Rev. David Bottorff (1979-1987), Rev. Christopher Sheets (2003-2013)*

*Line 2 Rev. Mark Peters (1991-1998), Rev. George Matranga (1964-1969), Rev. Michael Hanel (2014-2021), (German speaking pastors via Rev. Joel Eden)*

*Line 3 Rev. Roger Drinnon (2021-present), Rev. Karl Koeppen (1996-present)*

*\*Full List of Pastors on page 13*

P: The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

*Numbers 6:24-26*

**Closing Hymn: “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”**

*LSB, hymn #656*

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev’ry need That hath us now o’ertaken.

The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight;  
On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our loss effected;

But for us fights the valiant One, Whom God Himself elected.

Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is,  
Of Sabaoth Lord, And there’s none other God;  
He holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpow’r us.

This world’s prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none. He’s judged; the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it;  
He’s by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit.

And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife,  
Though these all be gone, Our vict’ry has been won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

**See You In Worship Next Week!**

### **After worship prayer**

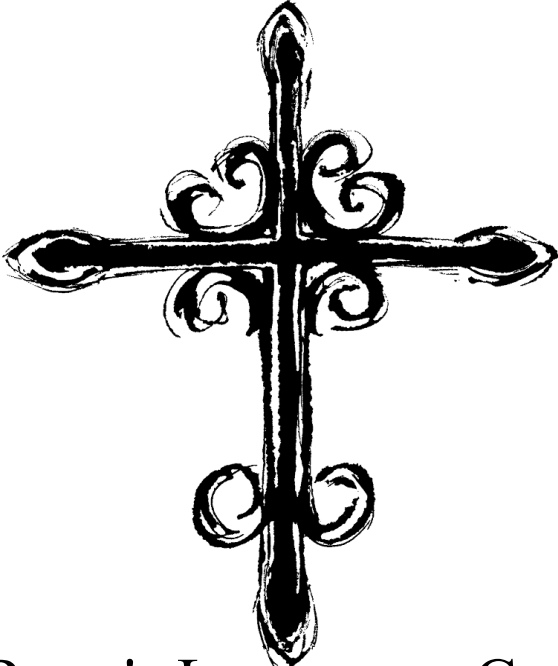
*Almighty and everlasting God, of Your great mercy in Jesus Christ You have granted us forgiveness of sin and all things pertaining to life and godliness. Send us Your Holy Spirit that He may so rule our hearts that we, being ever mindful of Your fatherly mercy, may serve You in holiness and pureness of living and may give You continual thanks for all Your goodness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.*

**Altar Flowers** Altar flowers this weekend are given in loving memory of my father, Dennis Boyer, by Cheri & Mark Rogers and family; also in thankfulness for all of our blessings, by Ron & Lydia Brown.

**Full list of the pastors that have served St. Paul's Lutheran Church**

**In chronological order**

- 1. Rev. George Bernthal 1860-1862
- 2. Rev. Carl Meyer 1864-1870
- 3. Rev. Gustav Adolph Mueller 1870-1883
- 4. Rev. J. Frederick Schroeder 1883-1916
- 5. Rev. Herman Pfothenhauer 1917-1921
- 6. Rev. Carl Haller 1922-1957
- 7. Rev. Herbert P. Vogel 1941-1943
- 8. Rev. Herbert F. Bohlmann 1945-1977
- 9. Rev. Gerald Schaus 1959-1963
- 10. Rev. George Matranga 1964-1969
- 11. Rev. Paul G. Mueller 1970-1981
- 12. Rev. David M. Bottorff 1979-1987
- 13. Rev. Neil M. Bockelmann 1982-1989  
Vacancy - Rev. Ken Lueke 1989-1990
- 14. Rev. Martin A. Haeger 1990-1999
- 15. Rev. Mark Peters 1991-1998
- 16. Rev. Karl J. Koeppen 1996-present
- 17. Rev. H. Christopher Sheets 2003-2013
- 18. Rev. Michael Hanel 2015-2021
- 19. Rev. Roger A. Drinnon 2021-present



**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

<b>Rev. Karl J. Koeppen</b> . . . . . Senior Pastor	<b>Rev. David Baker</b> . . . . . Missionary to Mongolia
<b>Rev. Roger A. Drinnon</b> . . . . . Associate Pastor	<b>Rev. Ross Engel</b> . . . . . Adopt-A-Chaplain
<b>Mr. Brian Porter</b> . . . . . Principal	<b>Church &amp; School Office:</b> . . . . . 932-0312
<b>Church Campus</b> . . . . . 348 E. Merchant, Kankakee	
<b>School Campus and Church &amp; School Office</b> . . . . . 1780 Career Center Road, Bourbonnais	
<b>Church &amp; School Website</b> . . . . . <a href="http://www.stpaulslutheran.net">www.stpaulslutheran.net</a>	

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## **Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss**

Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss was born in Watertown, Wisconsin and grew up working on a dairy farm. He attended St. John Lutheran School in Watertown and graduated from Lakeside Lutheran High School in Lake Mills, Wisconsin in 1982. After graduating from Concordia University Wisconsin in 1986, Rev. Dr. Buss attended Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, graduating in 1990. He did post graduate studies at Trinity Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. In May of 2018 Rev. Dr. Buss was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from CUWAA.

In his over 30 years of parish ministry Rev. Dr. Buss served two congregations: St. Peter Lutheran Church, Gilberts, Illinois, and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Belvidere, Illinois. He has also served The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the LCMS Northern Illinois District in a variety of leadership positions. He was elected as President of the LCMS Northern Illinois District in 2018 and re-elected 2022 and 2025.

Rev. Dr. Buss has participated in mission trips to Kenya, Ethiopia, and Belize. He currently serves on the Boards of Regents of Concordia University Chicago. He and his wife Marie reside in Belvidere, Illinois where he serves as the Fire Department Chaplain for the city. He has four children. All six members of his immediate family have graduated from the Concordia University System, five from CUWAA.

