

ENDURING JOY

THE JOY OF REFUGE



28 JANUARY 2024



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

725 S. Estrella Pkwy (Suite 120) Goodyear, Arizona 85338

The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

OUR PASTOR

Pastor Lincoln Albrecht

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WELCOME TO RIVER OF LIFE

Thank you for joining us this morning. In our worship service, God's children—you & I—gather together before God to be strengthened through God's Word. In response to God's message of love to us, we offer God our worship and praise.

The worship folder you're holding has the entire Order of Service. If you have questions, feel free to ask one of our ushers or anyone near you. The unfamiliar can be intimidating—let us help you. We want you to be comfortable & comforted here.

Restrooms are located in the front corner for your convenience.

God wants everyone to worship together. We recognize that public worship is a learning process for children. Parents, if you feel like you need a moment, there is a room in the back of the worship area where you can see, hear, and participate in worship without being heard.

OUR FOCUS FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

Do you ever have doubts? Do you grieve? Are you ever envious of those who chose the path of evil and seem to get away with it? Honest Christians admit having moments of each. In our Old Testament reading, we meet a prophet who is doing both. He feels alone and forgotten. God reminds Elijah that the weight of the world is not on his shoulders, but the Lord is in control of all things. There are believers Elijah does not see and triumphs he does not recognize. In our Gospel, Peter boldly steps out of the boat in faith, only to be overwhelmed by his surroundings. His own courage quickly fails him. But Jesus doesn't. He gave him his word and he will not let him drown. Graciously the Lord extends his hand to rescue this doubting disciple. We are not saved by great miracles, but by the still small voice, the steady open hand of our Savior!

OPENING HYMN

Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me | 433



1 Je - sus, Sav - ior, pi - lot me O - ver life's tem -
2 As a moth - er stills her child, Thou canst hush the
3 When at last I near the shore And the fear - ful



pes - tuous sea; Un - known waves be - fore me roll,
o - cean wild. Bois - t'rous waves o - bey thy will
break - ers roar 'Twixt me and the peace - ful rest,



Hid - ing rock and treach-'rous shoal. Chart and com - pass
When thou say'st to them, "Be still!" Won - drous Sov - 'reign
Then, while lean - ing on thy breast, May I hear thee



come from thee: Je - sus, Sav - ior, pi - lot me.
of the sea, Je - sus, Sav - ior, pi - lot me.
say to me, "Fear not! I will pi - lot thee."

The Gathering

INVOCATION

Minister: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

P: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

P: Amen.

*Praise & Prayer*¹

M: Surely God is good to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

P: They have no struggles. Their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens. They are not plagued by human ills.

M: This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. I thought: Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence.

¹ Our dialogue of praise is from **Psalm 73** where Asaph acknowledges his envy of the evildoers. It is not until he entered the sanctuary of God that he understood man's accountability to the one true God.

P: When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply, until I entered the sanctuary of God

M: Whom have I in heaven but you? Earth has nothing I desire besides you.

P: My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

M: Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.

P: You guide me with your counsel. You will take me into glory.

M: It is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge. I will tell of all your deeds and praise your holy name.

SONG OF PRAISE

Precious Lord, Take My Hand | 451



1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me
2 When my way grows drear, Pre - cious Lord, lin - ger
3 When the dark - ness ap - pears And the night draws



stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
near, When my life is al - most gone,
near And the day is al - most gone,



Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the
Hear my cry, hear my call; Hold my hand lest I
At the riv - er I stand; Guide my feet, hold my



light. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord; Lead me home.
fall. Take my hand, pre - cious Lord; Lead me home.
hand, Take my hand, pre - cious Lord; Lead me home.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Almighty and most merciful God, preserve us from all harm and danger that we, being ready in both body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish what you want done; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: **Amen.**

The Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 8

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Hebrews 11:1

M: Alleluia. Now faith is confidence in what we hope for,

P: and assurance about what we do not see. Alleluia.

RESPONSE OF PRAISE

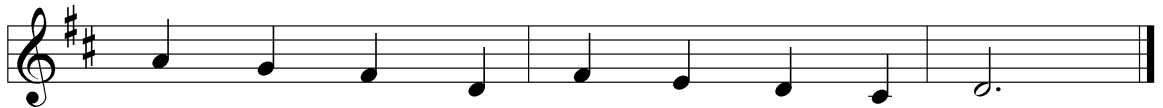
Oh, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink | 405 (1-2)



1 Oh, for a faith that will not shrink Though
2 That will not mur - mur nor com - plain Be -



pressed by man - y a foe, That will not trem - ble
neath the chas - t'ning rod, But in the hour of



on the brink Of pov - er - ty or woe,
grief or pain Can lean up - on its God,

OLD TESTAMENT READING

1 Kings 19

⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹ The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹⁵ The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 14

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

P: Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

By Grace I'm Saved | 384



1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and bound - less;
 2 By grace God's Son, our on - ly Sav - ior,
 3 By grace! Oh, mark this word of prom - ise
 4 By grace to tim - id hearts that trem - ble,
 5 By grace! On this I'll rest when dy - ing;



My soul, be - lieve and doubt it not. Why wa - ver
 Came down to earth to bear our sin. Was it be -
 When you are by your sins op - pressed, When Sa - tan
 In trib - u - la - tion's fur - nace tried— By grace, de -
 In Je - sus' prom - ise I re - joice. For though I



at this word of prom - ise? Has Scrip - ture ev - er
 cause of your own mer - it That Je - sus died your
 plagues your trou - bled con - science, And when your heart is
 spite all fear and trou - ble, The Fa - ther's heart is
 know my heart's con - di - tion, I al - so know my



false - hood taught? So then this word must true re -
 soul to win? No, it was grace, and grace a -
 seek - ing rest. What rea - son can - not com - pre -
 o - pen wide. Where could I help and strength se -
 Sav - ior's voice. My heart is glad; all grief has



main: By grace you, too, shall heav'n ob - tain.
 lone, That brought him from his heav'n - ly throne.
 hend God by his grace to you did send.
 cure If grace were not my an - chor sure?
 flown Since I am saved by grace a - lone.

Our Response to God's Word

M: In Christ, you have heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

P: **We believe in Christ and trust in the truth he has revealed to us in his Word.**

M: Living and serving together in trust and hope, we confess our common faith.

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there 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.**

THANK OFFERING



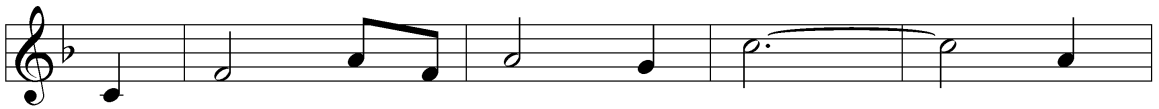
God's people respond with thankful hearts. The people of River of Life have joined to offer God the first-fruits of all he has given us. Our offerings support God's work in this community and the world. If you are a visitor with us, thank you for joining us today. Please do not feel obligated to support our ministry, but we ask that you do take time to fill out a digital connect card (azriveroflife.com/connect) so we can thank you for joining us. Thank you & God bless you!

HYMN

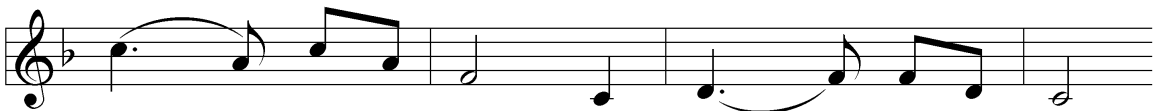
Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound | 379



1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound—
 2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me;
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares
 4 When we've been there ten thou - sand years,



That saved a wretch like me! I
 His Word my hope se - cures. He
 I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
 Bright shin - ing as the sun, We've



once was lost but now am found,
 will my shield and por - tion be
 grace has brought me safe thus far,
 no less days to sing God's praise



Was blind but now I see.
 As long as life en - dures.
 And grace will lead me home.
 Than when we'd first be - gun.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord of hosts, we thank you for the rich blessings you have showered upon us. We glorify you with our whole hearts and minds.

P: You are the God of righteousness and faithfulness. We thank you for giving us your Word. We praise you for keeping all your promises.

M: God of grace, by nature we are wracked with doubts. As we struggle with our own sinful natures, you continue to graciously extend your hand to us. You offer us your Word and your Son, who is the Word made flesh.

P: When we cry out "Lord, save me!" just like Peter, you always listen and respond. You are our Savior and our sure defense.

M: Holy Spirit, bring us comfort when we are feeling isolated and alone like Elijah. There are times and situations when we feel like we are the last faithful people left. Assure us of your strength. You sustain believers today as you always have in history. You uphold the Church. Your Word endures!

P: Remind us that there are many more faithful believers around us than we may realize. Increase our appreciation for the fellowship we do share with one another. Unite us for love and mutual encouragement.

M: Dear Lord, there are still many who do not trust in you with all their heart. Some of these defiant and disobedient ones are our friends and family members. You know how our hearts break as we see them demonstrate their unbelief. Yet, you are a God of rich mercy and abounding love. You continue to hold out your hand to them. Work through us to be a signpost pointing them back to your Son as Savior. Hear our private prayers:

A time for silent, personal prayers for defiant and disobedient unbelievers.

M: Repent and live is your promise to us. In that spirit, we pray as you taught:

P: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

P: Amen.

SONG OF DEPARTURE

Oh, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink | 405 (3-6)



3 A faith that shines more bright and clear When
4 That bears un - moved the world's dread frown Nor
5 A faith that keeps the nar - row way Till



tem - pests rage with - out, That, when in dan - ger,
heeds its scorn - ful smile, That sin's wild o - cean
life's last spark is fled And with a pure and



knows no fear, In dark - ness feels no doubt,
can - not drown Nor Sa - tan's arts be - guile,
heav'n - ly ray Lights up the dy - ing bed.

6 Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en now the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING

We recognize how busy this world and your life can be. Thank you for setting aside a Sunday morning to be with us in God's house. Stick around for a bite to eat and a refreshing drink. One of life's greatest pleasures is meeting new people and growing lasting relationships. We'd love to get to know you better.

INTERESTED IN JOINING RIVER OF LIFE?

Would you like to learn what the Lutheran church believes and teaches? Are you interested in joining our church, or going through a refresher class? We would love to meet with you and study God's Word. If you're interested, speak with Pastor Albrecht.

OPEN FORUM AND VOTERS' MEETING

FEBRUARY 4

Join us after worship on Sunday, February 4th, to hear updates on ministry over the past year, discuss future plans, and make important financial decisions for our congregation. After the open forum, we'll also have a fellowship meal for all!

SUPPORTING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ACSTO

If you are an Arizona taxpayer, you can make a donation to ACSTO and receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit in return. If you usually receive a refund from the state of Arizona, you'll get a bigger refund. If you typically owe, you'll owe less. When you make a donation you can identify a specific school or student to receive your donation.

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Hymn #433 **Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me** Text: Edward Hopper, 1818-88, abr.

Hymn #451 **Precious Lord, Take My Hand** Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993, alt. © 1938 Unichappell Music, Inc. Renewed 1965 (admin. by Alfred Publishing Co.). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Hymn #405 **Oh, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink** Text: William H. Bathurst, 1796-1877.

Hymn #384 **By Grace I'm Saved** Text: Christian L. Scheidt, 1709-61, abr.; tr. composite.

Hymn #379 **Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound** Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, st. 1-3, abr.; John P. Rees, 19th century, st. 4.

RIVER OF LIFE

Certainty & Hope In The Coming Days

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- Jan. 28** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Immanuel: Breaks Bread With Sinners**
- Feb. 4** (9:00 am) Worship (w/ Lord's Supper): **Enduring Joy: Renewed Strength**
- Feb. 4** (10:20 am) Open Forum & Voters' Meeting
- Feb. 5** (10am–4pm) District Mission Board Meeting
- Feb. 6** (9am–2pm) District Mission Board Meeting
- Feb. 8** (10-Noon) RiverKids
- Feb. 8** (4:30pm) Church Council Meeting
- Feb. 11** (9:00 am) Worship: **Enduring Joy: Clarity**
- Feb. 11** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Immanuel: Breaks Bread With Sinners**

CONNECTING WITH RIVER OF LIFE

Videos of recent worship services and audio recordings of weekly sermons are available online. Check out our website or our Facebook page.

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refreshing truth for you