

---

Western Koshkonong Ev. Lutheran Church

2633 Church Street, Cottage Grove, Wisconsin  
(Town of Pleasant Springs)  
Thomas A. Heyn, Pastor

(608) 873-6744

[www.westernkoshkonong.org](http://www.westernkoshkonong.org)

---

☞ WELCOME ☞

Welcome to all in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit! If you are a guest today, we welcome you and invite you to worship with us again. Please sign our guest register.

☞ ORDER OF WORSHIP ☞

OPENING PRAYER

**HYMN 106:**

*On Jordan's Bank the Herald's Cry*

CONFESSION OF SIN

P: Dearly beloved! We have come together in the presence of God our heavenly Father, to thank Him for the many blessings we have received from Him, to give Him the praise He deserves, to hear His holy Word, and to ask for those things that are necessary for our life and salvation. Let us confess our sins with penitent hearts, and obtain forgiveness by His infinite grace and mercy.

**C: Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed the desires of our hearts. We have offended against Your holy law. We have done those things which we should not have done, and we have not done those things which we should have done. Have mercy on us, O Lord! Spare us and restore us, according to the promises You have declared to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. For His sake grant that we may live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Your holy name.**

THE ABSOLUTION

P: The almighty and merciful Lord has granted us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, grace for true repentance and amendment of life, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO (*Hymn 36: All Glory Be to God Alone*)

<b>C: [sing] All glory be to God alone, Forevermore the Highest One, Who doth our sinful race befriend And grace and peace to us extend. Among mankind may His good will All hearts with deep thanksgiving fill.</b>	<b>We praise Thee, God, and Thee we bless; We worship Thee in humbleness; From day to day we glorify Thee, everlasting God on high. Of Thy great glory do we sing, And e'er to Thee our thanks we bring.</b>
--	--

THE SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: [sing, p. 45] **And with your spirit.**

THE COLLECT (*Prayer of the Day*)

**C: Lord God, heavenly Father, we pray that You would so rule and govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that we may seek no other refuge than the promises in Your Word, and thus avoid the sin to which we are inclined by nature. May we always be found among the faithful followers of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him obtain eternal salvation; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.**

C: [sing, p. 45] **Amen.**

READINGS — ELS 1-YEAR LECTIONARY (All readings from the EVANGELICAL HERITAGE VERSION)

*The Old Testament — Malachi 3:1-6*

Look! I am sending my messenger! He will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord, whom you are seeking, will come to his temple! The Messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight, will surely come, says the LORD of Armies.

But who can endure the day when he comes? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like launderers bleach! He will be seated like a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and like silver. They will belong to the LORD and bring him an offering in righteousness.

Judah and Jerusalem's offerings will be pleasing to the LORD as they were in the days of old, in years long ago.

I will approach you to judge you. I will be quick to give testimony against those who practice occult arts, those who commit adultery, those who swear false oaths, those who cheat workers out of their wages, those who wrong a widow and a fatherless child, those who turn away a resident alien—all those who do not fear me, says the LORD of Armies.

Certainly I, the LORD, do not change. That is why you, sons of Jacob, have not come to an end.

*The Epistle — 1 Corinthians 4:1-5*

This is the way a person should think of us: as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. In this connection, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But it is a trivial matter to me if I am evaluated by you or by a day in a human court. Why, I do not even evaluate myself. I do not in fact know of

anything against myself, but I am not justified by this; rather, the one who evaluates me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing ahead of time, until the Lord comes. He will bring to light whatever is hidden in darkness and also reveal the intentions of hearts. Then there will be praise for each person from God.

*The Holy Gospel — Matthew 11:2–10*

While John was in prison, he heard about the things Christ was doing. He sent two of his disciples to ask him, “Are you the Coming One or should we wait for someone else?”

Jesus answered them, “Go, report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not take offense at me.”

As these two were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? No, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you! And he is much more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’”

RESPONSE

P: Here end the Scripture readings.

C: [sing, p. 46] **God be prais-éd for His glad tidings.**

THE CREED

P: Having heard God’s Word, we confess our Christian 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he shall 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.**

**C:** [sing, p. 46] **Amen.**

**HYMN 107:**

*When All the World Was Cursed*

**THE SERMON:** *God's messengers prepare us for the coming Christ.* (Malachi 3:1-6)

**HYMN VERSE**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Your presence,  
and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,  
and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**LORD'S PRAYER** (Hymn 384)

<b>1 Our Father, throned in heav'n above, All glory to Thy name of love. Thy Kingdom come; Thy holy will May earth as well as heav'n fulfill.</b>	<b>2 Give us this day our daily food With all we need of promised good; And freely all our sins remit As we our debtors freely quit.</b>
<b>3 Defend us from the tempter's ways Uphold when tried, when fallen raise: For pow'r is Thine, and boundless reign, In glory evermore, Amen.</b>	

**THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION**

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

**OFFERING**

**HYMN VERSE**

**We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.**

HYMN 503, vv 1–3, 7:

*Lord Jesus, Who Art Come*

THE COLLECT

C: [sing, p. 58] **Amen.**

THE BENEDICTION

P: The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C: [sing, p. 59] **Amen, amen, amen.**

HYMN 102, vv 3, 4:

*Hark, the herald's voice is crying*

CLOSING PRAYER

---

Organist: Darek Hartwig

☞ ANNOUNCEMENTS ☞

Coffee and Refreshments After the service, all are welcome to join us in the basement for refreshments and coffee.

Bible Study Please join us at 11:00 AM for Bible study.

Advent midweek services Please join us at 6:00 PM for a “soup supper” followed at 7:00 PM by a time for devotion and singing of Christmas carols. Everyone is welcome.

Email addresses for church directory We would like to add email addresses to our church directory. If you would prefer that your email address not be published, don't feel obligated to provide it. For those who would like to include your email address, a sign up sheet is on the table in the narthex.

☞ GOD'S WORD TO MEMORIZE ☞

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me.”

— *Malachi 3:1*

From the December Outreach Newsletter —

### **Jesus is the Highway of Rest**

*“A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.’” —Isaiah 40: 3, 5*

Christmas time is upon us again! Is there anyone who sees it as a restful time? With the holiday program at our child’s school, the company Christmas party, the decorating and cooking, and of course, the shopping for the perfect gift, our pace is hectic. By the time Christmas Day arrives we are breathless. That’s ironic, since Christmas is the way to rest, perfect rest, as God purposed it.

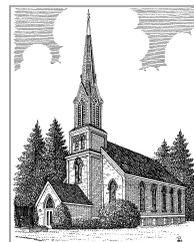
A long time ago God sent a special messenger, John the Baptist, to remind the people of Israel that Christmas is the way to perfect rest. He lived in the Judean desert, dined on odd holiday fare (locusts and wild honey), and spent his time preaching about Christmas rest. The Bible describes him, *“A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.’”*

Considering that we run ourselves breathless, going this way and that, and making little headway in this wilderness, John’s preaching is timely. He preached about the way that brings rest, which he called “a highway for our God.” He said that this way would be revealed for all mankind to see, and it was this: God’s eternal Son was born into the world from the Virgin Mary as the sinless man Jesus Christ. Jesus had come to save all people from their sins, and by doing so, provide the way of perfect rest. John also preached that to catch one’s breath on the “Jesus highway” one needed to prepare.

But don’t worry! This preparation is not another task to be crammed into an already hectic schedule. He was talking about the inner preparation of the heart. John preached about confessing our sinfulness to God (*repent*) and trusting in Jesus. He also preached how this happens, and it is not through our personal willpower to reprioritize. Rather he said that God gives these gifts to our heart through Scripture and baptism for salvation.

Since God promises to work in our heart through these means, it reminds us of something essential. Before we begin each new week’s rat race, we need to pull off at God’s rest stop, the church. We will hear during Christmas and throughout the year that Jesus is the highway to heaven, and that this is not a hectic expressway of personal achievements, but a way of perfect rest. He came into the world to do for us what we could not do for ourselves: he lived a life of perfect devotion to his heavenly Father and then at 33 years old, he gave his holy life over to hell and death at the cross to forgive all sin. This forgiveness is God’s perfect rest for our conscience that is disturbed about all the times we rushed right past him. Best of all, it promises at the finish of our earthly race the eternal rest stop called heaven.

Our mission is to proclaim the gospel of Christ through the pure word and sacraments, witnessing to the lost, and nurturing fellow believers so that they may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. This we do through worship, education, service, and fellowship.



☞ THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE ☛

Today	Coffee and refreshments	10:35 AM
	Bible Study	11:00 AM
Wednesday	Advent Soup Supper	6:00 PM
	Advent worship and Christmas carol sing	7:00 PM
Next	Divine Service	9:30 AM
Sunday	Bible Study	11:00 AM
Christmas Eve	Song Service	5:30 PM
Christmas Day	Song Service	9:30 AM

☛ -----

**- PASTORAL INFORMATION -**

Please fill out info, detach, and put in offering plate or give to pastor

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New to area                           | <input type="checkbox"/> New Address / Phone Number |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wish Pastor to Call                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Illness in Family          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Want Offering Envelopes               | <input type="checkbox"/> New Baby in Family         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in Volunteer Opportunities |   |