

# CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2023



**A community praising God, growing in Christ,  
and joyfully serving others.**

*Welcome. We are so happy to have you with us! If you are visiting us for the first time, please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the offering plate which is in front of the baptismal font. The last six pews on the left side of the church are reserved for those who are more comfortable wearing face masks and some social distancing. For the rest of the left side and the right side of the church, masks are optional. Masks are available if you need one. Thank you for your consideration.*

## Choir Acclamation

*Christ is Coming*

### Processional

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

*H 66*

### Opening Hymn

*Please stand as you are able.*

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.*

### *Priest and People*

*Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### The Collect

*Celebrant The Lord be with you.*

*People And also with you.*

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

## **The Lessons**

### **First Reading**

**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

### **A reading from the Prophet Isaiah**

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.  
For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
 my whole being shall exult in my God;  
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
 as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
 For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
 so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
 to spring up before all the nations.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
*People Thanks be to God.*

## Psalm 126

### RCL Advent 3B Psalm 126

based on "St. Stephen" (H82-73)



- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
 then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*  
 and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, \*  
 "The LORD has done great things for them."

[ANT.]

- 5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, \*  
like the watercourses of the Negev.
- 6 Those who sowed with tears \*  
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves. [ANT.]

## **The Epistle**

## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

A reading from the Book of Thessalonians

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

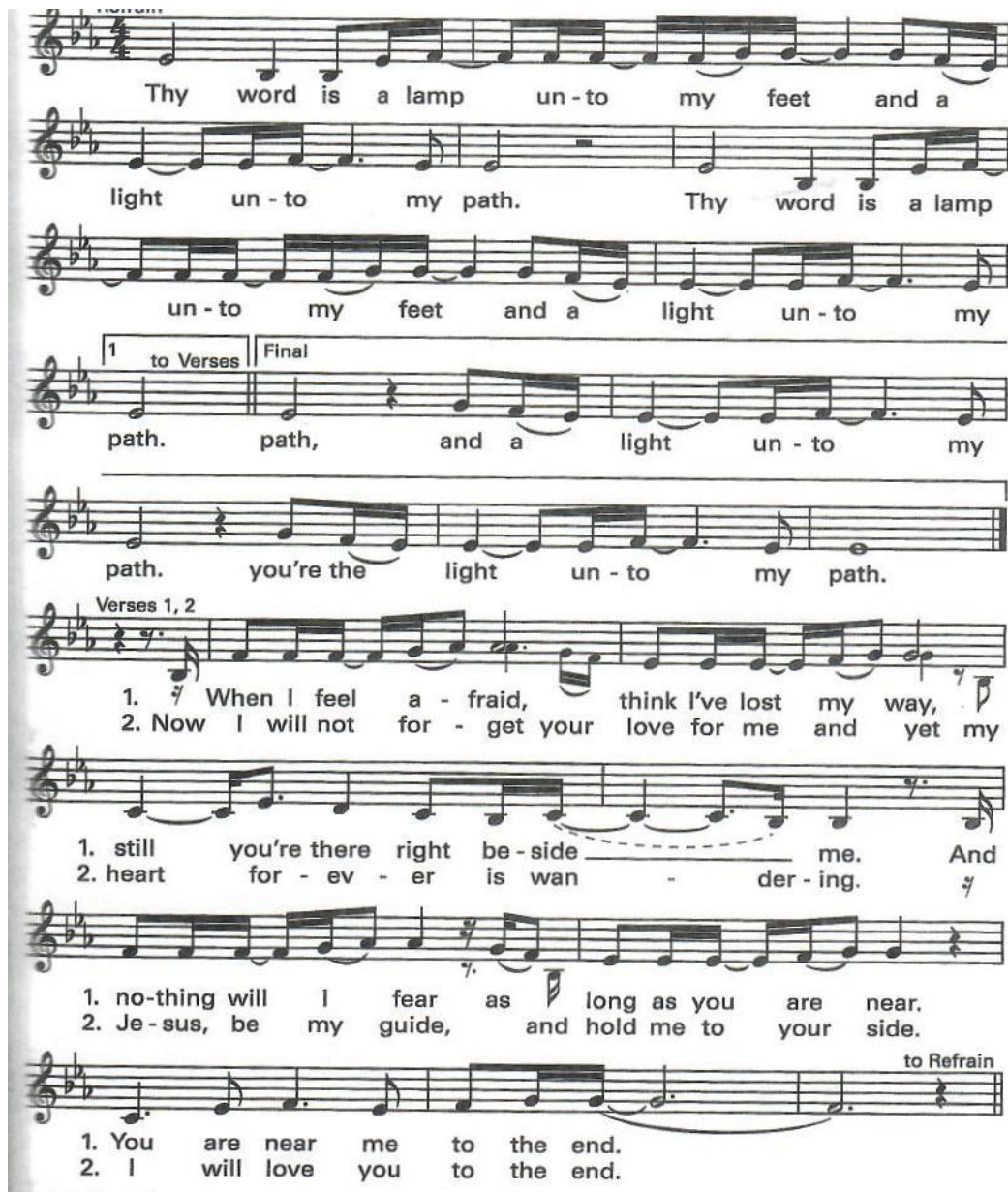
May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

***People        Thanks be to God***

# Sequence Hymn

## *Thy Word is a Lamp*



Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a  
light un-to my path. Thy word is a lamp  
un-to my feet and a light un-to my  
path. path, and a light un-to my  
path. you're the light un-to my path.

Verses 1, 2

1. When I feel a - fraid, think I've lost my way,  
2. Now I will not for - get your love for me and yet my

1. still you're there right be - side me. And  
2. heart for - ev - er is wan - der - ing.

1. no-thing will I fear as long as you are near.  
2. Je - sus, be my guide, and hold me to your side.

to Refrain

1. You are near me to the end.  
2. I will love you to the end.

## **The Gospel**

**John 1:6-8,19-28**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

***People***      ***Glory to you, Lord Christ***

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

***People***      ***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

**Homily**

**The Rev. Annette Mayer**

## The Nicene Creed

*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, 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 THE PEOPLE

*Celebrant:* Holy God, you have spoken through your prophets and called us to make straight the way of the Lord: Visit us with your grace to cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations, as we pray: God has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

*Deacon:* O God of peace, you have called your people to rejoice always and to pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances: Sanctify your Church and her members that our spirit and soul and body may be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*



God of Justice and Mercy, you love justice and hate wrongdoing: Guide our leaders and all in authority, that they may bring good news to the oppressed, bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, repair the ruined cities and cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. We pray for those in the military and for our first responders, especially Alex, Anthony, Frank, Edilio, Sam, Michael, Alexander, Jacob, Will and their families. Are there others?

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*

God of Compassion, look upon the needs of the world: Proclaim the year of your favor, and clothe your children with the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness.

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*

God of Grace, be among us in this community that we may be a people whom you have sanctified to testify to the light and to become oaks of righteousness.

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*

Receive our prayers for those for whom we pray in intercession, especially for Chelsea, Georgianna, Marilyn, Chuck, Pam, Bill, Ed, Steven, Michael, Rich, Patrick, Annette, Christopher, Lorna, Cathy, Pura, Pam, Joe, Laura, Michael, Jude, Lois, Jack, Wayne, Chris, Michael, Tom, Kim, Derek, Barb, Rich, Sherrill, Sandy and Kathleen. Are there others?

Hear our gratitude as we offer our thanksgivings, especially for . . .

Comfort all who mourn, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit, as we remember before you those who have died.

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*

We pray for those celebrating birthdays, especially Eric Anderson. Are there others?

God has done great things for us,  
*and we are glad indeed.*

*Celebrant:* Loving God, your Advent people look expectantly for the coming of Christ: As the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, nurture our prayers and the thoughts of our hearts, that we may receive with joy the goodness of your strength and live in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

## **Confession of Sin**

*Deacon*            *Let us confess our sins to God.*

*Minister and People*

*God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.*

*Celebrant*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

## **The Peace**

Celebrant      The Peace of the Lord be always with you.  
People          *And also with you.*

## **Announcements**

## **Birthdays and Anniversaries**

### **Birthday Prayer**

*Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

### **Anniversary Prayer**

*O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## The Offertory

Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.

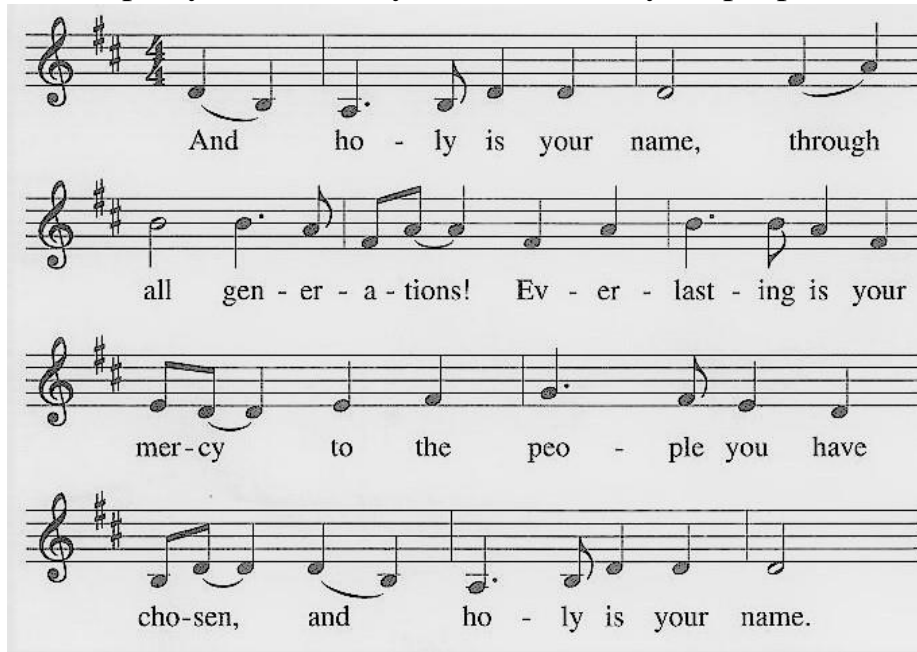
### Offertory Anthem

### *Holy Is Your Name*

*David Haas*

### Choir on verses

- v. 1** My soul is filled with joy as I sing to God my savior; you have looked upon your servant, you have visited your people.



- v.2** I am lowly as a child, but I know from this day forward that my name will be remembered, for all will call me blessed.

### **Refrain**

- v.3** I proclaim the pow'r of God, you do marvels for your servants; though you scatter the proud hearted, and destroy the might of princes.

### **Refrain**

**v.4** To the hungry you give food, send the rich away empty.  
In your mercy you are mindful of the people you have chosen  
**Refrain**

**v.5** In your love you now fulfill what you promised to your people.  
I will praise you, Lord, my savior, everlasting is your mercy.  
**Refrain.**

*Celebrant* All things come of thee, O Lord.

*People* ***And of thine own have we given thee.***

### **The Holy Communion**

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* ***And also with you.***

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

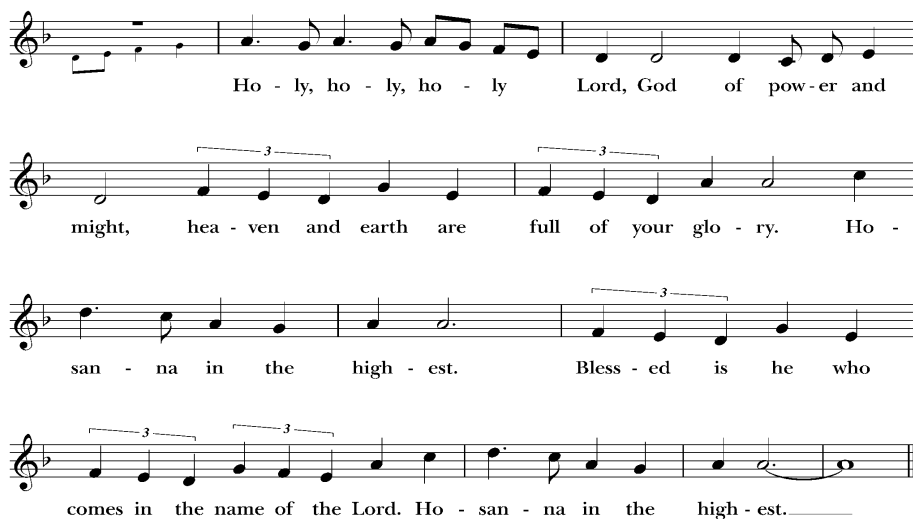
*People* ***We lift them to the Lord***

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* ***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

### *Celebrant and People*

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:



### *The Celebrant continues*

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made. In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*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*

## **The Breaking of the Bread**

Celebrant     Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
People        *Therefore let us keep the Feast.*

O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a -

way the sins of the world, have mer - cy up -

on us. O Lamb of God, that

ta - kest a - way the sins of the world, have

mer - cy up - on us. O Lamb of

God, that ta - kest a - way the sins of the

world, grant us thy peace.



## **Invitation to Communion**

*Celebrant*    The Gifts of God for the People of God.  
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

## **Communion Anthem**

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming*

## **Post-Communion Prayer**

*Celebrant*    *Let us pray.*

*Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Deacon: In the name of Christ, and of this congregation, we send you forth bearing the body and blood of Christ to those who cannot be with us today.....Take God's holy Word, the prayers of this congregation, and this holy food for holy people.*

*People: We who are many are one Body because we share one bread, one cup.*

## **Blessing and Dismissal**

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Deacon      Let us bless the Lord  
*People      Thanks be to God.*

| <i><b>This month at Transfiguration:</b></i> |  |            |         |
|--|--|------------|---------|
| 12/17  | Adult Formation                                  | Leach Hall | 9:00am  |
|  | Third Sunday of Advent                           | Church/FB  | 10:00am |
|  | “Greening of the Church”                         |            |         |
|  | Children’s Formation                             |            | 11:15am |
|  | Coffee Hour hosted by CYMC                       | Leach Hall | 11:15am |
| 12/19  | Silent Prayer                                    | Church     | 5:30pm  |
| 12/21  | Service for the Longest Nite<br>(Blue Christmas) | Church     | 7:00pm  |
| 12/24  | Fourth Sunday of Advent                          | Church     | 10:00am |
|  | No Coffee Hour                                   |            |         |
| 12/24  | Christmas Eve                                    | Church     | 5:00pm  |
| 12/25  | Christmas Day                                    | Church     | 10:00am |
|  | No Coffee Hour                                   |            |         |

## **SPECIAL INTENTIONS**

***THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE REMAIN ON OUR PERMANENT PRAYER LIST AS THEIR NEED FOR PRAYER IS LONG-TERM RATHER THAN ACUTE:*** Don, Roberta, Marilyn, Jim, Mary, Emily, Meghan, Jan, Chelsea, Bob, Mark, Michael, John, Bob, Billy, Natasha, Laura, Cindy, Pam, Katy, Lou, Nick, Brendan, Bob, Debra, Janet, Jacelyn, Sharon, Gabe, Chuck, Nancy, Mike, Tom, Betty, Carol, David, James, Kathy, Bill, John, Rosemary, Roberta, Earl, Patricia, Anita.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- We are celebrating another successful Revive Christmas Basket program. Thank you to everyone who supported this very worthwhile Outreach Ministry, either by taking a family or giving a monetary donation. As a Parish, Transfiguration gave 40 families a very Merry Christmas. On December 1 the Revive truck picked up our 94 boxes. A special thank you to Jan Whalen and John Carroll for helping load the boxes on the truck.
- **The Giving Tree** - This year's annual Giving Tree collection will benefit The Jones Center in Chicago Heights, whose mission is to strengthen family ties, emphasize the worth of God's children (all persons), and answer a community need. The Jones Center has been operating since 1917 and offers a rich variety of support programs and activities for all ages. For children, they have an after-school program, tutoring and mentoring, and assorted holiday events and parties, to name a few. Among their offerings for adults and seniors, there are health and wellness classes and workshops, social events, immigration services and resource referrals. They also operate a food pantry, offer a weekly free lunch program for those in need, and much more. We want to help them with a few of their wish list items: socks (all ages); \$10-\$15 fast food gift cards; small toys (ages 6-11); and jars of peanut butter and jelly. Everyone is invited to participate. Kindly purchase one or more of the wishlist items (new and unopened/tags-on) and place them on or under the Giving Tree. We will be collecting all the way through Christmas. Thank you for your help!

- **Bulletin Announcement for Alternative Christmas Gift Market:**  
**Are you thinking about Christmas shopping?** The Alternative Christmas Gift Market enables you to contribute to a charitable organization. An alternative Christmas gift to friends and family will benefit those in need. Your alternative gift to another will extend the true meaning of Christmas and ensure spiritual action after Christmas has passed and other gifts are forgotten or discarded. For each donation made, you will receive a decorative card indicating the name of the organization to which you have donated. This card can then be given as your alternative Christmas gift. **The following organizations will be included this year: The Jones Center, AUSA (American Veterans Service Dog Academy), Ukrainian Relief, The Bakery in La Transfiguracion, and our Venezuelan Families. Order forms are in church or on line.**
- **SAVE THE DATE!** Please mark your calendar for Sunday, February 4th, 2024 for Annette's retirement and farewell party. We will be celebrating at Francesca's Oak Lawn, from 12 to 3:30 PM. Children over 10 are welcome. More details and formal invitations to follow. Hope to see everyone there!

**Note:** You may continue to submit your pledges and offerings by mail or use the credit card payment option [Transfigpalos.breezechms.com](https://Transfigpalos.breezechms.com), or use the text giving option by texting your \$amount plus the word "pledge" to 708-394-7474. There are no Zelle payments.