

Welcome to
St. Peter's Lutheran Church



Third Sunday of Advent

*December 17, 2023
10:15 Worship Service*

Pastor Brandon Johns

BELL RINGING**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Let us pray. Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow.
You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as
this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us
strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises.
Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.
Amen.

The first three candles are lit as the litany begins.

ADVENT LITANY: A Little Child Shall Lead Them

*(We sing the indented lines together. For the first verse we begin after it is
played through once. Afterwards, we sing after a chord is played.)*

**Now in God's time, our Lord arrives.
We put our faith in him.
Our ev'ry thought and deed and word
Become for us a hymn.**

The Lord Jesus came when the time was right to save us from all evil.

**With faith in him, we know that all things
will work together for our good.**

We were once under the law of sin,
But we have been redeemed by Christ.

**When we were lost, we disobeyed
The law our Lord decreed.
Found by the Lord, our God and King,
We from all sin are freed.**

Jesus paved the way for us to follow in and take each step by faith.

In good times and bad, we put our trust in him.

By his birth and perfect life,
our Savior took the place that we deserved upon the cross.
His sacrifice for us was prepared by God from the beginning.

**Jesus was born and lived perfectly.
He said he came to save.
In faith we trust eternally.
His holiness he gave.**

When Jesus was born to us, he provided a path to paradise.
Heaven is ours because of him.

**Guided by Christ, we go to him
To ev'ry place and thing
That points the way to hope in Christ,
As saints and angels sing.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(Children are invited at this time for the Children's Message and to remain up front during this Hanging of the Greens portion to assist in hanging chrismons on the Christmas trees.)

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

CHRISMONS

The Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40: 3-5

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

The Reflection

The Placement of Chrismons

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

B. C. Dockery

played by Lily Johns & Roberta Domhoff - flute duet

The Blessing

Stir up your might and come to save us.
Reveal your face to us, and give us life.

The Prayer

Let us pray. Holy are you, God of power and glory: You became flesh and lived among us. As we present these chrismons on our Christmas tree into your holy house, open our hearts and eyes to receive the gift of faith. Help us be stronger witnesses of your Word, inspired by the arts and music, so that the world may know your perfect love. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The 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;

²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³to 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.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For 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.

⁹Their 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.

¹⁰I 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.

¹¹For 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.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

PSALM 126 (*Read Responsively*)

¹When 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.**

Then they said among the nations,

“The Lord has done great things for them.”

³The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May 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. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(The assembly stands, if able, to welcome the gospel.)



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

The holy gospel according to John, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the Holy Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Love's Pure Light Opener
Silent Night! Holy Night!
 Birthday of a King

Let There Be Light
 We Three Kings
My Soul Magnifies the Lord
Angels, from the Realms of Glory

 Blessings
Tell the World

Shepherds Quake Underscore

 Infant Holy Medley
 Silent Night! Holy Night!
 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
 We Will Glorify

What Christmas Really Means
 Birthday of a King

Tell of His Wonder Finale
 Silent Night! Holy Night!
Jesus, What a Wonderful Child
Go, Tell it on the Mountain

CANTATA CHOIR

Soprano – Marla Bird, Luann Brosius, Bev Critchlow, Teresa O'Malley
Alto – Karen Ferrari, Christine Johns, Bea King, Robin Van Dyke
Tenor – Pastor Beverly Banyay, Ted Lindgren, Adam Price, Marge Wearing
Bass – Charlie Flach, Glenn Fulghum, Mark Acre
 Soloist – Christine Johns
 Director – Roberta Domhoff
 Pianist – Marlene Domhoff
 Percussion – Nazeer Elahee
 Narrator –Patti Flach

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration. *A brief silence.*

Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent.

The response for each petition is:

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

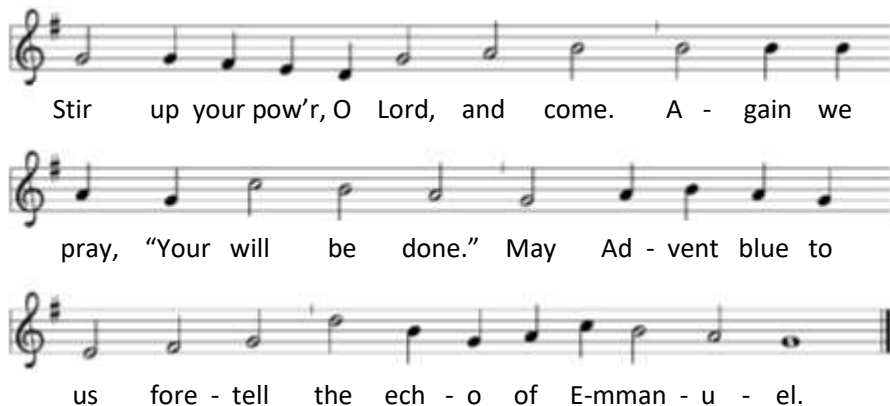
PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

Our offerings are made processional, which means dropped into the plates located near the entrances to the nave.

CANTICLE OF ADVENT ANTICIPATION *(to the tune of "The Doxology")*



Stir up your pow'r, O Lord, and come. A - gain we
pray, "Your will be done." May Ad - vent blue to
us fore - tell the ech - o of E-mman - u - el.

OFFERING PRAYER

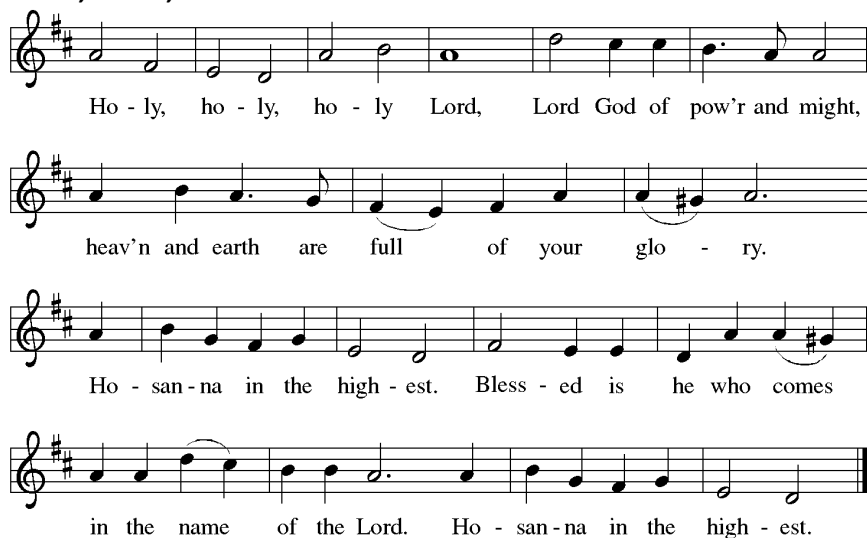
Let us pray. Eternal God, **you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and care. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE PROPER PREFACE (*It is indeed right... join their unending hymn*)

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup,
we remember your Word dwelling among us full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us.
Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people. Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God
incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

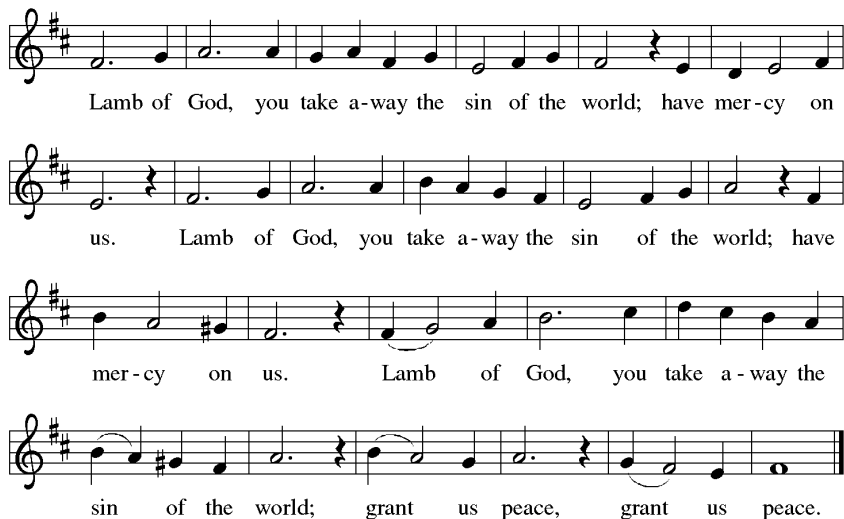
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and help us to pray:

**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**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, the foretaste of the heavenly feast to come.

LAMB OF GOD *(sung as the distribution of the sacrament begins)*



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

The Sacrament will be offered with these words:

The body of Christ, given for you. *And* The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Optional responses **Amen or Thanks be to God or Renew us, Lord**

BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your
mercy, coming among us by the real presence of Christ. As we wait
for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain and
strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised
future, the loving reign of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

NATIVITY

The Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:20b-24

An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said,
“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for
the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son

and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “God is with us.”

²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.

The Reflection

The Blessing

Stir up your might and come to save us.

Reveal your face to us, and give us life.

The Placement of the Nativity

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming sung by all

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing from ten-der stem hath in
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.

The Prayer

Let us pray. Holy are you, O God of glory: With Mary and Joseph, with the angels and shepherds, and with the animals of the stable we await the birth of your Son, given for us. As we present this nativity scene into your holy house, we pray that you would open our hearts and eyes to repent and prepare to receive the gift of salvation, our Savior and Lord, the promised Messiah, Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

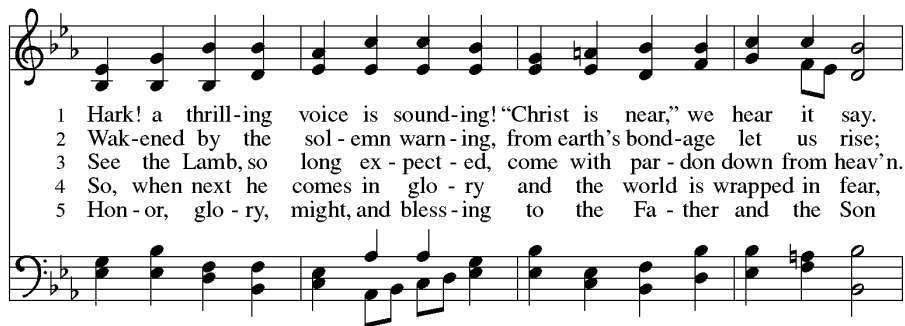
BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

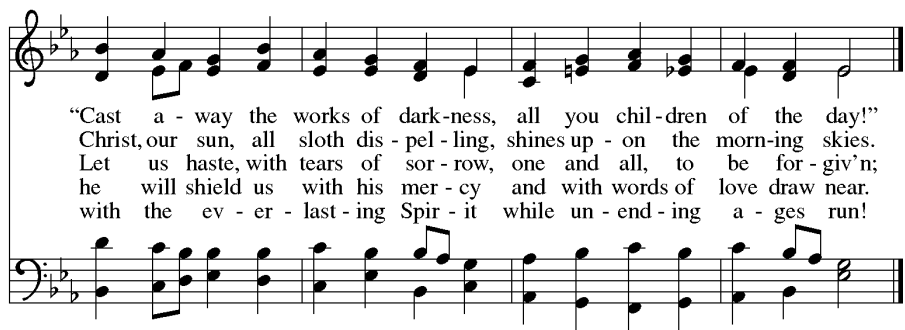
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding



1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn-ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don down from heav'n.
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is wrapped in fear,
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless-ing to the Fa - ther and the Son



"Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!"
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;
he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878
Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

SHARING FOR SERVING: Mission Notices and Birthdays

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Oh, Come, Emmanuel

Ellen Jane Lorenz

AFTER CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Annual Christmas cookie sale - Cookies are provided today by Lutherlyn camper families for fellowship time. If you enjoy the sweet, festive treats, then you are invited to purchase more to take home in order to help defray the cost of camp for our youth. Christmas tins will be available to fill.

*Today's Altar Flowers
are given by
Karen Ferrari
in loving memory of
Michael Ferrari*

*The Eternal Candle
is presented by
Barb Graham in
memory of her husband
Harold Graham*

Our Monthly Benevolent Cause will support
Bethesda Lutheran Services
To support this cause, please mark the *Other* line on your envelope.

Prayers Have Been Requested Recently for the Following

Cole Barkley	Helen Barto	Luke Clawson
Bev Banyay	Mark Phillips	Karen Marburger
Audrey Smith	Joan Gump	Family of Pat Wagoner

Also, please remember those who are in need of long-term prayer support, whose names and concerns are kept on a prayer list, found on the reading table in Luther Hall as well as the back of the church.

Please hold these members and friends of St. Peter's in your prayers.

"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." James 5

St. Peter's Upcoming Events:		
Mon – Fri	4-6 pm	After School
Mon. Dec. 18 th	7 pm	Boy Scouts
	7 pm	Sowers
Wed. Dec. 20 th	7 pm	Choir Practice
Thur. Dec. 21 st	9 am	Quilters Group
	6:30 pm	Bible Study Christmas Party
Fri. Dec. 22 nd	5:30 pm	Christmas Dinner and Caroling

We are having Sunday School and Worship at our regular times next Sunday morning as we celebrate Advent 4 before shifting to Christmas Eve!



ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*is a congregation of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).*

Pastor	The Rev. Brandon Johns
Music Director and Organist	Marlene Domhoff
Sexton	Joe Ludwick
Secretary	Kimberly Peaco
Acolyte	Elsa Plank
Assisting Minister	Robin Van Dyke
Bell Ringer	Joe Ludwick
Greeters	Dan & Jen Erin
Lector	Robin Plank
Nursery	Marge Lindgren
Tech Support	Adam Price
Ushers	Dan & Casey Guerriero

Sunday School Christmas Program – will be held tonight at 6:30 pm.

Refreshments will be served in Luther Hall after the presentation of the Nativity story. Participants in the program, please plan to arrive between 5:30-6 pm for costumes. Littlest ones should plan to arrive at 6 pm.

Christmas Dinner and Caroling – All are invited to eat together and then sing carols throughout Evans City on December 22nd starting at 5:30 pm.

Christmas Luminaries at St. Peter's - Once again St. Peter's will light your way on Christmas Eve. If you would like to sponsor a luminary, please fill out a form or you can email or call the church with your request. Donations of \$5 will be accepted and will benefit Batten disease research and support.

Christmas Eve - We offer two candlelight communion services at St. Peter's on Christmas Eve. One will be held at 7 pm, which we call our family service because it has our Christmas Eve Children's Message and is slightly briefer for younger attention spans. At 10 pm is our traditional, full liturgy service. Make plans to join us as we celebrate the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem.

The 2024 offering envelopes - will soon be available in your mailboxes. The envelopes are numbered and dated for 2024 so please wait to use them until the new year! Friendly reminder: to keep your membership active, a record of contribution and communion in this calendar year or the preceding year is necessary. It's like being on the voting member Nice List!

Welcome to St. Peter's

We are thankful that you are here to worship with other Christians today. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray that your worship experience will fill you with the grace and mercy of Almighty God through his Holy Spirit.



Newcomers and Guests

New to St. Peter's? Please sign the GUEST REGISTER behind the last pew. A handicapped accessible RESTROOM is located near the Van Buren Street entrance (through Luther Hall, past the kitchen, restroom is on the left in the foyer). You are welcome to commune with us if that is your practice.

Nursery - is staffed by a volunteer and available for children and caregivers. Exit the rear of the nave and follow the steps to the basement, the nursery is on the left. The service can be heard through an intercom in the nursery. There are activity bags in the back of the sanctuary and children's bulletins geared for children ages 5 and up are at the nave entrances.

Staying in Touch:

Our church office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am until noon. Pastor is often there also or by appointment. Please feel free to contact us by phone or internet:

Church Office: 724.538.5810

Church Email: stpeterslcec@zoominternet.net

Pastor Email: rev.brandonjohns@gmail.com

Church Website: www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org

Church Facebook Page: St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Sunday Bulletin Deadline: Wednesdays at 10:00 AM.

Newsletter deadline: Third Sunday of the Month

RECOGNITION OF ARTISTS:

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