Welcome to St. Peter's Lutheran Church



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023 10:15 Worship Service

Pastor Brandon Johns

BELL RINGING

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Let us pray. Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. **Amen.**

Four candles are lit as the litany begins.

ADVENT LITANY: A Little Child Shall Lead Them

Jesus, God's Son, descended down From heaven to earth alone. He reunites us with our God. Lor, for our sins alone.

In the infant Jesus, God was made flesh, and become one of us. He knows our human condition and joins with us in our experiences.

Both human and divine, our Savior is both our friend and our redeemer.

He sympathizes with us and releases us from our bondage to sin, death, and the devil.

Our Friend for life, Christ is our King.
His dwelling place shall be
Within our hearts forevermore.
His manger-beds are we.

God knew us before we were born and knit us together in our mother's womb.

Our names are written on the palms of his hands.

Our Savior knows us more than we know ourselves.

We give to him our all.

Dear Jesus, come. Show us, we pray.
The truth, the life, the way.
Stay close to us each morning new
Until the Final Day.

Jesus is with us wherever we go. **Let us greet him with joy.**Jesus draws close to us.

Let us come near to him this season and always.

Lift up your voice. The Lord is here Mid swaddling clothes and straw. We welcome him; we praise his name With thankfulness and awe.

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

POINSETTIAS

The Scripture Reading: Isaiah 35: 1-2a

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² 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.

The Reflection

The Blessing

Stir up your might and come to save us.

Reveal your face to us, and give us life.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we offer to you these items that will beautify our worship space, which have been inspired by our love for you. Accept our grateful thanksgiving for what you have given us in the Word made flesh, and bless our coming Christmas worship when we will once again announce the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

CANDLES AND LIGHTS

The Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60: 1-3

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

The Reflection

The Placement of Candles and Lights

O Holy Night played by James Thomas on the French Horn

The Blessing

Stir up your might and come to save us.

Reveal your face to us, and give us life.

Let us pray.

Holy are you, God of power and glory: You alone can bring light and hope to a desperate planet. As we present these candles and lights into your holy house, open our eyes to see your eternal gift of hope that helps each of us see that all our tomorrows are held in your arms through the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

And also with you!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

CHOIR ANTHEM Christmas Star Medley Tom Fettke

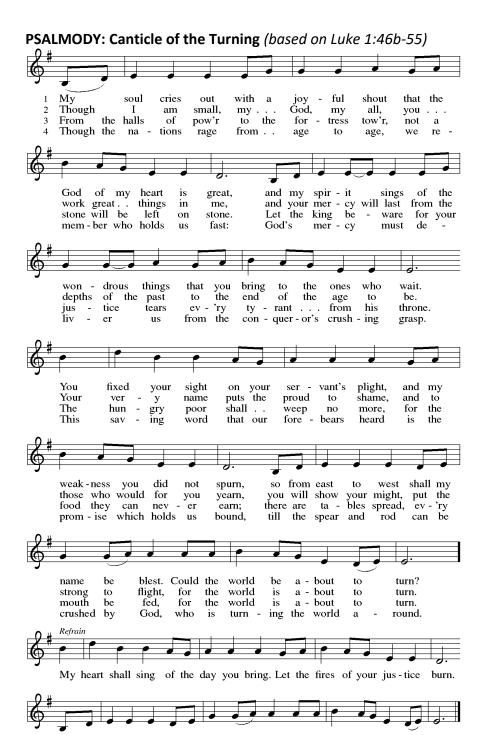
FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

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





Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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





GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

The holy gospel according to Luke, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

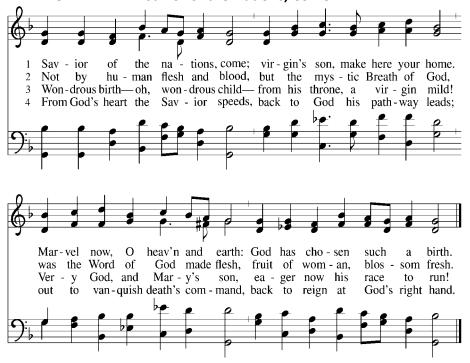
²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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

SERMON





- 5 Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light. Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.
- 6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word! To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524 Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

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 and the Son, 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 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*.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world.

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.**

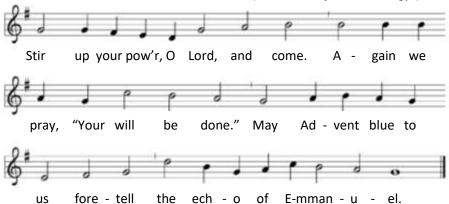
PEACE

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

OFFERING

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

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



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









EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, 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.

Amen. 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.

Amen. 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.**

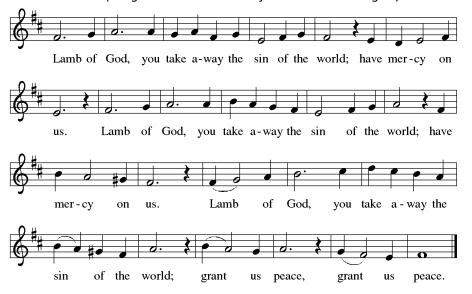
LORD'S PRAYER

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)



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.**

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 \pm give you peace. **Amen.**



SHARING FOR SERVING: Mission Notices and Birthdays

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE Procession of the Magi Frederick C. Erhardt

Today's Altar Flowers are in memory of Lydia Grace given by Neal & Beverly Critchlow Today's Altar Flowers are also given by Carol Kerr in memory of Edward Kerr



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 Gumpp Raquel Barron
Tony Platek Jenny Mashuda Jane Mashuda

Rick Reifenstein Lynn Schweinegruber The family of Emma Lou Knauff

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

"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." James 5:16

St. Peter's Upcoming Events:		
Sun. Dec. 24 th	7 pm	Worship Service
	10 pm	Worship Service
Mon. Dec. 25 th	Office Closed	Joyous Christmas
Sun. Dec. 31st	No Sunday School	
	10:15 am	Lessons and Carols
Mon. Jan. 1 st	Office Closed	Happy New Year

<u>Thank You!</u> – to everyone who shared God's love by providing gifts to people through Glade Run and our Angel Tree this year!

<u>The 2024 offering envelopes</u> - Are in your mailboxes. The envelopes are numbered and dated for 2024 so please wait to use them until then!

<u>Christmas Eve</u> - 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.

<u>Pot Luck Epiphany Luncheon</u> - Our annual Advent Friend reveal and Epiphany luncheon will be held on Sunday, January 7th immediately following worship. EVERYONE is invited to bring a dish to share and listen to stories of those who participated in Advent Friends 2023.

<u>Nursery</u> – With the nursery being back to regular use, we could use some older children and teens as assistants. Please let Adam Price or Beverly Barkley know if you're interested. Thank you!

<u>Sign Ups</u> – The flower chart, eternal candle, and newsletter sponsorship sheet as well as a sign up for After Worship Fellowship are available on the table between the nave and Luther Hall. Please consider serving in one or more of these ways. Thank you!



ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

The Rev. Brandon Johns **Pastor** Marlene Domhoff Music Director and Organist Office Secretaries Kimberly Peaco Sexton Joe Ludwik Myka Plank Acolyte **Assisting Minister** Troy Barkley Bell Ringer Adam Price Tom & Cindy Ayers Greeters Lector **Becky Rengers** Nursery Melissa Bonicky **Tech Support** Heidi Beahm Ushers Adam Price & Rob Burn

Christmas Poinsettias Sponsorship



In Loving Memory Of

- * Ron & Ken Crider and Ron & Dan Budisky by Eilene Budisky
- * Bob Domhoff, Charles M. & Mabel A. Peters, and Lynette Wingard by Marlene Domhoff
- * All of my family that have gone to Heaven by Roberta Domhoff
- * Harold Graham by Barb Graham
- * Ruth & John Watson and Frank & Freda Merrison by Debbie & Jim Merrison
- * Jerome, Pam, Doris & Howard Brittner, Delores & Herb Brittner, Ruth & Claire Hoffman, David & Ed Smith, and Lorena & David Mashuda by Teresa O'Malley
- * Parents Martin & Jennie Marburger, Richard Reifenstein, Marion Reifenstein Schultz, Emil Schultz by Rick & Rita Reifenstein
- * Loved ones by Becky Rengers
- * Bryon Schmidt and Beryl George by Inez and Dennis Schmidt
- * Thomas Lee Wearing by Garrie & Marge Wearing
- * Paul Wingard and Lynette Wingard by Lucille Wingard

In Honor Of

- * My family by Kay Burr
- * Marlene Domhoff by Roberta Domhoff
- * Our son Chuck and daughter Kate by Charlie & Patti Flach
- Our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren by Debbie & Jim Merrison
- * My family, friends and neighbors by Teresa O'Malley
- Our grandchildren Emily, Morgan, Riley, Luke and Reagen by Rick & Rita Reifenstein
- * Kurt and Todd Wearing by Garrie & Marge Wearing
- * Trevor, Tucker and Patricia VanDyke by Robin VanDyke

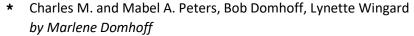
To The Glory of God

* By Pastor & Christine Johns

Christmas Luminary Sponsorship

In Loving Memory Of

- Our fathers Rege Rengers, David Piper, John Bonicky, our grandparents and great grandparents, and Donald F. Mars, Jr. by the Bonicky Family
- * Lee and Genevieve Brosius, Paul Wingard and Lynette Wingard by Luann and Perry Brosius



- Bob Domhoff, my grandparents, my Uncle Paul and cousin Lynette Wingard by Roberta Domhoff
- * Tucker by the Erins
- * Our Loved Ones by Walter and Amy Grigorovich
- * Ted and Flossie Lindgren, Francis and Verma Galarneau, and Jack Lindgren by Ted and Marge Lindgren
- Jerome, David and Ed Smith, Ruth and Claire Hoffman, Delores and Herb Brittner, Doris and Howard Brittner, Lorena and David Mashuda and Pam by Teresa O'Malley
- * Our Loved Ones by Marsha and Don Reedy
- * Rege Rengers, David Piper, Dot and Joe Marburger, Helen and Jerry Rengers, Walter and Dee La Sota and Frank Piper by Becky Rengers
- * Bryon Schmidt, Beryl George and Alice Rylands by Dennis and Inez Schmidt
- * Dot Marburger and David VanDyke by Robin VanDyke
- * Tom Wearing by Garrie and Marge Wearing

To The Glory of God

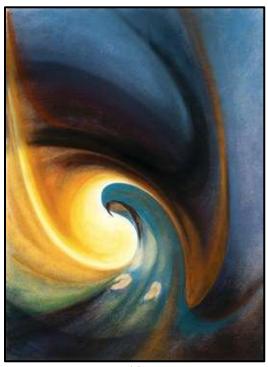
- * Debbie and Jim Merrison
- * Gloria Deo! by Teresa O'Malley
- * Dennis and Inez Schmidt





In Honor Of

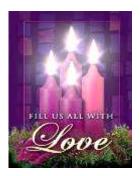
- * Our mothers, Becky Rengers and Rose Bonicky by the Bonicky Family
- * Lucille Wingard, Pam, Paige and Paul Volz, Mark and Elaine Brosius and Ava Brosius by Luann and Perry Brosius
- * My Mom, Marlene, for her many years that she has dedicated her talents to our church by Roberta Domhoff
- * Joseph Ludwik and JoAn Fulmer by Walter and Amy Grigorovich
- * Ella Jason by Mary Kay Knox
- * Mike Galarneau by Ted and Marge Lindgren
- * My sons, grandchildren, Mike, our families and friends by Teresa O'Malley
- * Our grandchildren Eden and Myla Peffer, Emersyn and Elliot Walker by Vic and Brenda Peffer
- * Ella Jason by Lori Rasp
- * Our Family by Marsha and Don Reedy
- Kurt Wearing and the Todd Wearing Family by Garrie and Marge Wearing



The Incarnation by Sister Mary Stephen

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: style="style-type: style-type: s

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:

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #24133.New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.