The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve Traditional Service of Holy Communion



St. Peter's Lutheran Church

December 24, 2024 10 PM Worship Service

Pastor Brandon Johns

Welcome to worship on this holy night!

Whether this is your first time in worship at St. Peter's or you have been here for your lifetime, all of us, in many ways, are like Joseph. For it is Joseph who is returning to the place of his relatives, so the trip to Bethlehem is like a home-coming for him. Any time we find ourselves in worship within the house of the Lord, it is a homecoming, since it is with God our Father that we belong. There is always room for you here in worship, as well as, among the fellowship of St. Peter's, and within the loving heart of God, whose Incarnation we celebrate tonight and live out daily.

Theme of the Day:

In so many ways, down through the ages, God tried to show us that He loved us and cared for us. God tried to speak to us in various ways, to reach us through various means. Now God has come to us as the babe of Bethlehem. Here is a gift we did not know how to ask for, much less graciously receive. Yet here is the great gift, the magnificent act of grace, that God knew we needed. Immanuel. God in the flesh. Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, born among us. Here is our great joy!

Communion of the Faithful

Baptized Christians who have been instructed in the practice of holy communion and have previously communed are invited to share with us the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Real Presence of Christ is in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sin. Young children and anyone else who do not yet commune are invited to receive a blessing.

You are invited forward to the rail to gather around the Lord's Table for communion or blessing. Additionally, we believe that Jesus extends his table of hospitality to all those who desire to experience his Real Presence in as many barrier-free ways as possible. If you are unable to come forward but would like communion from the pastor, let someone know and Pastor will bring communion to you. If you prefer, there are also individually wrapped host and cups that are available in a basket on the tables at the entrances to the nave. Please return the packaging to the container on the same entrance table.

**SILENT PRAYER (As you prepare for worship, you are invited to pray in this way:) + Gracious God, from ancient times the promise of your salvation has sustained your people with hope. With Mary and Joseph, teach us to treasure in our hearts the birth of Jesus, and with shepherds and angels, lead us to praise his holy name. Amen.

PRELUDE

BELL RINGING

PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

On the twenty-fifth day of December...

Unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in His own image...

Several thousand years after the flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant...

Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt...

Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as King; in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel...

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome...

The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus, the whole world being at peace...

JESUS CHRIST

eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and nine months having passed since his conception,
was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.

Now is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

OPENING HYMN: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear



GATHERING DIALOGUE

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

And also with you!



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. *This is the Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God!**

PSALMODY: Away in A Manger

Away in a manger no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. *This is the Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God!**



GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

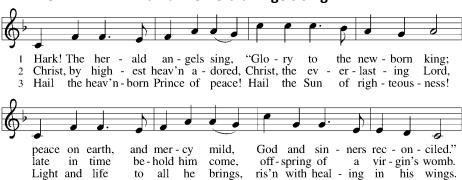
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing





Joy - ful, all you na-tions, rise; Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Mild he lays his glo - ry by, join the tri-umph of the skies Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty! born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"

Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her-ald an-gels sing, "Glo-ry to the new-born king!"



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 THE CHURCH

In the Word made flesh, we see God's love for us and for all people. Trusting in God's saving power, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all those who long for peace and good will.

For the spread of the joyful news that the Savior has come, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring joy to the world.

For the renewal of the whole Christian Church in unity, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring renewal to your Church.

For the increase of peace among the nations of the world, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring peace on earth.

For the light of Christmas to shine on us all, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring us the light of your truth.

For those who are lonely, grieving, forgotten, or abused, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring them comfort and aid.

For the poor and those who find no room in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring help to the poor.

For the sick and the homebound, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring them comfort and healing.

For Mary, the mother of our Lord, for Joseph, his guardian, and for all those who have died in the faith, let us pray to the Lord.

Christ the Lord, bring them to eternal life.

Rejoicing in your birth and trusting in your mercy, O Christ, we commend all for whom we pray.

Amen.

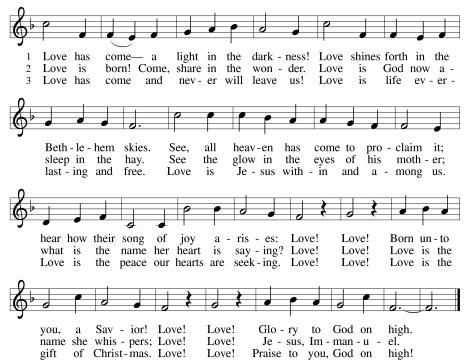
PEACE

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 THANKSGIVING: Love Has Come



OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Good and loving God,

we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessings for others. With all the hosts of heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

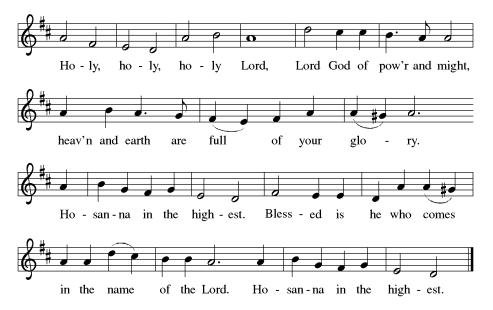
The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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 in remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored to him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Taught by God's Word Incarnate, we are bold 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

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

COMMUNION

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**

HYMN DURING COMMUNION: O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
 how still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep
 and dreamless sleep
 the silent stars go by;
 yet in thy dark streets shineth
 the everlasting light.
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 are met in thee tonight.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary,
 and, gathered all above
 while mortals sleep,
 the angels keep
 their watch of wond'ring love.
 O morning stars, together
 proclaim the holy birth,
 and praises sing to God the king,
 and peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n. No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of wonder, in Jesus we behold the light of the world come near. As you have come among us now, send us out in joy, hastening to share the good news of your love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit dwelling among us now and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ Child. And may Almighty God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES/ANTHEM

"O Holy Night"

Jim Schrader

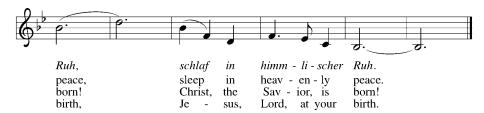
(During the musical meditation, the center white candle in the Advent wreath, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks, will be lit. The lighting of the Christ candle represents the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation of God, the Light of the World breaking into the darkness of our weary world. The light then radiates out through the congregation to remind us that it is from the Light, Jesus Christ, that we receive our own light to shine before others that they might see God, know God, and glorify God. From the Babe of Bethlehem, God shines forth that all peoples who have walked in darkness might have great light. Therefore, our candles are lit from the Christ candle and then as the light spreads from to worshiper to worshiper, the lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.)

CLOSING HYMN: Silent Night, Holy Night









Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE



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



Christmas Poinsettias Sponsorship



In Loving Memory Of

- Rege Rengers, David Piper, John Bonicky, Donald Mars Jr.,
 Donald Mars Sr., Brian Kenney, Frank Blakesley, and our Grandmothers,
 by Ryan & Melissa Bonicky & Family
- * Ron & Ken Crider and Ron & Dan Budisky, by Eilene Budisky
- * Bob Domhoff, Charles M. & Mabel A. Peters, and Lynette Wingard by Marlene Domhoff
- Jean & Dave Fulghum, Marjorie & William Berry,
 by Mary & Glenn Fulghum
- * Susan Ludwik and Richard Grigorovich, by Walter & Amy Grigorovich
- * Loved Ones, by Bea King
- * Sue Ludwik, by Joselph Ludwik
- * Loved ones, by James & Debbie Merrison
- * Jerome, Ruth & Claire Hoffman, Delores & Herb Brittner, Doris & Howard Brittner, Lorena & David Mashuda, Pam, Roland & Shirley Wise, David Brittner & Ed Smith by Teresa O'Malley
- * Bill Painter, by Pat Painter
- * Richard Reifenstein, Marion & Emil Schultz, Martin & Jennie Marburger, by Rick & Rita Reifenstein
- * Rege Rengers & David Piper, by Becky Rengers
- * Robert & Gertrude Kennedy, and Walter & Gladys Riddle, by Rick & Becky Riddle
- Ken & Marion Knauff, MaryKay Hill and Ruth Rasp, by Vicki & Pat Sammons
- Dot Marburger and Pat & Dave VanDyke, by Robin VanDyke
- Art, Mary & Todd Wearing, and Martin & Jennie Marburger,
 by Marge & Garrie Wearing
- * Paul Wingard and Lynette Wingard by Lucille Wingard

In Honor Of

- Heinie & Mary Jane Raupp, Dwain & Cathy Paiter, Gary & Brenda Reinart, by Brenda Ainsworth & Gary Reinert
- * Our Parents, by Davin and Heidi Beahm
- * Our Mothers, by Ryan & Melissa Bonicky & Family
- * My Children, Grandchildren and Great grandchildren, by Barb Graham
- * Joe Ludwik, by Walter & Amy Grigorovich
- * Nancy Zattiero, by Susan Kushnereit, Shannon Kushnereit and Karlee Babusci
- * Our Children, Grandchildren and Great grandchildren by James & Debbie Merrison
- * Our Children, Grandchildren, Family, Church Family & Mike, by Teresa O'Malley
- * Our five Grandchildren, by Rick & Rita Reifenstein
- * My Grandson Benson, by Robin VanDyke
- * Emersyn & Elliot, by Corey Walker
- Kurt Wearing Family, and Todd Wearing Family,
 by Marge & Garrie Wearing

To The Glory of God

- * Jane Brown
- * Charlie & Patti Flach
- Mary & Glenn Fulghum
- Pastor Johns & Family
- * Gloria Deo! by Teresa O'Malley





Christmas Luminary Sponsorship

In Loving Memory Of

- * Troy Barkley, Jr, Betty & Al (Beverly's parents) Etta & Ralph (Troy's parents), by Troy & Beverly Barkley
- * Sister, Lynette Wingard, Father, Paul Wingard, Mom and Dad, Lee & Geneveve Brosius, by Luann and Perry Brosius
- * Bob Domhoff, by Marlene Domhoff
- * Harold Graham, by Barb Graham
- * Paul, Olive, Karen and Gerald Marburger, by Janice Marburger
- * In loving memory of all those who have gone before us, by Teresa O'Malley
- * Our Loved Ones, by Marsha and Don Reedy
- * Rege Rengers, David Piper, Dot and Joe Marburger, Helen and Jerry Rengers, Dee & Walter LaSota, and Frank Piper, by Becky Rengers
- * Our son Bryon, Inez's twin sister Beryl, and sister Alice,
- by Dennis and Inez Schmidt
- * Dot & Joe Marburger, Pat & Dave VanDyke, by Robin Van Dyke
- * The Watson Family, The Bonzer Family, Helen Barto and Betty Young, by Bob & Mary Watson
- Daughter, Lynette Wingard and Husband, Paul Wingard, by Lucille Wingard

In Honor Of

- * Our Parents, by Davin & Heidi Beahm
- * Mother, Lucille Wingard, Children, Mark & Elaine Brosius, and Pam Volz, Sister, Peggy and Mike Smith, by Luann and Perry Brosius
- * Roberta Domhoff, Marla and RJ Bird, by Marlene Domhoff
- * Ella Jason, The Jason Family, by Mary Kay Knox
- * Peggy, Raquel, Rolly, David & Lily, and Jamar Happy Birthday, by Teresa O'Malley
- * Ella Jason, Marissa Rasp & Lyndsay Jason, by Lori Rasp
- * Our Loved Ones, by Marsha and Don Reedy
- * My Children, Grandchildren, and Great grandchildren, by Becky Rengers
- * Our Children and Grandchildren, by Dennis & Inez Schmidt

To The Glory of God

- * Gloria Deo! by Teresa O'Malley
- * Marsha and Don Reedy





ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Pastor
Supply Organist
Sexton
Secretary
Acolyte
Assisting Minister
Bell Ringer
Greeters
Lector
Tech Support
Ushers

The Rev. Brandon Johns
Marge Wearing
Joe Ludwick
Kimberly Peaco
Lily and Anna Johns
Karen Ferrari
Volunteer
Adam Price
Ted Lindgren II
Adam Price
Volunteers

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.

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 Website: www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org

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