# The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve Family Service of Holy Communion and Light



St. Peter's Lutheran Church December 24, 2024 7 PM Worship Service

Pastor Brandon Johns

## Theme of the Day:

Together, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are known as the Season of Light. In the world around us, this doesn't make much sense. Here, we say that the days have been getting shorter, because darkness is still overcoming the light. Into the midst of that darkness comes the Light of the world. Jesus is our Bright Morning Star, a ray of hope that pushes back against the gloom, precisely when it seems to have won. The candles that adorn our church remind us that no darkness can overcome us, because of the bright shining light of Jesus. So we light candles as a sign of hope and anticipation, believing Christ has come, is come, and will come again. Their light bears witness to us and is reflected in us to the world, that the babe of Bethlehem is Lord of all.

## 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 homecoming 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. So that you might feel at home in this service, below is a note about how communion will take place.

## 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. We will come forward by the center aisle, commune processionally, at the stations that correspond to the side where you are sitting, and return to seats by side aisles. Those in Luther Hall will commune next, followed by the choir. If you need communion brought to you, please let Pastor know. Young children and anyone else who do not yet commune are invited forward to receive a blessing.

**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.

**BELL CHOIR PRELUDE** 

What Child Is This?
O Holy Night

Alan Lohr Ron Mallory

el.

high!

## **BELL RINGING**

## **OPENING HYMN: Love Has Come**



- 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won der. Love is God now a -
- 3 Love has come and nev-er will leave us! Love is life ev-er-



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav-en has pro - claim come to See glow in sleep in the hay. the the eves of his last - ing and free. Je - sus with - in Love is and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un-to what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the Love is the peace our hearts are seek-ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! name she whis - pers; Love! gift of Christ-mas. Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u -Love! Praise to you, God on



### **GATHERING LITANY**

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 Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

**CHOIR ANTHEM** Were You There on that Christmas Night N. Sleeth

### PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH'S BIRTH: Isaiah 9:2-7

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>You 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. <sup>4</sup>For 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. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For 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. <sup>7</sup>His 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!

## PROMISE OF NEW BIRTH THROUGH THE MESSIAH: Titus 3:4-7

<sup>4</sup>When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. *This is the Word of the Lord.* **Thanks be to God!** 

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

## **GOSPEL CANTICLE: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**



- I In fant ho ly, in fant low ly, for his bed a cat tle stall;
- 2 Flocks were sleep-ing, shep-herds keep-ing vig-il till the morn-ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know-ing Christ the child is Lord of all. saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift-ly wing-ing, an - gels sing-ing, bells are ring-ing, tid - ings bring-ing: Thus re-joic-ing, free from sor-row, prais-es voic-ing, greet the mor-row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

## PROCLAMATION OF THE MESSIAH'S BIRTH: Luke 2:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.** 

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph 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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And 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.

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

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When 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." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The 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**



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Hark! The her - ald

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

an-gels sing,



"Glo - ry

to

the new-born king!"

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

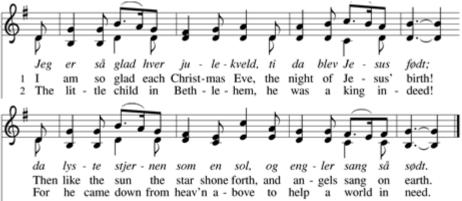
## **PEACE**

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

#### **OFFERING**

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

## **CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING: I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve**



#### 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.

### **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

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.

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

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of joy and peace.

**COMMUNION** (please see the inside cover for instructions)

## 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** 

#### HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

## Away in a Manger



- 1 A way in a man-ger, no crib for his bed, the lit tle Lord 2 The cat - tle are low-ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
- 3 Be near me, Lord Je sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked you, Lord Je - sus; look Je - sus. no cry - ing he makes. I love ev - er and love me. I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay. down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn-ing is nigh. your ten - der care and fit us for heav-en, to live with you there.

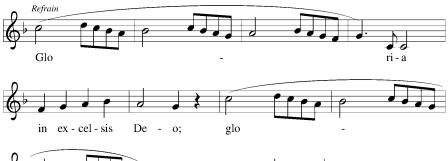
## **Angels We Have Heard on High**



- 1 An gels we have heard on high, sweet ly sing ing o'er the plains,
- 2 Shep-herds, why this ju bi-lee? Why your joy ous strains pro-long?
- 3 Come to Beth le hem and see him whose birth the an gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re-ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains. What the glad-some tid - ings be come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.





## O Little Town of Bethlehem









The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing. and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing. oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing! and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.



### **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.** 

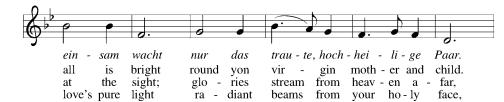
## **SOLEMN REFLECTION ON THE INCARNATION:**

"O Holy Night" Curt Johns

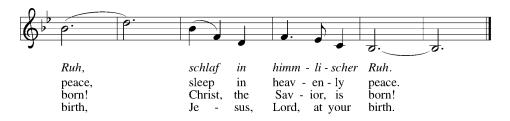
(During the musical meditation, the center white candle in the Advent wreath, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks, will be lit. The lighting of the Christ candle represents the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation of God, the Light of the World breaking into the darkness 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**









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 Altar Flowers are given by Carol Kerr in memory of Edward Kerr

# O Holy Night

Ron Mallory

Today's Eternal Candle is presented by Barb Graham in memory of her husband Harold Graham



## 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 Joe Ludwick Sexton Secretary Kimberly Peaco Leah Plank and Penelope Erin Acolyte **Assisting Minister** Glenn Fulghum **Bell Ringer** Davin Beahm Jason & Robin Plank Greeters Lector Robin Van Dyke **Tech Support** Heidi Beahm Brian Johns & Dean Zinkhann Ushers

<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 2025 offering envelopes</u> - Are in your mailboxes. The envelopes are numbered and dated for 2025 so please wait to use them until then!

<u>Soup Sale</u> - will take place on Sat., January 18<sup>th</sup>. Soup will be sold by the quart for \$10. Pre-orders will be taken and will be sold on first come first served basis. Chicken noodle, potato, stuffed pepper, and wedding soups will be offered again this year, and bread again for \$3. Watch for more info in the January newsletter and future bulletins.

<u>Pot Luck Epiphany Luncheon</u> - Our annual Advent Friend reveal and Epiphany luncheon will be held on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> immediately following worship. EVERYONE is invited to bring a dish to share and listen to stories of those who participated in Advent Friends 2024.

<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 bulletin board in Luther Hall. Please consider serving in one or more of these ways. Thank you!

# 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, and 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





# 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: <a href="mailto:stpeterslcec@zoominternet.net">stpeterslcec@zoominternet.net</a>
Pastor Email: <a href="mailto:rev.brandonjohns@gmail.com">rev.brandonjohns@gmail.com</a>

Church Website: <a href="www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org">www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org</a> 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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