

Welcome to
St. Peter's Lutheran Church

*He replied, "Sir, let it
alone for one more year,
until I dig around it and
put manure on it. If it
bears fruit next year,
well and good; but if
not, you can cut
it down." -Luke 13: 8-9*



Third Sunday of Lent

March 23, 2025

10:15 Worship Service

Pastor Brandon Johns

BELL RINGING

The Lenten Cross Garden will grow each week as a different symbol of Christ is added at the foot of the cross. Its stark beauty prepares us for the extravagant beauty of the Resurrection Garden on Easter Morning.

NAILS *There they crucified him. – John 19:18*

Nails are meant to hold things together, useful in building. Rome twisted their purpose for torment, holding flesh and wood together for pain. Jesus repurposed those nails, though, taking our pain of sin into his own, so that God and humanity, through the cross and its nails, might be joined together for all eternity.

We pause to reflect as the nails are added to the cross garden.

GATHERING: The WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE: The Life of Grace

(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.)

***You are the life; the rending tomb
Proclaims your conqu'ring arm;
And those who put their trust in you
Not death nor hell shall harm.***

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

We now live our lives abundantly by his grace.

Having been justified by Christ's grace, made manifest on the cross,
we have become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

***You are the life; the life of grace
Abides forevermore;
Unto the cross you set your face;
Our bond to God restore.***

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved.

He died for all,
so that those who live might live no longer for themselves
but for the one who for their sake died and was raised.
So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
Everything old has passed away;
look, new things have come into being!

St. Paul said, "We know that the one who raised Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and will present us with you in his presence."
Indeed, everything is for our sake, so that grace, when it has extended to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

***You are the way, the truth the life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.***

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. Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

CHOIR ANTHEM *For God So Loved the World* Allen Pote

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-9

- ¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
- ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
- ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
- ⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
- ⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations
that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord
your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.
- ⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
- ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord,
that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will
abundantly pardon.
- ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
- ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways
higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

PSALM 63:1-8 (Read Responsively)

- ¹ O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- ² **Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**
- ³ For your steadfast love is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.

**⁴ So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your name.**

⁵ My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

**⁶ when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

⁷ For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

**⁸ My whole being clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

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

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



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL: Luke 13:1-9

The holy gospel according to Luke, the thirteenth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

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

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: As the Deer Runs to the River



- 1 As the deer runs to the riv - er, parched and wea - ry from the chase,
- 2 When your Is - rael crossed the des - ert where no stream or spring was seen,
- 3 "Come and drink," I - sa - iah sum-moned, "all who for God's mer - cy plead!
- 4 Christ, we come from des - ert plac - es, deep - est thirst un - sat - is - fied.



we have come from hurt and hur - ry, thirst-ing for your heal - ing grace.
Mo - ses struck the rock, and wa - ter flowed for them, re - fresh - ing, clean.
God's for - give - ness, like a foun-tain, flows to sat - is - fy your need."
Lead us to the wa - ters flow - ing from the cross on which you died.



Refrain
Je - sus, source of liv - ing wa - ter, may we drink of you and live!

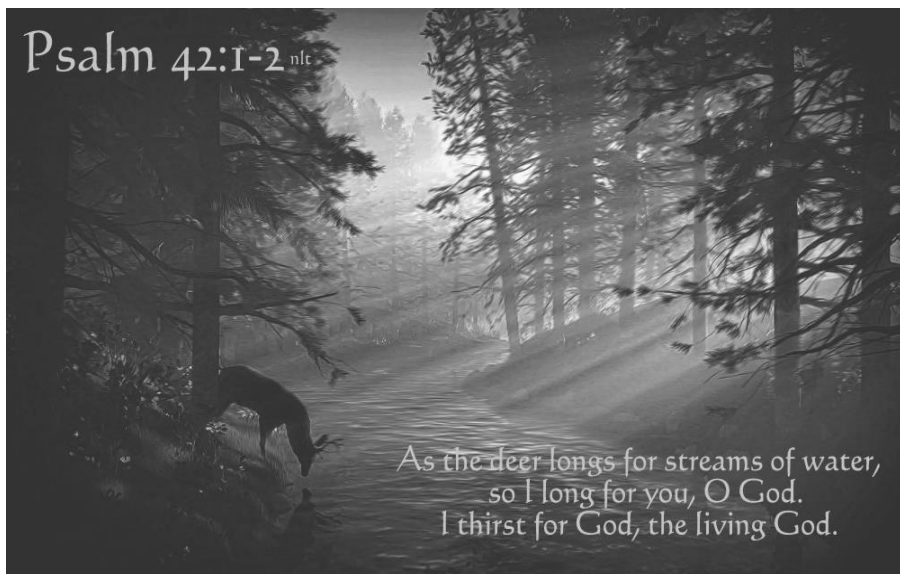
Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923

Music: JULION, David Hurd, b. 1950

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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

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions.

The response for each petition is:

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

PEACE

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

OFFERING

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

CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God, receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may be instruments of your mercy, and know the joy of life eternal; through Christ our Lord. 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 our God.

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

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death
to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us.
Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.
With your holy ones of all times and places,
we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, 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 Christ, broken and poured out for you.

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.

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**

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. Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our prayer, the song of thankful hearts; through Christ our 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 ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

SHARING FOR SERVING: Mission Notices and Birthdays

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be merciful as God is merciful. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

March Recessional

Lily Strickland

*Today's altar flowers are
in loving memory of my
mother Edith Sarver ,
by Karen Ferrari*



*The eternal candle is
in loving memory of
Jerome O'Malley,
by Teresa.*



Prayers Have Been Requested Recently for the Following:

Cole Barkley

Luke Clawson

Gary Checkan

Pr. Tony Schneck

the Jason Family

Stephanie Hogan

Amy Grigorovich

Berty McMillen

Jerry McElhinny

Cliff & Liz Mashuda

Clark Graham

Dave & Patty Grubbs

Dale Weisz

The families of Jane Brown, Melitta Garbuny, & Ruth Banyay Mirage

Our Monthly Benevolent Cause for March

Our Monthly Benevolent Cause will support Camp Lutherlyn.

If you would like to support this cause, please mark the

Other line on your contribution envelope Camp Lutherlyn.

St. Peter's Upcoming Events:

Mon.-Fri.	4-6:00 pm	After School
Tues. March 25	7:00 pm	Dorcas Circle
Wed. March 26	10:00 am	Community Quilting
	5:30 pm	Manna Night
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice
Thurs. March 27	10:00 am	Quilters Group
	6:00 pm	Meager Meal
	7:00 pm	Lenten Service
	8:00 pm	Bible Study
Fri. March 28	4:00 pm	Fish Fry

Food Drive – In addition to our Monthly Benevolent Cause, we are collecting condiments in March to supplement the stocks in the food cupboard. Please consider donating to help our neighbors in need.

Lent Special Offering – Our offerings made during Meager Meals and in the Lent Special Offering envelopes will go to Lutheran Disaster Response and in particular to their aid to people impacted by the devastating wildfires in California.

Fasting for Change – This Lent consider not just the discipline of giving something up, but also giving something toward. As part of your Lenten journey, you are invited to donate the money you would have spent on what you have given up to support Lutheran Service Society. LSS is a collective ministry of our synod and helps people in a variety of ways, including providing adoption and foster care services for children and families in our area. Coin boxes will be available or you are welcome to mark the Other line on your contribution envelope. You may choose to donate weekly, or give the sum of your savings at the end of Lent.



ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Presiding Bishop (ELCA)
Synodical Bishop (SW PA Synod)
Pastor
Music Director and Organist
Office Secretary
Sexton
Acolyte
Assisting Minister
Bell Ringer
Greeters
Lector
Nursery
Tech Support
Ushers

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
The Rev. Kurt A. Kusserow
The Rev. Brandon Johns
Marlene Domhoff
Kimberly Peaco
Joe Ludwik
Meera Lindgren
Robin Van Dyke
Jason Plank
Jim & Debbie Merrison
Ted Lindgren III
Linda Schmidt
Heidi Beahm
Dan & Casey Guerriero

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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