

Welcome to
St. Peter's Lutheran Church



Fourth Sunday of Advent

*December 21, 2025
10:15 Worship Service*

Pastor Brandon Johns

BELL RINGING**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (2022)**

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 INVOCATION

Selections from Psalm 33 & Once in Royal David's City

(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.)

**He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.**

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.

Praise befits the upright.

Praise the Lord with the lyre;

make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.

Sing to him a new song;

play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

For the word of the Lord is upright,

and all his work is done in faithfulness.

He loves righteousness and justice;

the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.



Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him,
for he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

**And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.**

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
to deliver their soul from death
and to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.

Our heart is glad in him
because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

**Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory crowned.**



THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

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 *Joy to the World* Luke Johns

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 hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." *This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!*

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19 *(Read Responsively)*

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O Lord God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹**Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.”²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

CHRISTMAS CANTATA PROCLAMATION

The Best Gift of All Arranged by Russell Mauldin

Rejoice! Medley
A Night to Remember
The Best Gift of All
He Came So Far
Strange Way to Save the World
Christ Is Born Medley
Heaven’s Child
Lead Me to Bethlehem
In This Holy Place
Finale
The Best Gift of All
Joy to the World

CANTATA CHOIR

<u>Soprano</u>	<u>Alto</u>	<u>Tenor</u>	<u>Bass</u>
Marla Bird	Christine Johns	Bev Critchlow	Charlie Flach
Marlene Domhoff	Debbie Merrison	Curt Johns	Glenn Fulghum
Jan Hogan	Deb Mort	Marge Wearing	Pr. Larry Mort
Lily Johns	Robin VanDyke		
Teresa O’Malley			

Director – Roberta Domhoff

Pianist – Kathy Kennedy

Soloists – Curt Johns & Christine Johns

Narrator – Patti Flach

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

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *A brief silence.*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us.

The response for each petition is:

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **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 ADVENT ANTICIPATION *(to the tune of "The Doxology")*

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

OFFERING PRAYER

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

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord 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

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

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

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

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

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

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

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

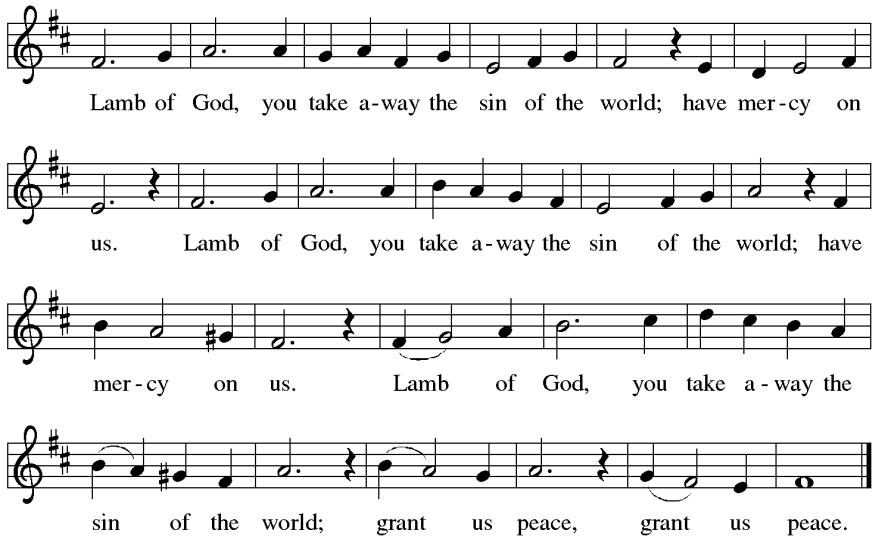
LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and help us to pray:
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

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



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

The Sacrament will be offered with these words:

The body of Christ, given for you. *And* The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Optional responses **Amen or Thanks be to God or Renew us, Lord**

BLESSING

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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



THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

NATIVITY

The Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:20b-24

An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

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

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

The Reflection

The Placement of the Nativity

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

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

The Blessing

Stir up your might and come to save us.

Reveal your face to us, and give us life.

The Prayer

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

BENEDICTION

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✠ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: People, Look East



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new



of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol

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SHARING FOR SERVING: Mission Notices and Birthdays

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE *Postlude on a Christmas Carol* Roger C. Wilson

Our Monthly Benevolent Cause for December

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

*The Eternal Candle
is presented by Barb Graham
in loving memory of
Harold Graham & Clark Graham*



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

Prayers Have Been Requested Recently for the Following:

Cole Barkley	Luke Clawson	Mary Fulghum
Stephanie Hogan	Berty McMillen	Gini Rinkus
Rick Reifenstein	Jason Sarver	Beth Lauer
Sherry McCormick	Amber Weinzierl	Betty Musher
David Bohannon	Mary Sue Marburger Hunia	

Sunday School Christmas Program – will be held tonight at 6 pm. Refreshments will be served in Luther Hall after the presentation of the Nativity story.

Christmas Eve – We offer two candlelight communion services at St. Peter's on Christmas Eve. One will be held at 7 pm, which we call our family service because it has our Christmas Eve Children's Message and is crafted to be for shorter attention spans. At 10 pm, is our traditional, full liturgy service.

Lessons & Carols – Our Sunday service on December 28th is a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season when the rest of the world seems to have packed it all up. Join us for scripture and song. There will be **NO** Sunday School that morning.



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
Organist & Music Director	Marlene Domhoff
Sexton	Joe Ludwik
Asst. Minister	Ted Lindgren II
Lector	Robin Plank
Acolyte	Meera Lindgren
Bell Ringer	Corey Walker
Ushers	Casey & Dan Guerriero
Nursery	Colleen Prenovitz
Tech Support	Adam Price
Greeters	Brian & Danielle Johns

St. Peter's Upcoming Events:

Mon. – Tues.	4-6:00 pm	After School
Tues. Dec 23	7:00 pm	Worship Set-up
Wed. Dec. 24	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
	10:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service

Thurs. Dec. 25 – Fri. Jan. 2 – The office will be closed. Voicemails, emails & postal mail will still be checked routinely. Joyous Christmas!

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. **New to St. Peter's?** Please sign the GUEST REGISTER behind the last pew. You are welcome to commune with us if that is your practice. 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).

RECOGNITION OF ARTISTS:

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