

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
2nd Sunday of Christmas, Eve of the Epiphany January 5, 2024
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship
January 5, 2025



The CHURCH'S GATHERING

WELCOME *Theme of the day, Prayer concerns, & Praise time:*



CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

We bless the † one God, our creator,
our protector, our wellspring of life. **Amen**

Trusting that God receives our words and the meditations of our hearts, we confess our sin. *Silence is kept for reflection.* Merciful God, **you speak blessing and compassion into the world. Forgive us for the ways we act with judgment, cruelty, or indifference. We ignore the needs of our neighbors; we resist your call to oppose injustice; we give in to scarcity and fear; we assume the worst about one another. Cleanse us from our faults and release us from their grasp. Show us your lovingkindness. Restore our hearts and repair your world, that we may live in Christ's ways. Amen**

God proclaims these words of assurance: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." In † Christ, you are forgiven. In Spirit, you are made free. Refreshed by the waters of mercy, live anew as beloved children of God. **Amen**

Prolog Gospel: John 1:1-14 *Jerusalem Bible*

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came into being,
not one thing came into being except through him.
What has come into being in him was life,
life that was the light of all people;
and light shines in darkness,
and darkness could not overpower it.

A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
to bear witness to the light,

so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light.

The Word was the real light
that gives light to everyone;
he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had come into being through him,
and the world did not recognize him.
He came to his own
and his own people did not accept him.
But to those who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to those who believed in his name
who were born not from human stock
or human desire
or human will
but from God's true self.
The Word became flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that he has from the Father
as only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY

The love of Christ, the wisdom of God,
and the light of Spirit is with you all.

And also with you.

Holy God, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

GOD'S WORD

READING: Isaiah 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

This is a responsive reading from the prophet Isaiah, the 60th chapter.
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 God's glory will appear over you.

**Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;

**your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.**

Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,

**because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.**

A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

**They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.**

This is the Word of God, word of life.

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went

the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

HYMN of the DAY: # 300 "The First Noel"

1 The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. Refrain

3 And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. Refrain

4 This star drew near to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. Refrain

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. Refrain

Text: English traditional

MESSAGE: Ruling *(silence for reflection follows)*

The CHURCH PRAYS

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people. *A brief silence.*

Your glory fills the earth. Bless the work of all who engage in dialogue with people of other traditions and faiths. Bridge our differences with a shared mission of revealing your boundless love to the world. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Restore the glory of creation. Send rain to water-parched lands. Revive ecosystems and habitats threatened by a changing climate, and protect the peoples and creatures who live in them. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Give the rulers your justice and reveal your righteousness to those who govern. Frustrate the plans of tyrants and oppressors. Encourage the work of community organizers and activists who speak out against injustice. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Liberate this congregation from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine our ministries in new and different ways. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Help those who have no helper. Draw near to those who have no one to advocate for them or those who feel forgotten. Deliver those who call to you. Precious are they in your sight. We especially pray for John, Greg, Genevieve, Mary Lou, Lori, Ruth, Agnes, ... God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for your holy ones who now rest in your radiant glory. Make us, with them, sharers in the boundless riches of Christ, our hope and promise. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen

PRAYER for MISSION

We pray. *A brief silence.* God of grace, your love reaches to the heavens, and your abundance to the depths of the seas. Bless what we offer to your service: our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts. Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity, now and always. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

We pray that God's rule will appear, as Jesus taught us.

**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

BLESSING

God’s Spirit, dwelling with us in our hearts and in our minds, bless ☩ you with joy, anoint you with compassion, and send you in love. **Amen**

PEACE

The peace of Christ is always with you. **And also with you.**

We go with Christ’s peace to love and serve all!

We will Learn God’s Truth. We will Share Spirit’s Healing.

We will Follow Jesus’ Way. Amen

Please greet your household and friends online with Peace.

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At the time of this writing, please keep the following in your prayers: ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Synod Bishop Bill Gohl, those hospitalized or at home recuperating, and our at-home worshippers.

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Today’s Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God

In Loving Memory of my parents,
May and Howard LeBrun,
and brothers Skip, Ned, Jack, and Rich.
Given by Patty Read.

Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities

Thank You to everyone who sponsored poinsettias to decorate the altar for Christmas Eve worship! Any plants remaining after today will be given to a good home.

2025 Offering Envelopes are available. Please contact the church at 410-665-7300 if you would like your envelopes mailed to you, or would just like your envelope number.

Prayer Group: Need a warm, cozy, and uplifting break from winter? Join us on **Wednesday, January 8th at 11 am.** in Grace Chapel (lower level, elevator access)! KINDNESS is our Fruit of the Spirit for January. Our prayers and discussion will center around Random Acts of Kindness. Give us a try, we're people friendly and refreshing! Our gathering is under an hour and includes time for fellowship and sharing! Let's open our hearts to the Lord. Jump in and join us and bring your coffee or hot chocolate!

Sponsorships Available: Flowers for the 8:45 am. worship on 1/26 and bulletins for 1/12 (contact the church office). Flowers for the 10:15 am. worship on 1/19 (contact Nancy Barnes).

PLEASE NOTE: In 2025, pricing on floral arrangements will increase to be more in-line with pricing from the florist. Until pricing is finalized, please "pay as you go" using current pricing for floral sponsorships. Also, when you return the vases for Rose Vase sponsorships, the church receives a \$3 discount!

For every NEW regular deposit account opened at Eastern Savings Bank (Fullerton branch only) St. Peter's Lutheran Church receives \$5! Visit the Fullerton branch at 4113 Wholesale Club Drive, Suite 130 or go to EasternSavingsBank.com.

News from St. Peter's Elementary School

Enrollment for the 2025-26 school year begins in mid-January. Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions, want to schedule a tour, or to register. Referrals are always welcome!

The Poppin' Popcorn online fundraiser runs to January, 18th. See the attached flier for details.

Join us on the 1st Wednesday of each month for a delicious fundraiser at Frank's Pizza & Pasta (6620 Belair Rd., 21206). Fliers with additional details are posted at the red awning door and the church office lobby. You can also obtain a flier through the school office (410-665-4521). **PLEASE NOTE: The January fundraiser night is Wednesday, January 8th.**



**ST. PETER'S
ELEMENTARY
PAGE PRESENTS:**

DEC 18TH-JAN 18TH

HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER



Buttery Caramel, Cheddar Jalapeno, Chicago style, Cinnamon Toast, Kettle Corn, Dill Pickle, Fruity, Movie Theatre, White Cheddar, Ranch, Birthday Cake and Many More!

**SCAN QR CODE TO ORDER YOUR
POPCORN**



Group ID: CJAZUV