

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship
February 23, 2025

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**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**

**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 Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

**GOD'S WORD**

**HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 6:27-38**

*Jesus continues to address a crowd of his disciples. He invites his followers to shower radical love, blessing, forgiveness, generosity, and trust even on enemies and outsiders. Living in harmony with God's intent brings the reward of overflowing blessing.*

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Luke, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter. Jesus said: "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for God himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

### **HYMN of the DAY: # 608 "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling"**

- 1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,  
calling for you and for me.  
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,  
watching for you and for me.

#### *Refrain*

"Come home, (Come home,)  
come home! (come home!)  
You who are weary, come home."  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

- 2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,  
pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,  
mercies for you and for me? *Refrain*
- 3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,  
promised for you and for me!  
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,  
pardon for you and for me. *Refrain*

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909

**MESSAGE: MERCIFUL** (silence for reflection follows)

**The CHURCH PRAYS**

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. *A brief silence.*

Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care. We pray for John, Greg, Genevieve, Mary Lue, Lori, our at-home worshippers, Joe, Lynn and Jack, Sandy, Clara, Derek and Robyn, George, .... God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us especially Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Waiting in hope for Christ's appearing, we pray as he 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**

## **WE are SENT to SERVE**

### **PRAYER for MISSION**

Holy God, hear our prayer. *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. Strengthen us for service, and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ we pray, **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 Honor of the birthdays of Jimmy (February 19th), Heather (February 26th), and Holly (March 4th).
Given with love by their mother, Janice Frederick.

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*Today's Worship Folders are Given to the Glory of God*

In Loving Memory of Betty Weinreich  
on the anniversary of her passing, February 29, 2024.  
Given by Nolan Weinreich and family.

In Loving Memory of Aunt Betty Weinreich.  
Given with love by the Mills family.

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Attendance for February 16, 2025: 29

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**Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156**

Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna (in present-day western Turkey) and a link between the apostolic age and the church at the end of the second century. He is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation. In turn he was known by Iranaeus, bishop of Lyon in France, and Ignatius of Antioch. At the age of eighty-six he was martyred for his faith. When urged to save his life and renounce his faith, Polycarp replied, "Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who saved me?" The magistrate who made the offer was reluctant to kill a gentle old man, but he had no choice. Polycarp was burned at the stake, his death a testimony to the cost of renouncing temptation.

## ***Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities***

**Prayer Group:** Our 'Fruit' for March is FAITHFULNESS – our good group has thought-provoking chats laced with great humor! How does FAITHFULNESS enhance our lives? Come, hear, and share on Wednesday, March 5 @ 11am. (out by noon!). Change the world with Prayer - You 'Betcha!!  
In His Name, Patty Read & Kathy Shull.

**Lent 2025:** Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th, with Ash Wednesday. We will celebrate with communion at 7 pm. in the church. Lent mid-week services will continue on Wednesdays, at 11:30 am. in Grace Chapel, March 12th-April 9th. Our gatherings will be followed by fellowship and lite lunch. If you're staying for lunch, please bring your sandwich, we'll provide the drinks and side dish. Pr. Lans will upload a mid-week message on our YouTube channel and Facebook page in lieu of an evening mid-week service.

**Save the Date!** Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup> – Game Day at St. Pete's! See flier for details.

**Easter Flower order form attached.**

**Sponsorships Available:** Altar flowers for 8:45 am. worship on 3/30 and bulletins for 3/23 & 30 (contact the church office). Altar flowers for 10:15 am. worship on 3/2, 16, 23, & 30 (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 discount!

**Pancake Breakfast:** Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> in the Parish Hall at Jerusalem (4605 Belair Rd, Baltimore, MD 21206) from 9 am to 1 pm.

**Quarter Auction:** Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at Epiphany (4301 Raspe Ave, Baltimore, MD 21206) at noon.

**Pancake Supper:** Celebrate Shrove Tuesday (3/4) at St. Luke (7001 Harford Rd., 21234) at 6 pm. Bring the family for free pancakes, music, and fun!

**Studio Apartment for Rent:** First floor of a two-story brick house. Studio has two-rooms, includes full bathroom and a full kitchen. It has a private laundry room/utility room and a parking pad. Rent includes utilities: heat, air conditioning, water & internet. Security Deposit \$1,250 and first month's rent \$1,250 due up front. Located in Parkville section of Baltimore. Interested: 410-444-5171.

**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.

**On-line Giving:** As an alternate way of submitting your offering, you can make donations on-line through PayPal! Login to your PayPal account and search for our tag: @Spl367 or St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Christian Day School.

### ***News from St. Peter's Elementary School & PACE***

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

The World's Finest Chocolate sale runs through February 28<sup>th</sup>. Each bar is \$1. See a school student to purchase yours.

St. Peter's Lutheran Church  
and Elementary School invites you to

# GET YOUR GAME ON

**Game Day at St. Pete's!**  
Sunday, March 9th at 11:15 am.

**Fight cabin fever and join us in the  
fellowship area of the lower level!**  
(elevator accessible)



**Fun for all ages and no  
experience necessary!**  
**Bring your favorite game!**

**Beverages provided.**

**Optional: Bring a snack to share**

**Questions?  
Call 410-665-7300**

