

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
2nd Sunday in Advent, December 8, 2024
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship

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**The CHURCH'S GATHERING**



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

**CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

We bless the God † of Incarnation, Advent, and Epiphany:  
alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen**

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.* God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**  
God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen**

**GREETING**

Almighty God, who is, who was, and who is to come  
is with you, now and always. **And also with you.**

**PRAYER of the DAY**

Holy God, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GOD'S WORD**

**READING: Malachi 3:1-4**

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.*

This is a reading from the prophet Malachi, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter.  
See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the

covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

This is the Word of God, word of life.

### **HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6**

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Luke, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

**'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.**

Every valley shall be filled,

**and every mountain and hill shall be made low,**

and the crooked shall be made straight,

**and the rough ways made smooth;**

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

### **HYMN of the DAY: # 249 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"**

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
announces that the Lord is nigh;  
awake and hearken, for he brings  
glad tidings of the King of kings!
- 2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;  
make straight the way for God within,  
and let us all our hearts prepare  
for Christ to come and enter there.

- 3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord,  
our refuge and our great reward;  
without your grace we waste away  
like flow'rs that wither and decay.
- 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,  
and make us rise to fall no more;  
oh, let your face upon us shine  
and fill the world with love divine.
- 5 All praise to you, eternal Son,  
whose advent has our freedom won,  
whom with the Father we adore,  
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

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

### **The CHURCH PRAYS**

#### **PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, we pray for all people  
and places that long for God's presence. *A brief silence.*

Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your  
people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors,  
deacons, and all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm  
what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore  
creatures and habitats. Stay with all those who are recovering from recent  
disasters. Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and  
communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all  
caught in the center of conflict: in the Middle East and Ukraine, and all lands  
divided by civil war. Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal  
preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music  
ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering from illness, sorrow, or anxiety. Provide comfort and strength, and nurture our sustained wholeness for the future. We pray for John, Greg, Genevieve, Mary Lue, Lori, Kathy, David, Maren, our at-home worshippers, ... Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **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**

### **SPIRIT'S SENDING**

#### **PRAYER for MISSION**

Holy God, hear our prayer. *A brief silence.* Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for our salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. **Amen**

#### **BLESSING** from Philippians, ch 1

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through † Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. **Amen**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ is always with you. **And also with you.**  
*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 17<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, December 8, 2007,  
of Robyn (Harry) and Andrew Thompson.  
Given with love from her mother, Betty Harry.

In honor of Lena Frankenfeld's birthday.  
From Kathy Sykes.

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Attendance for December 1, 2024: 49

Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities

WELCA Christmas Candy: The women of St. Peter's are taking orders for their homemade candy! **Orders and payment are due by Sunday, December 8th.** Orders will be available for pickup on Sunday, December 15th. Call the church office at 410-665-7300 for an order form.

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.

The SPES/PACE Penny Wars: We are down to the home stretch! Continue to bring in your pennies (loose and rolled) and paper money for our collection jar! See the fliers posted at the red awning door and hallway by the church office for point values.

Christmas Bazaar: Saturday, December 7th from 10 am.-4 pm. at St. Luke's (7001 Harford Rd., 21234). Handmade gifts, holiday crafts, local artisans, food sampling, vintage clothing, festive food, Fair Trade gifts, 50/50, gift wrapping station, kid's craft table, and more!

Cookies & Crafts with Santa: Sunday, December 8th from 10:30 am.-12 noon at St. Michael Lutheran (9534 Belair Rd., 21236). Bring the whole family for a cozy morning of holiday cheer! Enjoy creating a festive winter craft, indulge in delicious cookies & hot cocoa, and snap a memorable photo with Mr. & Mrs. Claus. This free, family-friendly event is open to all ages, so come ready to spread joy and make holiday memories together.

Sponsorships Available: Flowers for 8:45 am. worship on 12/22 & 1/26, and bulletins for 12/22, 1/5 & 12 (contact the church office). Flowers for the 10:15 am. worship on 1/5 & 19 (contact Nancy Barnes). **Sponsorships for 1/5 must be received by 12/18.**

On-line Giving: As the holidays and travel to family near and far approaches, remember that 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.

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 & PACE

Enrollment for the 2025-26 school year will begin on Monday, January 6th when the school reopens after Christmas break. Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions, want to schedule a tour, or to register. Referrals are always welcome!

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).