

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship

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**The CHURCH'S GATHERING**

**CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

We bless the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,  
whose home is heaven and earth,  
whose salvation is sure. **Amen**



Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.* Long-expected God, **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. You are freed and forgiven, saved by ☩ grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen**

**GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY**

We bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

**Oh, come, let us worship and praise our God.**

Emmanuel, come; **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* 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**

**GOD'S WORD**

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16** *Contemporary English Version*  
*An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 7.

Once again the LORD God spoke to King Ahaz. This time he said, "Ask me for proof that my promise will come true. Ask for something to happen deep in the world of the dead or high in the heavens above."

"No, LORD," Ahaz answered. "I won't test you!"

Then I said:

Listen, every one of you in the royal family of David. You have already tried my patience. Now you are trying God's patience by refusing to ask for proof. But the LORD will still give you proof. A young woman is pregnant; she will have a son and will name him Immanuel [God is with us]. Even before the boy is old enough to know how to choose between right and wrong, he will eat yogurt and honey, and the countries of the two kings you fear will be destroyed.

This is God's Word, our hope.

### **HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25**

*Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."*

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Matthew, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

Now 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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

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

This is the Good News of Christ's victory!

### **HYMN of the DAY: # 267 "Joy to the World"**

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

**MESSAGE:**        **Fulfillment**        *silence for reflection follows*

### **The CHURCH PRAYS**

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

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. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. We pray for ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Bill Gohl, Ebenezer Grace Worship, those hospitalized or recuperating at home, John, Greg, Lori, Mary Lue, Lynn, Linda, Will, Bea, Ruth, our at-home worshippers, ... God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. 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.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Blessing God's holy name, we pray 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.* God our hope, **in the Word made flesh, you share with us joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share and welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen**

#### **BLESSING and PEACE**

May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen**

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

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Today's Sponsorships

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*Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God*

In Celebration of Cathy McQuade's birthday.  
Given by her family.

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Worship Folders are Given to the Glory of God

In Honor of our son, Eddie Volz, for his December 19th birthday.
Given by his parents, Lois and Fred Volz.

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*The following donations have been made by Ruth Diepold:*

To the organ fund in memory of my mother, Dora Von Munchow.

To the church in loving memory of my husband, Elmer Diepold.

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Attendance for December 14, 2025: 10

Learning, Serving, and Fellowship Opportunities

Christmas at St. Peter's

12/24 –Worship at 7 pm.; Candlelight worship at 10:30 pm.

12/28 & 1/4– On-site worship at 8:45 & 10:15 am.

Christmas Holiday Closing: The church office and St. Peter's Elementary School will be closed from 12/22/25-1/2/26, reopening on Monday, January 5th.

2026 Offering Envelopes are available in the Narthex.

Poinsettias: Thank you to everyone who sponsored poinsettias to decorate our altar! Plants may be picked up after each Christmas Eve worship service. Please initial the "pick-up" paper on the lectern when you take your plants.

New Years Eve Service: Wednesday, December 31st at 7 pm. at Epiphany Lutheran (4301 Raspe Ave., 21206). Begin your evening with thanks for the blessings in 2025 and prayers for a blessed 2026. After worship we will have a champagne reception with champagne and sparkling cider toast.

Epiphany Day Celebration: Tuesday, January 6th at 6 pm. at Epiphany Lutheran (4301 Raspe Ave., 21206). Come and celebrate the arrival of the Magi with worship and lite meal following.

PACE Movie Night: Friday, January 9th at 6 pm. in the fellowship hall. All are welcome!

LGBTQIA+ Friends and Allies Pot Luck: Sunday, January 11th at 5 pm. at Epiphany Lutheran (4301 Raspe Ave., 21206). All are welcome to the parlor for the potluck to bring LGBTQIA+ friends and allies together to get to know each other. Fried chicken provided, bring a side dish or dessert. Reservations are not needed, but you can RSVP to Mary Catherine Day at 443-743-4717.

Beginning January, 2026: To sponsor bulletins or flowers contact the church office. Payment for sponsorships should be included with your offering (not a separate payment), and put in the offering plate or mailed to the church, Attn: Finance.

Sponsorships Available: Altar flowers for 10:15 am. worship on 1/18, and bulletins on 1/11 (contact the church office).

St. Peter's Family Goods Center: If you are interested in volunteering for the Family Goods Center, please contact Bill Lauer. This is a great opportunity for service hours for your middle or high school student, and volunteer hours for SPES families. Please place donations in the shopping cart in the Narthex.

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 and PACE

Open enrollment for the 2026-27 school year begins in January! Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions or want to schedule a tour. Referrals are always welcome!