

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
1st Sunday of Christmas, HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

December 28 2025, 8:45 am.

Feast of the Faithful

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(P) Pastor; (A) Worship Assistant; (\*) Please stand as you're able;  
Congregation responses in **BOLD**

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

+ What are you praising God for today? +

PRELUDE: "The Day Which is So Filled with Joy" –J.S. Bach



The CHURCH'S GATHERING

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

P: We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection. Reconciling God,

we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair.
We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for
your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.

We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear.
We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our
participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our
reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your
salvation. Amen

God's grace upon grace flows over you. Christ's presence † redeems the
whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Alleluia and Amen!

***GATHERING HYMN: # 275 "Angels from the Realms of Glory"**

***GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY**

P: The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God
sent from heaven above, is with you all. **And also with you.**

Almighty God, Leader of the Heavenly Hosts, **hear our prayer.** *A brief*
silence. We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the innocent children
of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy
all innocent victims. By your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants

and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

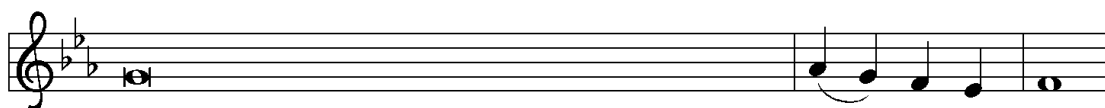
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



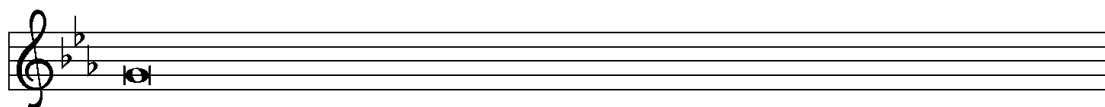
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



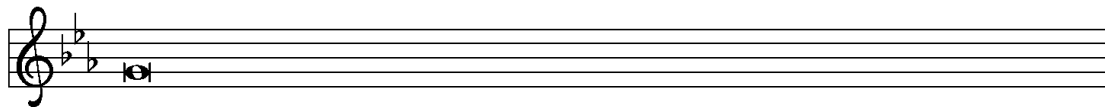
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

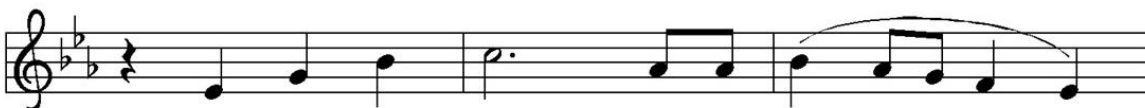


Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS



Glo - ry to God in the high -



est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and



Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we



praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus



Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,



Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the



right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a -



lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High,



Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of



God the Fa - ther. A - men.



Glo - ry to God in the high -



est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

GOD'S WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or an angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

A: A responsive reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 63.

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,

the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,

because of all that the LORD has done for us,

and the great favor to the house of Israel

that God has shown them according to his mercy,

according to the abundance of God's steadfast love.

For God said, "Surely they are my people,

children who will not deal falsely";

and God became their savior in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but God's presence that saved them;

in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;

God lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

This is God's Word, our hope.

We give our thanks to God.

***WELCOMING the GOSPEL**



Verse: *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
and let the word of Christ dwell in your richly.*

***HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23**

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

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

We give glory to you, O Lord.

Now after the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet,

"Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

This is the Good News of Christ's victory!

We give praise to you, O Christ!

***HYMN of the DAY: # 420 "By All Your Saints"** (v. 1, 6, & last)

MESSAGE: **Saved** *silence for reflection follows*

CHORAL RESPONSE: "Coventry Carol" –arr. M. Shaw

APOSTLES CREED

A: With the whole Church, we confess our baptismal faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he
ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection † of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

A: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand.

P: We pray for John, Greg, Lori, Mary Lue, Lynn, Linda, Will, Bea, Ruth, Bud, our at-home worshippers, ... Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

JESUS' SUPPER

PEACE

P: The angels declare: "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"
The peace of Christ is with you always. **And also with you.**

GIVING OUR TITHES and OFFERINGS

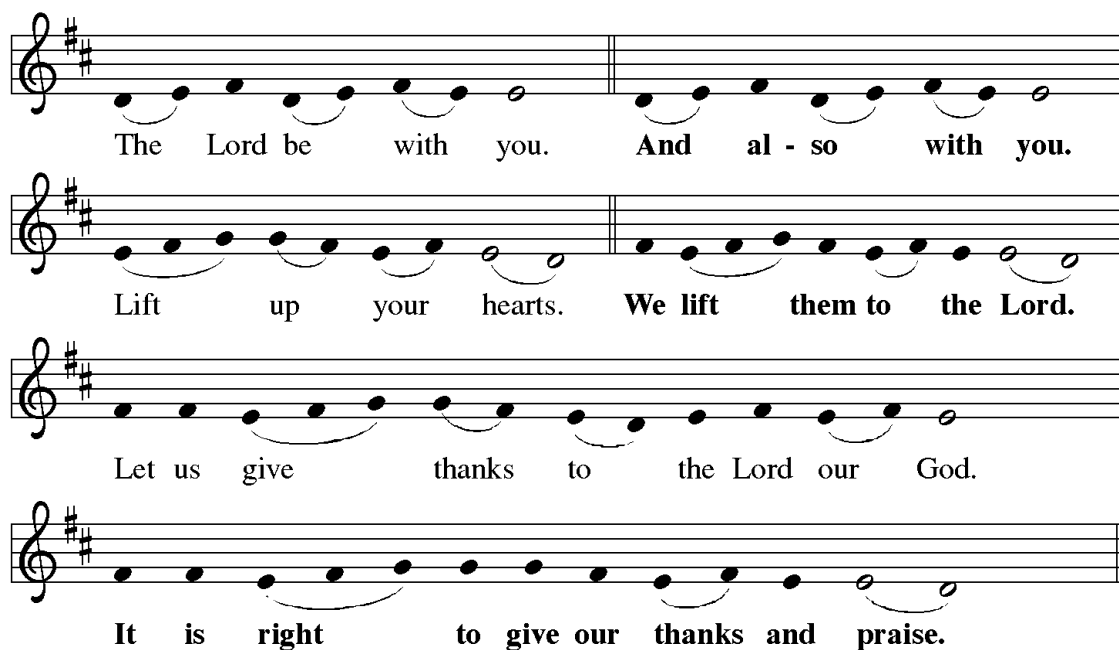
OFFERING HYMN

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray. *A brief silence.* God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen**

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

***PREFACE** *sung by pastor*

***HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE - CHRISTMAS**

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life,

**at the birth of time your Word brought light
into the world.**

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary,

**to shine in our darkness and to build us
into your beloved community.**

While his followers were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said,

Take, eat; this is my body. Do this to remember me.

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying,

Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this to remember me.

Remembering his birth and life among us,

his death and resurrection,

we await Christ's coming again

when all things will be restored in him.

Come, holy Jesus.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
**we may live as your children,
shining with the light of your Son.
Come, Holy Spirit.**

Through Christ all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church, both now and forever.

***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**

***INVITATION to the FEAST**

When we eat this bread we share the body of Christ.

When we drink this cup we share the blood of Christ.

**Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of bread,
as once you revealed yourself to your disciples.**

Sharing Communion *Please take time for meditation & prayer.*

SONG during SUPPER: # 296 "What Child Is This"

SPIRIT'S SENDING

PRAYER for MISSION

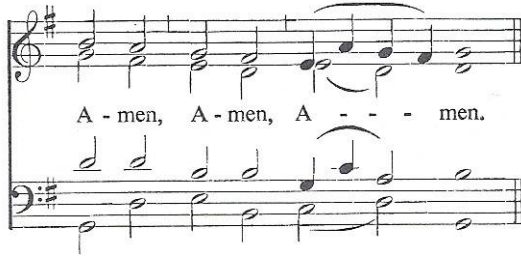
A: Holy God, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* Incarnate God, **you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. Amen**

MISSION UPDATE: *opportunities for learning & service*

***BLESSING**

P: Please stand as you are able to receive the benediction.

*The triune God, glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
bless you with ✠ endless grace, | peace, and joy.*



***SENDING HYMN: # 287 "Let All Together Praise Our God"**

***SENT for MISSION**

A: Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

We will Learn God's Truth.

We will Share Spirit's Healing.

We will Follow Jesus' Way. Amen

P: We go in the peace of Christ

to love and serve all! **YES, we will!**

POSTLUDE: "Let All Together Praise Our God" –J.S. Bach

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**The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

The infant martyrs commemorated on this day were the children of Bethlehem, two years old and younger, who were killed by Herod, who worried that his reign was threatened by the birth of a new king. Augustine called these innocents "buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves." Those linked to Jesus through their youth and innocence encounter the same hostility Jesus encounters later in his ministry.

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***Today's Sponsorships***

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

In Loving Memory of my mother,
Anna Gahs' December 31st birthday.
Given by her son, Bud.

In Honor of Ciara Rook's birthday.
Given by the Heinbaugh family.

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

Thank you for your continued support  
of our flower and bulletin ministry.  
Happy New Year and God's blessings  
to each and every one!  
Nancy and Joy.

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Attendance for Sunday, December 21, 2025: 35

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*Helping with Today's Worship*  
Worship Assistant: Don Bayne  
Usher: Kathy Shull

***Learning, Serving, and Fellowship Opportunities***

**Christmas Holiday Closing:** The church office and St. Peter's Elementary School will be closed through 1/2/26, reopening on Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Poinsettias:** Thank you to everyone who sponsored poinsettias to decorate our altar! Plants remaining after January 4<sup>th</sup> will be given to a good home. Please initial the "pick-up" paper on the lectern when you take your plants.

**Christmas Card Boxes:** Christmas Card boxes are located in the back of the church. Place cards to your church friends in the boxes under the first letter of the recipient's last name. Don't forget to check for cards sent to you! If you see cards addressed to an and at-home worshipper, consider taking the card/s to him/her. Please also consider donating any money you saved on postage to a church mission. Boxes will be removed after 1/11.

**Prayer Boxes:** While the prayer group will not continue to meet (at this time), we will continue to collect prayers for Sunday worship, and to pray for our school families and staff. If you would like to submit a prayer request, please use the prayer jar in the school lobby or the basket in the church lobby.

**2026 Offering Envelopes are available in the Narthex.**

**New Years Eve Service:** Wednesday, December 31<sup>st</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. in the fellowship hall. All are welcome!

**LGBTQIA+ Friends and Allies Pot Luck:** Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 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!