

Sunday, December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent
Holy Communion 10 am



INTRODUCTION

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
121 N. SPRING STREET, MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057
Sunday Worship 10:00am and Wednesday 10:00am

THIS IS CHRIST'S CHURCH
THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU HERE

St. Peter's is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Reconciling in Christ congregation joining with Reconciling Works. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we welcome and invite all of God's people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or economic status.

SERVING OUR CHURCH

December 14, 2025

Preaching & Presiding:

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians:

David Binkley

Reader:

Don Hossler

PRELUDE: Savior of the Nations, Come

by Paul Manz & Dietrich Buxtehude

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSIC MEDITATION: Savior of the Nations, Come

by Johann Sebastian Bach

GATHER

ADVENT WREATH

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 3

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.

As we light the candles on this wreath,
strengthen our hearts

as we await the Lord's coming in glory.

Enlighten us with your grace,

that we may serve our neighbors in need.

Grant this through Christ our Lord,

whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Light three candles.

After the prayer, the candle will be lit, and the congregation will sing the song

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel ELW 257 v 2

ADVENT LITANY:

We prepare a way for the light in the world,

Emmanuel, God with us

We look for you in the eyes of the hungry and unhoused

Emmanuel, God with us

We feel you in the community as we embrace those who have been
unseen or uninvited

Emmanuel, God with us

We search for your love, light and justice in this broken world

Emmanuel, God with us

We wait for the spirit to guide us back to you

Emmanuel, God with us

Gather us today to look toward the light this advent season. Prepare
our hearts, minds and spirits to be one with you.

We ask this in the name of the
Creator, Redeemer and Advocate

AMEN

**GATHERING HYMN: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New
Morn ELW 242**

PRAYER OF THE DAY: Stir up the wills of all who look to you,
Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that,
transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ,
our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.]]

³Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;
⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in**

them;

who keeps promises forever;

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to ¹ those who hunger.

The Lord sets the captive free.

⁸ **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;**

the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹ The Lord cares for the stranger;

the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The Lord shall reign forever,**

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: setting 3 p142

Please stand as you are able.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Gospel according to Matthew the eleventh chapter.

Glory to you O, Lord

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

YOUTH TALK

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: Prepare the Royal Highway ELW 264

+PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We will say the response together.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Let us confess our faith through the Apostles' Creed together:

APOSTLES' CREED (*will be spoken*)

**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.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you all

C: and also with you

P: share that peace with one another

MEAL

MUSICAL OFFERING: Come Now, O Prince of Peace ELW 247

OFFERING PRAYER: Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Body of Christ given for you.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Blood of Christ shed for you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

LORD'S PRAYER *(will be spoken)*

**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 COMMUNION: Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

All are invited to share in communion. It is Christ's table and all are welcome. The Ushers will bring you forward. The Pastor will give you the bread and the communion assistant will have a tray of wine. Please take one cup and drink it.

COMMUNION SONGS:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel ELW 257

It Came upon the Midnight Clear ELW 282

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen**

SEND

BLESSING: 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.

Standing is optional.

SENDING SONG: All Earth Is Hopeful ELW 266

DISMISSAL: Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: Tambourin sur des Noels *by Jean Jacques Charpentier*

**The bulletins are dedicated in honor of our Grandchildren and
Great Grandchildren by Sharon Beard.**

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Middletown is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock peoples and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this place their home.

St. Peter's News

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: New to our prayer list this month: John Ziats, Amelia, Nolan Smith, Debbie Goodling, Gary Fichthorn, James Speeden, Jaiden Mullins, Josie Brewster, Ruth Shireman, Jimmy & Cece Abromitis, Lynda Fitzpatrick, Rainal family, family of Becca

Those friends and members in need of continued prayers: Richard Brandt, Michelle, Milton, Bruce, Betty Wise, Jim White, Jenny Dimeler, Marie Fox, Tina Polito, Patty & John Stewart, Charles Brooks, Mitchell Hahn, Karen Eckles, Barbara Henry, Emily Booth, Lucinda Sheaffer.

****SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES****

Justin Polito, Corbin Stetler, Gabriel Goldsborough, Jordane Mondeaux, Anthony Mondeaux, Edgar Lopez, John Pappas, Colton Stone, Aaron Williams

Thursday Advent Services at the Kierch 7pm

Join us every Thursday of Advent to worship at the Kierch.

Giving Tree

IF YOU HAVE NOT RETURNED YOUR GIVING TREE GIFTS, PLEASE CONTACT SHANNON TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS ASAP! Families will be picking up gifts Monday, December 15th.

Mitten Tree

Each year, we help spread a little warmth to the children and families in Middletown through our Mitten Tree. Please bring in new or handmade hats and mittens for all ages and place them on the tree in

the north narthex beginning November 16th. These items will be collected until December 14th.

Poinsettia Dedications

If you would like to dedicate a poinsettia to a loved pick up your dedication form and return it with payment by December 21st.

Advent in the Barn at Wittle Farm December 21, 7-8:30pm

Join us for an intimate evening of scripture, hymns and songs, prayers and joyful music. We gather in the barn around a manger for this annual tradition, with candlelight, hot cocoa and cookies. Hosted by The Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central PA.

Sunday, December 21 is our annual youth led Christmas worship play during the 10am worship service. Join us as the kids tell story of Christmas.

Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – noon. Monday – Thursday

Enter through the Community Center doors

Phone Number: (717) 944-4651

Web site: www.stpetersmiddletown.org

E-mail address: ParishMail@stpetersmiddletown.org

WMSS 91.1FM broadcasts our service at 11am.

Facebook livestream: St Peter's Lutheran Church Middletown

