

Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve Family Service
6:30 p.m. Prelude
7:00 p.m. Holy Communion with Candle Lighting



Introduction

In winter's deepest night, God's story of heaven on earth is told to all who will listen, see and have faith in the Promise of a new life. Have you heard... Mary and Joseph welcome the Christ child. Have you heard... the angels singing to the shepherds in the night sky. Have you heard... Christ's light shines all over the world! Bringing HOPE, PEACE, LOVE & JOY to the world!

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

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 24, 2025

Preaching

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians

Spirit & Truth with Amy & Cassidy Miller,
Adam Evans, Brookelynn May, John Ponnett

Reader:

Adam Evans

Acolytes

Allison Evans, Adam Evans, Luke Wren,
Brookelynn May, Wren Heckman

GATHER

PRELUDE (beginning at 6:30pm)

Make Room *by Casting Crowns*

Let There Be Peace On Earth *by Vince & Jenny Gill*

Merry Christmas Darling *by The Carpenters*

Sweet Little Jesus Boy *by Casting Crowns*

Heaven Everywhere *By Francesca Battistelli*

Joseph's Lullaby *by Mercy Me*

***God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen**

***Up On The House Top** *Brookelynn Mae on violin*

WELCOME HYMN:

Angels We Have Heard On High ELW 289 v1-3

INVOCATION

In the name of God the creator, Christ the redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, who is our guide. **Amen**

PRAYER

O God, we thank you for the best Christmas gift to us! Jesus coming to us in an ordinary place. It is not about the fancy things, houses and cars, it is about your love that is so big it lights up the world! This love fills us with hope that all will be made new! Through this gift of Jesus, our sadness, pain and mishaps are forgiven. Our arguments are turned into peace. And being claimed as your children gives us great joy! We thank you for this celebration as your church! **Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE MANGER

The animals stir as a baby is born, Emmanuel – God with us
O come, let us adore him.

The shepherds come to see for themselves what the angels told
O come, let us adore him.

The angels sing the message of Emmanuel -God with us
O come, let us adore him.

The people see the power of your love
O come, let us adore him.

Let us pray. O Lord our God, we gather around your Son, born for us. Bless us with your holy presence, and inspire us to help those who have no place to dwell. Be with us that we might share Christ's love with all the world, for Jesus is our light and salvation. Glory in heaven and peace on earth, now and forever. **Amen**

Carol: *The First Noel* ELW 300 v1

WORD

FIRST LESSON according to Isaiah 9:2,6-7, Walking in the Dark

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

CAROL: What Child is this ELW 296 vs 1

SECOND LESSON- Isaiah 11:1-5 A branch: it starts small

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

CAROL: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear ELW 282 vs 1

THIRD LESSON: Luke 1:26-33 Mary & angel surprise!

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

CAROL: *Mary Did You Know* by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy has come to make you new?
This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?

Oh Mary did you know... Ooo Ooo Ooo

The blind will see
The deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of The Lamb

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
The sleeping Child you're holding is the great "I am"

FOURTH LESSON: Luke 1:46-55 Mary's Song of Joy

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

CAROL: The Manger and the Cross *by Doug Anderson*

VERSE 1:

The road was dusty rough and long Her labor pains were getting
strong
The inns were full as night closed in on them Young Mary made it to
a barn
Leaning hard on Joseph's arm His coat and straw would make for her
a bed
That night in Bethlehem city of bread Long promise bread of life was
born

CHORUS:

*Brightest star and darkest night Treasure and loss
The wood and the bread of life The manger and the cross*

VERSE 2:

A wooden manger was his bed
A bag of grain held his sweet head
The borrowed cave became his borrowed home
Some borrowed neighbors came to see
This fragile babe eternity Lying there in Mary's arms awake
And did the carpenter feel the rough wood Was there in Mary's heart
some pain

CHORUS:

Brightest star and darkest night Treasure and loss

The wood and the bread of life The manger and the cross

BRIDGE:

O come and place a baby's face Where all heaven and her

Dance in the light All the hopes and fears

Of all the years Are met in you Tonight tonight

VERSE 3:

Tender head and rugged wood deep as hunger's holy food

The breath of God comes right to where we are

That night in Bethlehem city of bread Long promise bread of life was
born

Brightest glory and darkest night Treasure and loss

The wood and the holy seed The wood and the holy seed

The manger and the cross

FIFTH LESSON: LUKE 2:7, Emmanuel: God With Us

⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

CAROL: Away In A Manger ELW 277 vs1 *with Amy & Cassidy Miller*

Luke 2: 8-15 Angels Sing and Shepherds Fear

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

CAROL: O Come, All Ye Faithful ELW 283

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Angels are everywhere!

MESSAGE: Turning from fear- living into joy!

MUSICAL REFLECTION:

Come and See What's Happenin' In The Barn *by The Gaithers*

Chorus

Come and see what's happenin' in the barn
I've seen nothin' like this since I've been on this farm
Those strangers camping out there, have a baby in their arms
Come and see what's happenin' in the barn

verse

Must have been sometime 'bout close to midnight
A big ole guy came knockin' at my door
He said his wife was about to have a baby
She just couldn't travel anymore
I said the rooms had all been rented out
But they'd find shelter out there in the barn
They could throw some blankets in the stable
At least, they would be dry and safe from harm

chorus

verse

Sometime before dawn, I was awakened
The light was floodin' through the windowpane
A star as bright as moonlight was shinin'
And pretty music I could not explain
And so, I ran downstairs to have a look around
And I tell you I could not believe my eyes
A crowd had gathered all around the manger
And they were talkin' about God's big surprise

chorus

verse

The shepherds said that they'd been on the hillside
Tellin' stories just to stay awake
The baby lambs were sleepin' near the campfire
The ewes were huddled by the stone-fenced gate
And then the sky just seemed to open wide
With a sound and light that they could hardly bear
What they swore were angels sang in chorus
"You'll find the new Messiah over there"
Now go and see what's happening in the barn

There's been nothin' like it ever happened on this farm
The strangers that camped out there have a baby in their arms
Go and see what's happenin' in the barn

chorus

outro

Come and see (come and see) (come and see) (come and see)
Come and see what's happenin' in the barn
Come and see (come and see) (come and see) (come and see)
Come and see what's happenin' in the barn
Come and see (come and see) (come and see) (come and see)
Come and see

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

Hear Us, O Christ,

O Come Let Us Adore Him. *Response will be sung by musicians*

MEAL

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share that peace with each other.

OFFERING SONG: Joy To The World ELW 267 v1,4

OFFERING PRAYER

Emmanuel - God with us:

You came as a baby to a manger.

You greeted shepherds and the poor.

You come again in bread and wine.

Remind us of your blessings in ordinary things.

And, through these gifts,

help us to bless the lives of others

in the strength of your holy name. **Amen.**

COMMUNION

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.

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.

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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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

Come to the table, Jesus invites us to receive his love, mercy and grace!

COMMUNION

All are invited to share in Holy Communion.

Please be seated & come forward for Holy Communion as directed by our ushers. If you are unable to come forward the pastor will bring communion to you.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Stand as you are able

Do You Hear What I Hear *by Noel Regney*

O little Town of Bethlehem ELW 279

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

You have nourished us around the table and have prepared our hearts to continue your light in the world. Send us out to tell your story. **Amen**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your love shine all over the world, and in this meal we have been fed by your grace. Let your WORD guide us to you, to help us share your story with everyone we meet. We thank you for inviting us to be your holy people through Jesus today, tomorrow and always. **Amen**

CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

The Pastor, taking a large candle, lights it from an altar candle which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the World.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In the beginning there was darkness and you created light and in the fullness of time you sent forth your Son, the Light of the World. Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ; may His word be a lamp to your feet and a light to our path; for you are merciful and love your whole creation, and we your creatures, glorify you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

The Pastor gives light to the ushers who are standing at the chancel entrance. They, in turn, give light to the first worshipper in each pew, who passes it on. The lighted candle is held upright when giving light to another. When all the candles are lit, we sing together:

HYMN: Silent Night, Holy Night ELW 281 v1-3

1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,



heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

SEND

BLESSING

May God teach you in the way you should go;
May Christ counsel you with a loving eye on you
May the Spirit direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love
for one another and for all,
And strengthen your heart until Jesus comes to earth again.
Almighty Creator, redeemer and advocate bless your this day and
always
Merry Christmas!

HYMN: Go Tell It on the Mountain ELW 290 v1-3

DISMISSAL

Go in hope peace and love and share the joy of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE- Silver Bells *by Ray Evans*

My Favorite Things *by Rodgers & Hammerstein*

The alter greens are dedicated in memory of Barbara J. Wise and
Betty Wise by Molly & Jim

As we are a priesthood of all believers, I thank you for the gift of the
ministry we share together. Whether you are visiting or a long time
member, your care for neighbors is what makes us a church
family. Thank you for continuing this ministry together so others
may know the story of Christ's light in this broken world.

Peace and joy,
Pastor Molly

St. Peter's News

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: New to our prayer list this month: Paula, Michele, John Ziats, Amelia, Nolan Smith, Debbie Goodling, Gary Fichthorn, James Spedden, 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

ST. PETER'S STAFF

Everyone Serving and Caring for Others

Rev. Molly Haggerty	Pastor
Shannon Kelly	Coordinator of TOGETHER
Bennett Williams	Coordinator of Music
Shannon Kelly	Office Administration
Hope Pankake	Visitation Chaplain
Sharon Beard	Coordinator of Congregational Care
John Ponnett	Treasurer
Kendra Darrah	Financial Secretary
Andy Wren	Council President

Church Office Hours: 9:00 am. – 11:30 am. Monday – Thursday
(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

Church Office Holiday Hours:

The church office will be open Dec 22-24.

The office will be closed Dec 25-Jan 3.

The office is located at the back entrance of the church in the alley
Monday – Thursday 9-11:30 am.

COMMUNITY DINNERS:

Community Meal on Tuesday, December 30 from 6-7pm. Food
Pantry 6:30-7pm.

Holiday Food and Clothing Pantry Hours

Open Tuesday Dec 30 from 6:30-7 pm

CLOSED Dec 24-Jan4 during the day

*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.*



Ministries of St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Church Ministries

Sewing Ladies	Tues 9-11:30 am
Bible Study	Wed 11:00 am
Justice Book Club	contact Marianne Moore
TOGETHER Hope garden	contact Shannon Kelly
Holy Huddle - lunch & faith	One Sunday per month

Outreach Ministries

Community Meals	Tues 6 pm
TOGETHER Afterschool	Wed 3-5:30 pm
Parent Pod	Thur 9:30-11 am
Food & Clothing Pantry	Mon-Thurs 9-11:30 am
Meals on Wheels	contact Don Hossler
Family Promise	contact Pr Molly Haggerty

Summer Fun & Lunch

Community Partners

Hope Academy PA

MAHS Life Skills student

Middletown Area Library

Middletown School District

Women, Infant & Children

Amanda Razansky Counseling

Lower Susquehanna Synod

Middletown Borough

June-Aug

Mon-Fri

Mon-Thurs

Summer Fun

Summer Fun

Mon-Fri

by appointment



***St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Poinsettia Dedications - December 2025***



In loving memory of

George Fuoti

Charles E. Beard

Alice Hoke

Audrey & Joseph Bartush

Florence Stoops

Walter Stoops

Barbara Ponnett

David & Erma Grim

James & Rosemarie Darrah

William A Darrah

John & Pauline Quaca

John & Helen Staub

Paula Staub

My Father, Ralph Thompson

My Mother, Frances Thompson

My Grandparents

Loved Ones

Dale & Marjorie Rhen

John & Grace DeHart

Leo & Lillie Krupilis

by

Agnes (Sis) Fuoti

His Family

Tim & Sue Hipple

Their Children &

Grandchildren

The Stoops Family

The Stoops Family

John Ponnett

Grim/Darrah Family

Grim/Darrah Family

Grim/Darrah Family

Staub Family

Staub Family

Staub Family

Ray Thompson

Ray Thompson

Ray Thompson

Ray Thompson

Their Loving Family

Rachel & Rebecca Allen

Rachel & Rebecca Allen

To the Glory of God

by Andy & Jodie Evans