

Sunday, December 21, 2025
Retelling of the Christmas Story Worship
Holy Communion 10 am



Introduction

The Christmas story told through the eyes of Mary. She shouts for joy to be chosen by God to be part of the holy family. The angels appear to give us all a message of turning fear into joy! The shepherds tend to their sheep in a way that brings a smile as we remember the love that Christ gives us turns into passing it on to others. May you find the spirit of Christmas in the youth's retelling of this blessed story! Emmanuel, God with 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 21, 2025

Presiding

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians:

Spirit & Truth

Narrator:

Don Hossler

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Mary: Avery Heckman

Joseph: John Ponnett

Elizabeth: Sam Starliper

Gabe, the Angel: Dan Allegar

Angels: Brookelynn May, Wren Heckman, Pr Molly Haggerty

Shepherds: Landon & Miles Young, Bruce Seaman

The Sheep: Kate Haggerty, Linda Carpen, Roxanne & Ernie Wehnke

A special thank you to Bennett Williams for his composition of several of the songs and his dedication to our worship team.

PRELUDE: Light One Candle ELW 240

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSICAL MEDITATION: *Dan Allegar* selection

GATHER

ADVENT WREATH

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

As we light the candles on this wreath,
open our eyes to see your presence
in the lowly ones of this earth.

Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may sing of your advent among us
in the Word made flesh.

Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 4

After the prayer, the candles will be lit, and the congregation will sing

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel ELW 257 v 4

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

ADVENT LITANY: (we will sing the response)

Emmanuel, God with us *by Bennett Williams*

Emmanuel, God with us

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 SONG: O Come All Ye Faithful ELW 283

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy Spirit, surround your children today as we experience the living
word of God through our own eyes. Help us to feel the joy of this
retelling of the Christmas story. Emmanuel – God with us! As we
hear the message of the angels, help us turn from fear to joy! Thank
you for the gifts of your people. **Amen**

Song: O Come All Ye Faithful ELW 283

Act One: Gabriel & Mary *Luke 1:26-38,46-56 CEB*

²⁶When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" ²⁹She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. ³¹Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. ³³He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

³⁴Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

³⁵The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. ³⁶Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. ³⁷Nothing is impossible for God."

³⁸Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

My Soul Glorifies the Lord: Mary's Song *by Bennett Williams:*

Sung by: Avery Heckman

REFRAIN:

My Soul Glorifies the Lord

And my spirit rejoices in my Savior **(REPEAT)**

VERSE:

He has been mindful of my heart

From now on, Generations will call me Blessed

The Supreme Angels *by Bennett Williams*

Spoken:

Hi! We're the GELS – The ANG – GELS!

And don't you forget about it!

Verse 1:

We are the GELS that like to dance

We hope you give our steps a chance

Verse 2:

We love to dance the night away

God with us, He's gonna stay

Verse 3:

We are the GELS that like to dance

We hope you give our steps a chance

Bridge:

Don't be scared, this isn't a fluke

It's all recorded in the Book of Luke

Outro:

We are the GELS that like to dance

Quieter: We are the GELS that like to dance

Song: Jingle Bells *by James Lord Pierpont*

Dashing through the snow

In a one horse open sleigh

Over the hills we go

Laughing all the way

Bells on Bobtails ring

Making spirits bright

What fun it is to ride and sing

A sleighing song tonight

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells

Jingle all the way

Oh what fun it is to ride in a

One horse open sleigh

Jingle bells, Jingle Bells

Jingle all the way

Oh what fun it is to ride in a one

Horse open sleigh

Act TWO: The Angel & Joseph *Matt 1:18-25 CEB*

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place.

When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. ²⁰As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

²³*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel.*^[a]

(*Emmanuel* means "God with us.")

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Song: Away in a Manger ELW 277

The Poor Little Sheep *by Minnigerode and Pomeroy*

We're poor little lambs who have lost our way: Baa! Baa! Baa!
We're little black sheep who have gone astray: Baa! Baa! Baa!

Act 3: Shepherds in the Field *Luke 2:8-18 CEB*

⁸Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. ⁹The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. ¹¹Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, ¹⁴"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

¹⁵When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” ¹⁶They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. ¹⁸Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them.

The Supreme Angels return

Song: Angels We Have Heard On High ELW 289

The Shepherd Shuffle *by Bennett Williams*

We are the shepherds, the mighty mighty shepherds.

We are the shepherds. Where’s this Jesus at?

We are the shepherds, the mighty mighty shepherds.

We are the shepherds

(STOP!)

(spoken loud) *Jesus Joseph Mary where’s this baby at?*

Song: O Little Town of Bethlehem ELW 279

Act 4: Mary’s Greatest Gift *Luke 2:19-20 CEB*

¹⁹Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. ²⁰The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

The Shepherd Shuffle *by Bennett Williams*

We are the shepherds, the mighty mighty shepherds.

We are the shepherds. Where’s this Jesus at?

We are the shepherds, the mighty mighty shepherds.

We are the shepherds

(STOP!)

(spoken loud) *Jesus Joseph Mary where’s this baby at?*

Song: Joy to the World E LW 267

THE MEAL

COMMUNION PRAYER: God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

THE 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.

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.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us 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.

The table has been prepared, come and dine!

COMMUNION SONGS:

What Child Is This ELW 296

Edelweiss *by Rodegers & Hammerstein*

BLESSING:

Go out into God's world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return to no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the suffering' honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

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

FINAL BLESSING:

Go glorify and praise God for all the things you see! Go Tell it on the mountain! **Thanks be to God!**

The Altar flowers are dedicated in memory of Matthew Hahn on the Anniversary of his birthday by Karen Hahn.

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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: Paula, Michele, 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

Christmas help – Can you stay after worship?

Sunday, Dec 21st we will be preparing the sanctuary for Christmas Eve. We will need to change paraments, hang the banner and move the baptismal font and altar back in place etc.

THANK YOU!

Christmas Eve Services:

10 am Traditional Service in the sanctuary
7 pm Family Friendly Service (Facebook live stream)
6:30 pm Christmas Prelude Music begins
10 pm WMSS 91.1 FM (pre-recorded service)
11:00 pm Christmas Eve Vigil at the Kierch

Lessons & Carols: Dec 28, 2025 10 am in sanctuary

We will be learning the history of our Christmas carols and singing our favorite selections. Dress comfortably and bring friends!

SHOP the SHOPPE

Check out our booth at the 717 Vintage Shoppe. Thank you to everyone that has donated items for us to sell. All proceeds support church ministries!

Clothing Donations: We are happily accepting donations of clean and gently used clothes and coats for all ages and sizes for our clothing ministry. If you have any clothes to donate, please drop them off at the church office! Thank you for your generosity.

Community Dinners: 6 pm in Luther Hall

Community Meal on Tuesday, December 23rd.

Community Meal on Tuesday, December 30th.

Holiday Hours for Church Office, Food & Clothing Pantry

Monday Dec 22 & Tuesday, Dec 23- Open 9-11:30 am

The office and pantry will be closed from Dec 24 through Jan 4.

There WILL BE a community meal on Tuesday, December 30.

We will return to normal hours on Monday, January 5th Mon-

Thurs 9-11:30 pm

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

WMSS 91.1FM broadcasts our service at 11am.

Watch the service live (10am) on our FACEBOOK page-

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Middletown, PA