

Sunday, March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent, Year A
Holy Communion 10 am



Introduction

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

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 community of faith committed to loving God and our neighbors. As a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Reconciling in Christ congregation joining with Reconciling Works, we gather for worship, study and service. 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. Come join us and experience the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ.

SERVING OUR CHURCH

March 1, 2026

Preaching & Presiding:

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians:

Rev. Thomas Busteed, Gerry Leonard

Reader:

Sharon Beard

PRELUDE: Musical Selections

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHER

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the fountain of living water,
the rock who gave us birth,
our light and our salvation.

Amen.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into
freedom.

At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the
Holy Spirit.

By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.
Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: What Wondrous Love is This ELW 666

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

KYRIE: ELW Setting 3, PG 138

CANTICLE: Glory to God ELW Setting 3, p 139

PRAYER OF THE DAY: O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, 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: Genesis 12:1-4a

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

¹The Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

^{4a} So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

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

PSALM: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the Lord. (Ps. 121:1, 2)

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

² **My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

³The Lord will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

⁴**Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

⁵the Lord watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

⁶**the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

⁷The Lord will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.

⁸**The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming
in, from this time forth for evermore.**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

¹What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

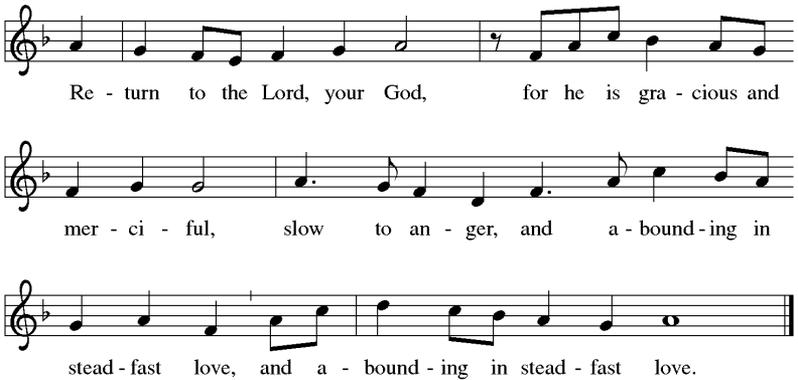
¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION setting 3 p142

Please stand as you are able.



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The Gospel according to John the third chapter.

Glory to you O, Lord

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

SERMON:

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lift High the Cross ELW 660

+PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: *We will say the response together.*
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Please stand as you are able.

APOSTLES' CREED

**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: On My Heart Imprint Your Image
ELW 811**

OFFERING PRAYER: O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.

You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.

Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ:
our Good Samaritan, who tends the wounds of body and spirit
with the oil of consolation and the wine of hope;
the Sun of righteousness, who raises us to life on his healing wings.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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

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.

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.

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. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SEND

BLESSING: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, † bless you now and always. **Amen.**

Standing is optional.

SENDING: Blessed Assurance ELW 638

DISMISSAL: Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: Musical Selections

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.

The altar greens are dedicated in loving memory of Walter Stoops by The Stoops family, the lamp candle is dedicated in loving memory of Deborah Fager on her birthday by Karen & Tim Ainsley and in loving memory of H. Russell Klinefelter by William & Barbara Klinefelter.

St. Peter's News

Daylight savings is next week, March 8th. We will spring forward and move the clocks one hour ahead. Don't forget to change your clocks or you'll be late to church!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE New to our prayer list this month: Barbara Lingle, Karen Hahn, Michele, Amelia, Nolan Smith, Gary Fichthorn, James Spedden, Jaiden Mullins, Jimmy & Cece Abromitis, Lynda Fitzpatrick. **Those friends and members in need of continued prayers:** Josie Brewster, Michelle, Milton, Bruce, Jim White, Tina Polito, Patty & John Stewart, Karen Eckles, Barbara Henry, Emily Booth, Lucinda Sheaffer.

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

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

Midweek Lenten services will be held in the chapel at 10am Wednesdays from February 25 through April 1, 2026.

Lenten Bible Study- Conversations with Jesus, will be held Wednesdays February 25 through April 1 at 11am in the café with Pr. Molly Haggerty.

Lenten Soup Sale- quarts of soup are being sold to help the youth group get to camp this summer! Soup will be available after church service on 3/1, 3/8 and 3/15 for \$10 a quart. Order forms are on the table at the back of the sanctuary and the bulletin table in the café.

There will be a craft show in Luther Hall on March 21 from 9-1pm. Join us to shop local and support our community!

Holy Week Schedule 2026

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| Sunday 3/29 | Palm Sunday | 10am | Sanctuary |
| Wednesday 4/1 | Midweek worship | 10am | Chapel |
| | Lenten Bible Study | 10am | Cafe |
| Friday 4/3 | Good Friday service | 10am | Chapel |
| | | 7pm | Sanctuary |
| Sunday 4/5 | Easter Sunday Worship | 10am | Sanctuary |

Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.. 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