

Second Sunday in Lent
Sunday, February 25th, 2024
Holy Communion 10 am



Introduction

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

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

February 25th, 2024

Preaching & Presiding:

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians:

Spirit & Truth

Reader:

Jeremy Railing

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: Even Then *by Micah Tyler*

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GREETING AND RESPONSE

The grace of Christ, the love of God, and the peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.** Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,



we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GATHERING: How Firm a Foundation ELW 796 v 1, 2 & 3

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of 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 17:1-7, 15-16

As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of

nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”
Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

We will read the Psalm responsively.

Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD. (Ps. 22:27)

²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob’s line, give glory. Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.

²⁴For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD’s face hidden from them; but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.

²⁵From you comes my praise in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

²⁶The poor shall eat and be satisfied, Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow before God.

**²⁸For dominion belongs to the LORD,
who rules over the nations.**

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

**³⁰Their descendants shall serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

³¹They shall proclaim God’s deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them, “The LORD has acted!”

SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.

¹³The 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. ¹⁴If 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 violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he 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. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what was promised. ²²Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ²³Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in our God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Sanctuary *by Scruggs & Thompson*

Please stand as you are able.

The Gospel according to St. Mark the eighth chapter.

Glory to you O, Lord

GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38

After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter's response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.

³¹[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Humankind must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Humankind will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his God with the holy angels."

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

YOUNG WORSHIPPERS' MESSAGE SERMON

HOD: Will You Come and Follow Me ELW 798 v 1, 2 & 3

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.

Please be seated for the prayers. We will say the response together.

+PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you all

C: and also with you

P: share that peace with one another

OFFERING: Jesus! Lover of My Soul *by Hillsong Worship*

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

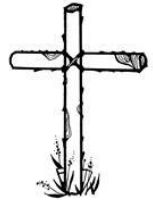
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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...

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



SANCTUS: ELW page 144

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

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. An Acolyte will collect the empty cup. You can go to the rail for a silent prayer or return to your seat.

COMMUNION SONGS

Arms of Love by Kate Cooke

Jesus, Remember Me ELW 616

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The God of glory, ✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Standing is optional.

SENDING: Make Me a Channel of Your Peace by Sebastian Temple



MAKE ME A CHANNEL OF YOUR PEACE

1 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

3 Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

DISMISSAL:

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: You Raise Me Up *by Celtic Woman*

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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: Kate Haggerty, Cindy Lippy, Mae Stum, Thelma Thomas, Doris Arnold, Regina Heagy, Lucinda Sheaffer, Ben Chappell, Mary Houser, and Richard Brandt. Those friends and members in need of continued prayers: Dorothy Murphy, Karen Ainsley, Ida Kramer, Betty Wise, Stephanie Kastelik, Brenda Stum, Kiersten Kwiatkowski, George Fuoti, Linda Holmes, Jim Hurst, and Tina Polito.

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

Gabriel Goldsborough, Jordane Cleckner, Edgar Lopez, John Pappas, Corbin Stetler, Colton Stone, Aaron Williams

SUNDAY SCHOOL

St. Peter's Sunday School program is back! We will meet in the café after church on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sundays at 11am. We ask parents to join us in the lessons and help the kids grow in their faith journeys.

THE CHOSEN SERIES

Join Pastor Molly & Bennett on Wednesday evenings starting February 21st centered around the critically-acclaimed drama, "The Chosen," which portrays the story of Jesus through the perspective of his followers. We will meet in Luther Hall at 6:30pm for a meal of soup and bread while we watch the series followed by a discussion at 7pm.

TOGETHER MENTOR

TOGETHER is looking for male volunteer mentors to come in and help for an hour several days a week. We are asking this person to help with making meals, talking with the youth, and possibly playing games with the kids. The times would be from 3pm to 4pm. If you are interested, please reach out to Alex Mabee at her email amabee@stpetersmiddletown.org or call her at 832-752-6833.

SUMMER CAMP 2024

Summer Camp programs and registrations forms are available for Kirchenwald and Nawakwa for the 2024 season. There are a variety of programs available for a wide range of ages. Please see Sharon for more information and to learn how to get a discount on your registration. Pamphlets are available by the office.
www.lutherancamping.org

SUMMER CAMP OPEN HOUSE

Meet the Nawakwa or Kirchenwald staff on Sunday, March 17th & Sunday April 14th from 2pm-4:30pm. You will tour the facilities and receive a \$10 coupon for the camp store for each new camper! For more information, visit www.LutheranCamping.org or call 717-677-8211

NYG FEBRUARY SOUP PICK-UP

The sale to send our youth to the National Youth Gathering is here! Pickup is today, February 25th after worship or Wednesday after Chapel. Please see Alex with questions.

SPRING GARAGE SALE

TOGETHER, St. Peter's Youth, and Hope Academy are hosting a garage sale fundraiser on April 12th from 5pm-8pm and on April 13th from 9am-3pm. If you have items you would like to donate to the sale or need help transporting your donations, especially clothes, household items, and games, please contact Alex at: AMabee@StPetersMiddletown.org. Donations are accepted now to April 1st!

CELEBRATIONS

If you have a special celebration you'd like to highlight in the bulletin, please email Jen at: JKemper@StPetersMiddletown.org or call the office at: 717-944-4651. Birthdays and anniversaries will be printed monthly, but we would also like to highlight other special events in our congregation or community, such as graduations, academic honors, sports achievements, engagements, or any other notable event you'd like to share.

717 VINTAGE

Beginning February 1st, St. Peter's will have a room reserved at the 717 Vintage Shop on S Union street in Middletown. If you have items you would like to donate, contact Sharon at: 717-991-0901 or sbeard712@gmail.com. All proceeds will go to church ministries.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join us for the women's retreat, "God in Us: Broken and Beautiful: at Kentland from Friday, March 8th at 6pm to Saturday, March 9th at 4pm. Kentland Retreat Center is located at: 1024 E Winding Hill Rd Mechanicsburg, PA. The weekend costs \$40 or \$25 for one day. RSVP through Pastor Molly by email: PastorMolly.outreach@gmail.com

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION APRIL 27th

Join TOGETHER at Hoffer Park on April 27th from 10am-1pm to learn about ways we can protect our planet. We will also be doing fun science experiments, playing games (including a bounce house), enjoying food trucks, and more!

COMMUNITY NEED

A member of our community has reached out in need of furniture. If you have furniture you'd like to donate, please email Jen what you have and whether you are able to bring it to the church. Thank you! JKemper@stpetersmiddletown.org

SIGN UP TO READ

A new sign-up sheet to read in the new year has been posted near the office. Please consider signing up to read! Email Jen at JKemper@StPetersMiddletown.org to request the readings in advance, in large print, or with another accommodation in mind.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Please consider helping StPeters Middletown deliver meals for 2 to 3 hours per morning 3 to 5 days a week in Royalton and Middletown in June. To learn more about the delivering experience please talk with JoAnn Skovira, Carol Hahn, Barb or Allen Jacobs, Kristie or Aaron

Young, Gail or Don Hossler. To sign up for June deliveries please call Gail at 717-944-2250.