

First Sunday of Advent  
Sunday, December 3rd, 2023  
Holy Communion 10 am



### Introduction

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Humankind with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

***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 3rd, 2023**

**Preaching & Presiding:**

Pr. Molly Haggerty

**Reader:**

Jen Kemper

**Musicians:**

Spirit & Truth

**PRELUDE: Oh, How Shall We Get Ready**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **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 opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.

Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Everlasting God,

**you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to**

work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. Amen.

**KYRIE ELW page 184 (setting 8) v 3 & 4**

*Refrain*

Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, on our world and on our way.

Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, ev-'ry day.

1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the  
 2 That we may live out your im-passioned re-sponse to the  
 3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for  
 4 For your Spir-it to guide; that you cen-ter our lives in the

u-ni-ty of all; for  
 hun-gry and the poor; that  
 friends and fam-i-ly; for  
 wa-ter and the word; that you

this ho-ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,  
 we may live out . . . . truth and jus-tice and grace,  
 life and for love, . . . . for our work and our play,  
 nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod-y and blood,

*Refrain*  
 let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up your power, O Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came ELW 265 v 1, 3 & 4**

## **LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE**

**SING: Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah ELW 240 v 1**

## **WORD**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9**

*This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.*

<sup>1</sup>O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— <sup>2</sup>as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! <sup>3</sup>When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. <sup>4</sup>From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for God. <sup>5</sup>You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. <sup>6</sup>We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. <sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. <sup>8</sup>Yet, O LORD, you are our Parent; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

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

*We will read the Psalm responsively.*

**PSALM: Psalm 95:1-7a**

*Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)*

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when  
your people pray?**

You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

And so will we never turn away from you;  
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

*As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.*

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in God, in speech and knowledge of every kind—<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus

Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by God you were called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW page 188** (*Setting 8*)

*Please stand as you are able.*

The Gospel according to St. Mark, the thirteenth chapter.

**Glory to you O, Lord**

**GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37**

*Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>24</sup>“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Humankind coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only God. <sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like someone going on a journey, when they home and puts their servants in charge, each with their work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the owner of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else they may find you asleep when they come suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

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

**CHILDREN'S SERMON  
SERMON**

**HOD: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers** ELW 244 v 1, 2 & 4  
*Please be seated for the prayers. We will say the response together.*

**+PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Merciful God,. **Receive our prayer.**

*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

**OFFERING SONG: We Are An Offering** ELW 692

**OFFERING PRAYER**

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**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 190** (*setting 8*)

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

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

*We will say the Lord's Prayer together.*

**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

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet. Come, take your place at the table.



*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**

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel** ELW 257

**My Soul Glorifies the Lord** *by Bennett Williams*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **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: My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness** ELW 251

## **DISMISSAL:**

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE: Waiting on the World to Change** *by John Mayer*

**The bulletins are dedicated to family & friends by Ray Thompson.**

**The Altar Flowers are dedicated in memory of Dottie & Edward Willenbecher by their family & in memory of Florence Stoops by the Stoops family.**

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# St. Peter's News

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:**

New to our prayer list this month:

Mae Stum, Josie Brewster, Alex Mabee, Alex Joyce, Thelma Thomas, Jessica Brenizer, Dorthy Murphy, Doris Arnold, Regina Heagy, Marjorie Peiffer, Lucinda Sheaffer, Lenda Evans, Don Cappetta, Ben Chappell, and Richard Brandt.

Those friends and members in need of continued prayers: Karen Ainsley, Fred Harris, Ida Kramer, Anna Raffensburger, Betty Wise, Stephanie Kastelik, Diana Arnold, Brenda Stum, Kiersten Kwiatkowski, George Fuoti, Linda Holmes, Jim Hurst, and Tina Polito.

## **\*\*SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES\*\***

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

## **KIERCH CAROL SING**

Please join us Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Kierch as part of the Middletown Historic Tours. Remember to dress for the cold and that the Kierch does not have a rest room.

## **HOLIDAY CONCERT**

The Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus is performing a FREE holiday concert at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Middletown on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 3pm in the sanctuary.

## **GIVING TREE**

Please take an ornament from the Giving Tree in the Narthex. Each ornament will include the age, gender, and wish list of a local child. Return all wrapped gifts to the Giving Tree by December 17<sup>th</sup> for the TOGETHER youth to deliver! Thank you and merry Christmas!

## MITTEN TREE

St. Peter's is collecting new or handmade hats & mittens for all ages up until December 17<sup>th</sup>. Place your donations on the tree!



## CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES WILL BE HELD  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH, 2023

- TRADITIONAL SERVICE: 10:00AM
  - FAMILY FRIENDLY SERVICE: 7:00PM
- WMSS 91.1 FM WILL BE AIRED AT 10 PM



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST WILL BE HELD IN  
LUTHER HALL WITH THE MEMBERS OF RENEWED IN  
GRACE. IT WILL BE BREAKFAST CHURCH WITH A  
CAROL SING.

*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 land their home.*