



# St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church

Hopewell Township, N.J.

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Rev. Jon Dunbar, Pastor (402) 641-4813

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## Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023

### **Our mission:**

*to spread the Word of Salvation through Christ,  
honor God, serve others, and grow in faith.*

**Welcome.** JOY is the theme for this third Sunday in Advent! The prophet Isaiah describes Israel's joy in the Messiah as being like a person who's served his time being released from prison (Isaiah 61:1) The apostle Paul invites us - by faith - to "Rejoice always," (1 Thess. 5:16). And John the Baptist proclaims the superiority of Christ with joy. The ability to rejoice, even through hard times, is an act of spiritual bravery. Cynics play it safe. God calls us to reflect the JOY that befits those who know the Savior of the world has come.

**Welcome guests!** We are delighted you are with us for worship this morning. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Jon, sign the guest book next to the front doors, and let us know how we can be of service to you. The order of service is printed in this bulletin starting on page 2. A cryroom is available at the back left of the sanctuary for families with young children if there is a need.

**Communion Note:** We believe that our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but his very body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with him and with one another. Our Lord invites to his table those who trust his words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as he forgives and loves us. Because unworthy reception of the sacrament can be harmful, those who are not yet instructed, are uncertain or doubtful, or hold to a different confession should speak to the Pastor before participating.

## The Preparation



**Prelude:** “Nun komm der Heiden Heiland” – J. Vetter

### **Words of Welcome**

### **Invocation, Confession and Absolution**

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Beloved in the Lord. Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, imploring him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: **Who made heaven and earth.**

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

C: **And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

**O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to you all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended you and justly deserved your punishment now and forever. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray you of your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.**

(Silence for personal confession.)

P: Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath Litany – see insert**

## The Service of the Word

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we implore You to hear our prayers  
and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation;  
for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**



**Old Testament Reading:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (see back cover)

**Psalm:** Psalm 126



<sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes  
of | Zion,\*  
we were like | those who dream.

<sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled  
with | laughter,\*  
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;  
then they said among the nations, “The  
LORD has done great | things for them.”\*

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things for  
us; | we are glad.

<sup>4</sup> Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,\*  
like streams in the | Negeb!

<sup>5</sup> Those who | sow in tears\*  
shall reap with | shouts of joy!

<sup>6</sup> He who goes out weeping, bearing the  
seed for | sowing,\*  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
bringing his | sheaves with him.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (see back cover)

**Advent Verse:** 357 vs 5-6 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Oh come, Thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav’nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death’s dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:6-8, 19-28

Acclamations (sung): **Glory be to you, O Lord.  
Praise be to you, O Christ.**

**Nicene Creed** (inside the back cover of the hymnal)

**Children’s Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day:** 341 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

**Sermon**

**Prayers** After each petition of the prayer P: Lord in your mercy,  
**C: Hear our prayer.**

**Prayer Request List** (Names are placed on the list by request only.)

***For comfort:***

Garefino family	Death of Gloria	Teschke
Melton/Yost families	Death of David Melton	Yost
Baker family	Death of Eleanor	Teschke

***For those with health concerns:***

Pastor John Babbits	Claire Haenisch	Ursula	Pat Dietz
Bob Latimer	Pat McSorley	Phillip Trivett	Kay Compton
Marge Carr	Mina Ciqus	Brennan	Tom Reside
	John and Sue Bridenbough, Covid		

***For those with cancer:***

Charlie Huebner	Yolanda Piekaoskey	Rich deDufour	Lynn
Rich Knechel	Rose Bonecki	Aaron Kline	Linda
Carol Tezla	Karen Shevchuk	Jane Chmieleski	Kathy
Edward Keenan	Kathy Lamkin	Mary Ellen	Mary Ann

***For those serving in the armed forces:***

LJ Lupinacci	Carrick Porter	Nate Fiske	Jake Grube
Daniel Gewecke (in Middle East)			

***For those suffering around the world:***

War in Europe	Prayers for peace and forgiveness
Family of Olga Nichols living in Ukraine	Prayers for health, safety, and provision
War in Middle East	Prayers for peace and forgiveness

***Birthdays***

Judy Grube	Dec 18	Annie Allardice	Dec 20
Tohomas Dorsett	Dec 19	Bob Maquire	Dec 23

***Anniversaries***

Siegfried and Claire Haenisch	Dec 23
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## Gathering of the Offering and Offertory (p. 192)

### Instrumental Offertory

**Congregational Offertory:** “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.**

**Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Amen.**

## *The Service of the Sacrament*

### Order of Holy Communion page 194

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

P: It is truly good, right and salutary.... Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name evermore praising you and saying:

C: *(sung)* **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.**

**Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, in the highest.**

**Blessed is He, Blessed is He, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

C: *(spoken)* **Our Father who art in heaven...**

Words of Institution (Consecration)

Pax Domini

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

### Sharing of Christ's Peace

Agnus Dei page 198 *(sung)*

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us Your peace. Amen**

Distribution Hymn: 332 Savior of the Nations, Come

Post-Communion Cantic: Lord, Now Let Your Servant Depart in Peace (p. 199 LSB)

**Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word,**

**for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people,  
a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Your people Israel.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

Thanksgiving page 200

P: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good,

C: **and His mercy endures forever.**

P: (Prayer of Thanksgiving)

C: **Amen.**

**Salutation and Benedicamus** page 201

P: The Lord be with you.      **C: And also with you.**  
P: Bless we the Lord.        **C: Thanks be to God.**

**Benediction** page 202

P: The Lord bless you...      **C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** 348 The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

**Announcements**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!  
**C: Thanks be to God!**

**Postlude:** “Nun komm der Heiden Heiland” – J.S. Bach



**Announcements – Week of December 17, 2023**

**Need assistance? The Church Office is staffed each week  
Tues, Wed. and Thurs. from 1:00 - 3:00 to help.**

**Worship, Sunday School, and Bible Study**

**Welcome!** Serving in worship today are: Jason Bloom (Communion Assistant and Live-streaming), Lydia Bloom (Reader and Acolyte), Joe Scheblein (Usher), Lillian Maguire and Jeanne Hoppe (Communion and coffee set-up and clean-up).

**Sunday Bible Study.** This Sunday and throughout the month of December we will be studying the assigned Old Testament lessons for the Advent and Christmas seasons. The reading for this Sunday is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24. There is NO Bible class or Sunday School on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Today’s service will be live streamed** on You Tube at the following link:  
<https://youtube.com/live/IUb8cmYCTKk?feature=share> If you miss the service live, watch it whenever you like! The services are also posted after the fact to the church’s website.

**Wednesday Zoom Bible Study.** There will be NO Wednesday bible studies on December 20 because of midweek Advent services. We'll resume on January 3, 2024! (You can find archived recordings of our studies on our church website - [www.stpeternj.org](http://www.stpeternj.org))

## (Announcements cont'd)

**Midweek Advent Services:** Advent is a season in the church year that helps prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas. With so many distractions this time of year, the world needs Advent more than ever! In this year's midweek Advent services we'll learn about three historical figures who carried the hope of Christ in their hearts and helped manifest His Light in the world:

Wed. Dec 20 at 7:30pm - Katharina von Bora Luther (Youth-Led Service, don't miss it!)

### *Men's, Women's, Senior's, Youth and Family Ministry*

**Prayer Chain.** The Prayer Chain is ready to receive your prayer requests. Simply call Barbara Greenberg at (609) 512-1928 to start or update a prayer

**St. Peter Christmas Caroling.** Sunday December 17th @ 2:00 PM (THAT'S TODAY!)– to visit some Homebound members. Come one, come all! Join us Sunday afternoon as we visit some homebound members and friends, raising our Hearts and Voices in Christmas joy! See Bill Kianka or Bob Maguire for additional Caroling details.

### *Service and Other*

**Live Nativity at Bethany, Ewing.** Bethany Lutheran Church in Ewing is hosting its annual live nativity tonight, Sunday, Dec. 17th at 7:00pm. Come and hear the story of Jesus' birth reenacted by live performers, enjoy hot cocoa, and pet the animals!



**Poinsettias** may be purchased for \$10/pot to adorn the altar during this festive Christmas season. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board – you can choose red, white, or pink. They can be taken home following the Christmas service.

**Operation Christmas Child.** As we look forward to next year's collection, we are focusing on certain supplies during each month. For December we could use **small stuffed animals (need 20)**, **wiffle balls (need plenty)** and **fun Christmas tchotchkes** while they're available, so if you can, pick up a few and drop them in the collection box in the narthex (next to the food pantry box).

**Flowers.** A Flower sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Flower contributions can be made in honor of someone, in thanksgiving for God's grace, or for a special occasion. The suggested donation is \$25.

**Lambertville Food Pantry.** Please grab some non-perishable items at the grocery store to add to our food pantry collection box in the narthex. December's collection is **BAKING AND COOKING PRODUCTS:** flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil, vinegar, baking powder, baking soda, etc. You can also sign up to deliver the donations; see the bulletin board sign-up.

**Faithfulness Report** 12/10 Attendance: 64 Gen Fund: \$ 4274 Mortgage: \$25

(Weekly contributions of approx \$6,000 are needed to meet our Congregation-approved 2023 budget.)

**Website and Facebook.** Our website is at [www.stpeternj.org](http://www.stpeternj.org), and our Facebook page is Saint Peter Lutheran Church - the link is: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Saint-Peter-Lutheran-Church/337705479662612>. Come check us out!

**Weekly Schedule.**

TUESDAY (12/19) Noon Planning Council Meeting; 4:30pm Confirmation Class  
WEDNESDAY (12/20) 7:30pm Midweek Advent Service (Youth-led)  
SUNDAY (12/24) 9:30am Worship; 5pm & 7pm Christmas Eve Worship services

**A Look Ahead.** Mark your calendars!



<b>Today, December 17</b>	<b>2:00 pm</b>	<b>Christmas Caroling</b>	
Wednesday, December 20	7:30 pm	Youth-led Advent Service	
Sunday, December 24	9:30 am	Sunday Advent Service	
Sunday, December 24	5 pm & 7 pm	Christmas Eve Services	
Monday, December 25	10:30 am	Christmas Day Service	

**Other Important web links.**

- NJ District LCMS [njdistrict.org](http://njdistrict.org)
- The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)
- LCMS World Relief and Human Care [lcms.org/ca/worldrelief](http://lcms.org/ca/worldrelief)
- “The Lutheran Hour” Broadcast [lhm.org](http://lhm.org)





## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

### Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

- <sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the  
brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to  
those who are bound;  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our  
God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a  
faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of  
righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may  
be glorified.  
<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former  
devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many genera-  
tions. . . .  
<sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their  
recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting cove-  
nant with them.  
<sup>9</sup> Their offspring shall be known among  
the nations,  
and their descendants in the midst of  
the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
them,  
that they are an offspring the LORD  
has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
my soul shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the gar-  
ments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of  
righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself like  
a priest with a beautiful  
headdress,  
and as a bride adorns herself with  
her jewels.

- <sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
and as a garden causes what is sown  
in it to sprout up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteous-  
ness and praise  
to sprout up before all the nations.

### Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceas-  
ing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for  
this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for  
you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not  
despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything;  
hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from  
every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace himself  
sanctify you completely, and may your  
whole spirit and soul and body be kept  
blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus  
Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he  
will surely do it.

### Holy Gospel: John 1:6–8, 19–28

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose  
name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to  
bear witness about the light, that all might  
believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light,  
but came to bear witness about the light.

. . . .  
<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony of John, when  
the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jeru-  
salem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He  
confessed, and did not deny, but confessed,  
"I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>And they asked  
him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He  
said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?"  
And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to  
him, "Who are you? We need to give an  
answer to those who sent us. What do you  
say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the  
voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the  
prophet Isaiah said."

<sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the  
Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Then why  
are you baptizing, if you are neither the  
Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John  
answered them, "I baptize with water, but  
among you stands one you do not know,  
<sup>27</sup>even he who comes after me, the strap of  
whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."  
<sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across  
the Jordan, where John was baptizing.