



# 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 14, 2025*

### **Our mission:**

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

**Welcome!** Every major holiday comes loaded with expectations, perhaps none more so than Christmas. From the decorations adorning our homes to food, presents, and party plans, children and adults alike are hoping and expecting Christmas to look and feel a certain way. And, let's be honest, the weight of all those expectations (and our ability to meet them!) can feel so heavy, right when we're supposed to be experiencing God's gifts of joy and peace. Jesus challenged the expectations that people in his day had about John the Baptist because they were borne out of human imaginations, not God's promises. John prepared the way for someone whose compassion, as well as his power to deliver, would far exceed what anyone was hoping for. Come, Lord Jesus, and restore in our hearts the right kind of expectations for this blessed season of Advent!

**A special welcome to all our visitors** this morning. We are delighted you are with us for worship this morning. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Jon and fill out a green visitor card (in the pewback). 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. S. Bach



### **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 unto God our Father, beseeching 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 unto the Lord.

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

P: O almighty God, merciful Father,

**C: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. 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 35:1-10 (see back cover)

**Psalm:** Psalm 146 (spoken responsively)

P: Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

**C: I will praise the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

P: Put not your trust in princes,  
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

**C: When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;  
on that very day his plans perish.**

P: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,

**C: who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;**

P: who executes justice for the oppressed,  
who gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord sets the prisoners free;

**C: the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.  
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the Lord loves the righteous.**

P: The Lord watches over the sojourners;  
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

**C: The Lord will reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, to all generations.  
Praise the Lord!**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen**



**Epistle Reading:** James 5:7-11 (see back cover)

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

O 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:** Matthew 11:2-15

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

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

**Children's Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day:** 349 Hark the Glad Sound

**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.)



AND THE  
POOR HAVE  
GOOD NEWS  
BROUGHT  
TO THEM  
MATTHEW 11:5

Cadwalder Family  
Vossler Family

***For comfort:***

death of Bob  
death of Margery

Teschke  
Gewecke

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

Columbia McDevitt  
Clara McMahon  
Don Hammond  
Sue Lauricella  
Shirley Yost  
Pete Seronew  
Catie Lauricella  
Judy Dito  
Sue Bridenbough

Eric Teschke  
John O'Neill  
Carla Behnfeldt  
Bob Aneskievich  
John Tarlo  
Rick Wright  
Kay Compton  
Jeff Corelli  
Norma Runkle

Freda Potts  
Bill Hotaling  
Jan  
Claire  
Pat Dietz  
Beverly  
Claire  
Carlie  
Rose

Grant  
Noah  
Zane  
Brennan  
Susan  
Sid

***For those with cancer:***

Rich Knechel  
Carol Tezla  
Kim McCollough  
Andrea(Andy) Hoteling  
Rich deDufour  
Aaron Kline  
Joan Rawls  
Tom Sullivan

Robert Miller  
Steve Saumsiegle  
Nancy Gilliand  
Kaleigh Moore  
Logan Mattessich  
Brad Hoppe  
Rosalie Reinbacher  
Terry Dunbar

Gerry Campbell  
Joe Campbell  
Aunt Jean  
Sally Ashmen  
Frank Cignus  
Judy Bacorn  
Carol Storr  
Keith Watson

Howard Zahn  
Lynn  
Mary Anne  
Dora  
Doris  
Lynn J.  
Dana  
Jason

Trudy  
Lance  
Joe  
Jerry  
Dawn

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

LJ Lupinacci	Carrick Porter	Emily Arndt	Jake Grube	Jim Buckman
Daniel Gewecke	James Bannon	Harper Usiskin	Mike Bahney	

***For those with needs around the world:***

Persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ	For protection, strength, comfort, spread of Gospel
Government officials and people of our nation	For peace, unity, safety, and wisdom
Those coping with disasters/flooding	For provision and help
Those in need of employment	For provision of jobs
Wars in Europe and Middle East	For peace, forgiveness, and guidance
Family of Olga Nichols living in Ukraine	For health, safety, and provision

***For St. Peter Lutheran Nursery School:***

For staff and families	for '25-'26 school year
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**Birthdays:**

Judy Grube	Dec 18	Tom Dorsett	Dec 19
Annie Allardice	Dec 20		

**Gathering of the Offering and Offertory** (p. 192)

**Instrumental Offertory** “Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottes-Sohn” – J. G. Walther

**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 Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.**

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

***The Service of the Sacrament***

**Order of Holy Communion** page 194

P: The Lord be with you.	<b>C: And with Thy spirit.</b>
P: Lift up your hearts.	<b>C: We lift them up unto the Lord.</b>
P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God	<b>C: It is meet and right so to do.</b>

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 Thy glory.**

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

**Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh 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, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.**

Distribution Hymn: 333    Once He Came in Blessing

Thanksgiving    page 200

P: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good,      **C: and His mercy endureth forever.**

P: (Prayer of Thanksgiving)      **C: Amen.**

## Salutation and Benedicamus    page 201

P: The Lord be with you.      **C: And with Thy spirit.**

P: Bless we the Lord.      **C: Thanks be to God.**

## Benediction    page 202

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

**Closing Hymn:** 341    Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (st. 1-4)

## Announcements

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

**C: Thanks be to God!**

**Postlude:** “Nun komm der Heiden Heiland” – J. G. Walther





## **Announcements – Week of December 14, 2025**

**Need assistance? The Church Office is staffed each week**

**\*MON, TUES and WED from 1:00 - 3:00\***

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

**Welcome!** Serving in worship today are: Stephen Behnfeldt (Communion Assistant), Jane Heebner (Reader), Juliet Behnfeldt (Acolyte), Dave deDufour and Jesse Dunbar (Ushers), Lesley deDufour (Live-streaming), Amy Van Hise and Lesley deDufour (Communion and coffee set-up and clean-up).

**Today's service will be live streamed** on You Tube at this link

<https://youtube.com/live/BmUhDHM0cF8> If you miss the service live, watch it whenever you like! The services are also posted to the church's website.

**Sunday Bible Study: Matthew's Account of the Birth of Christ.** This morning we begin a new study of Jesus' birth as recorded in Matthew chapters 1-2. Every Gospel writer tells the story of our Lord's birth in their own unique way. Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus' descendants going back to Abraham. What important clues about Jesus' mission as Savior to the world lie hidden within this genealogy? Come and learn with us!

**Midweek Advent Services in December.** Advent is a season that prepares us to celebrate Christmas. Join us this Wednesday, Dec 17 at 7:30pm as we are led in worship by the church youth and celebrate this season in a special way. The midweek Advent 3 link is: <https://youtube.com/live/iomwijSGRZM>  
(Wednesday evening ZOOM bible study is on break during the holiday season.)

**Youth practice today 11-1** for those who are helping in leading Wednesday's service. Pizza to follow.

**Many thanks to those who participated in the Christmas Decorating and Sing-along last Sunday.** It was a treat for the senses as we decked the halls, sang joyful Christmas favorites, and enjoyed some tasty treats. Special thanks to Hope for leading us on guitar – what a festive afternoon!

**Christmas Poinsettias!** If you would like to purchase Christmas poinsettias, please sign up on the bulletin board sign up sheet. They are \$10 each – red, white, or pink.

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

#### **Weekly Schedule:**

TUESDAY (12/16)	4:30p Confirmation Class
WEDNESDAY (12/17)	7:30p Midweek Advent Service (Youth-led)
SUNDAY (12/21)	8:15a Adult Bible Study; 9:30a Worship; 11a Discussion Group; 6:30p Live Nativity @ Bethany, Ewing

**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.

**The Prayer Shawl/Lap Blanket Ministry.** Join us in making special blankets to bless those in need of comfort or in celebration of a life event! Please speak with Barbara Greenberg at (609) 512-1928.

### **Service and Other**

**Faithfulness Report:** Attendance 12/7: 55/4                      Gen Fund (plate and elec): \$6349  
Flowers: \$40    Debt reduction: \$25    Poinsettias: \$30

**Flowers.** If you would like to have flowers placed on the altar in honor of someone, in thanksgiving for God's grace, or for a special occasion, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to do so. Suggested donation is \$25. You may take the flowers home following the service on the day you select.

**Food Pantry.** We continue to support the Lambertville Food Pantry with donations of food and other needs. December's collection is baking and cooking products – flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, baking soda, oil, vinegar, etc. You can sign up on the bulletin board to deliver items by month as well. Any questions, please see Leslie Klesat.

**Website and Facebook.** Come online to check us out! 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>. Don't miss the **St. Peter YouTube Channel**, which is linked to our church website, or go to YouTube and search "Saint Peter Lutheran Church".

### **Other Important web links:**

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod [lcms.org](http://lcms.org)

NJ District LCMS [njdistrict.org](http://njdistrict.org)

LCMS World Relief and Human Care [lcms.org/ca/worldrelief](http://lcms.org/ca/worldrelief)  
[/worldrelief](http://worldrelief)

The "Lutheran Hour" Broadcast [lhm.org](http://lhm.org)





## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

### Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 35:1-10

- <sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom  
like the crocus;  
<sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.  
<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
<sup>4</sup> Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
"Be strong; fear not!  
Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you."  
<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.  
For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
<sup>8</sup> And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.  
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

### Epistle: James 5:7-11

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

### Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-15

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before  
your face,  
who will prepare your way before you."

<sup>11</sup>"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup>From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup>For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup>and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup>He who has ears to hear, let him hear."