

December 24, 2020
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
CHRISTMAS EVE



Introduction

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

***ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
121 N. SPRING STREET, MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057-1497***

GATHERING

PRELUDE *Carol of the Bells* *Piano, Bennett Williams*

WELCOME

HYMN *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful* *ELW 283*

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain

Venite adoremus,
venite adoremus,
venite adoremus Dominum.

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

- 2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

INVOCATION

The Wren Family

L In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R Amen

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

The Wren Family

L The light shines in the darkness,

C **and the darkness has not overcome it.**

L The Word became flesh and lived among us,

C **and we have beheld Christ's glory.**

L To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

C **In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

L Glory to God in the highest,

C **and peace to God's people on earth.**

L Blessed are you, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth
and justice.

C **Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.**

L Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.

C **Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this
day.**

L Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word
made flesh.

C **Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may
bear your light to all the world.**

PRAYER

The Wren Family

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

GREETING

Amy Heckman

Today Christ is born: Alleluia, alleluia!

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

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Refrain:

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way
Kyrie eleison, every day.

Verse 2:

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry
and the poor; that we may live out truth and justice and grace
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. Refrain

Verse 3:

For the peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends
and family; for life and for love, for our work and our play,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. Refrain

BLESSING OF THE MANGER

Amy Heckman

P Christ is born to us.

C **O come, let us adore him.**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. O Lord our God, with Mary and Joseph, angels and shepherds, and the animals in the stable, we gather around your Son, born for us. Bless us with your holy presence, and inspire us to help those who have no place to dwell. Be with us that we might share Christ's love with all the world, for he is our light and salvation. Glory in heaven and peace on earth, now and forever.

C Amen

SONGS

Jingle Bells
Hark The Herald Angels Sing

Trumpet, Miles Young
Piano, Avery Heckman

WORD

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

The Wren Family

²The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness —

on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,

and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments

rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless

peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it with justice and with

righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

L Word of God, word of life. C Thanks be to God.

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

THE SECOND LESSON *Titus 2:11–1* *The Wren Family*
The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,

¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,

¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*
Flute, Allison Evans

THE HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 2:1–20* *Pastor Eckert*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the

child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION

Andrew Wren

SOLO

O Holy Night

Adam Evans

MEDITATION

Pastor Eckert

HYMN OF THE DAY

Do you Hear What I Hear

Andrew Eckert & Igor Pancevski

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the

Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear Us O God,
Your Mercy Is Great.

THE 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.

ANTHEM *Mary Did You Know*

CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

P Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In the beginning there was darkness and you created light and in the fullness of time you sent forth your Son, the Light of the World. Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ; may His word be a lamp to your feet and a light to our path; for you are merciful and love your whole creation, and we your creatures, glorify you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen

- 1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life. **Amen**

May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength. **Amen**

May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world. **Amen**

And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen**

HYMN

Go Tell It on the Mountain

*Andrew Eckert
& Igor Pancevski*

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Share the joy of Christ.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE MUSIC

The Altar Flowers for this evening are presented to

The Glory of God

and by Ann Swartz in honor of her children:

Mira and David Puglia; Alec and Jen

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*The Bulletins for this evening are presented to*

***The Glory of God***

*and by Ann Swartz in honor of her children:*

***Mira and David Puglia; Alec and Jen***

## **SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE LITURGY:**

Celebrating and Preaching

Pastor J. Richard Eckert

Musical Participants

Bennett Williams, Jen Joyce,  
Martha Black, Emily Walak,  
Adam Evans, Jeremy Railing,  
Andrew Eckert, Igor Pancevski,  
Allison Evans, Avery Heckman & Miles Young

## **THIS IS CHRIST'S CHURCH THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU HERE**

**We are the church** that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person — questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world. (from ELCA website)

**“At St. Peter’s** Lutheran Church, Middletown, we celebrate that Christ has made us one body with many members, all receiving God’s grace and unconditional love. In response, we share God’s grace and unconditional love with all people. All people are welcomed, invited, and affirmed here. Everyone is of great importance in our life together.

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.

We believe all people are unique and valued individuals created by God and loved by God. We joyfully welcome you to join us in worship, prayer, patient listening, Bible study, service to others, care for all, outreach, fellowship, sacrificial stewardship and spiritual formation.

St. Peter’s is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Reconciling in Christ congregation joining with Reconciling Works in living this Affirmation of Welcome.”

As we worship God virtually, Kathy and I, and our family offer our hope and prayer that the joy and love of Christmas will be with you and your family tonight and throughout the year. We thank you for the gifts, cards, and remembrances that you have shared with us.

In Christian love,  
Pastor Eckert

**SERVING ST. PETER'S**

Everyone Serving and Caring for Others

The Rev. Dr. J. Richard Eckert, Pastor  
Moses Kavishe, Coordinator of Together  
Bennett Williams, Coordinator of Music Ministry  
Martha Black, Organist  
Amy Heckman, Coordinator of Church Care & Administration

Website: [www.stpetersmiddletown.org](http://www.stpetersmiddletown.org)  
(717)944-4651

E-mail address: [ParishMail@stpetersmiddletown.org](mailto:ParishMail@stpetersmiddletown.org)  
WMSS 91.1FM broadcasts our service at 11am.

*St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church*  
*Middletown, PA*  
*Dedications - December 2020*

**Poinsettias**

**To the Glory of God**  
**To the Glory of God**  
**To the Glory of God**

by Andy & Jodie Evans  
by Herb & Marianne Moore  
by Marie Fox

**In honor of**  
Lillie's Birthday  
Linda & Ray Cary  
Barbara & Skip Young

**by**  
The Allen Family  
Their Children & Grandchildren  
Their Children & Grandchildren

***In honor & loving memory of***

All Veterans  
All our Loved Ones

***by***

Sharon Beard  
Bob & Blanche Reider

***In loving memory of***

Donald J. Arnold  
Frank, Eva, Frank Jr. Snively  
Harry & Helen Grove  
Melvin & Hilda Henry  
Mr. & Mrs. George Foltz  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Thompson  
Loved Ones  
Our Parents  
Russell and Kathryn Madara  
Dr. and Mrs. O. H. Swartz, Sr.  
Jim Swartz  
“Pinky” Catherine Snyder  
James & Rosemarie Darrah  
Our Grandparents & Great-  
Grandparents  
David A. Grim  
Robert Mrakovich  
Clifford Kramer & Carol Kramer  
Staub & Quaca Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Servius Brognia  
Mr. & Mrs. Karl Schmidt  
Douglas J. Hoy

***by***

Doris and children  
Doris Arnold & family  
Melvin & Barbara Henry  
Melvin & Barbara Henry  
Ray Thompson  
Ray Thompson  
Cynthia & Bill Fultz  
Walter & Regina Heagy  
Nancy Swartz  
Nancy Swartz  
Nancy Swartz  
Lillie Krupilis  
Kendra, Sean, Kristie & Dylan  
Aaron, Kristie, Ella, Landon &  
Miles Young  
Kendra Darrah  
Karen Mrakovich  
Ida Kramer & James Kramer  
The Staub Family  
The William Brognia Family  
Dennis Schmidt Family  
Doug & JoAnn Hoy

***Advent and Christmas Wreaths***

**To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God**

by JoAnn Skovira  
by Carole & Scott Shanaman  
by Andy & Jodie Evans  
by Herb & Marianne Moore  
by Marie Fox

***In loving memory of***

William A. Darrah  
Mr. & Mrs. Ben Hammond, Jr.

***by***

Kendra, Sean, Kristie & Dylan  
The Brognia & Schmidt  
Families

Jennifer Henry Dice  
Frances & Ralph Thompson  
Paula Staub  
Clifford Kramer & Carol Kramer  
Richard L. Shireman

Melvin & Barbara Henry  
Ray Thompson  
The Staub Family  
Ida Kramer & James Kramer  
Ruth & David

***In honor of***

Erma Grim

***by***

Kendra, Sean, Kristie & Dylan

***Kierch Memorial Garden Wreath***

To the Glory of God

by Lillie R. Krupilis

***Kierch Front Door Wreaths***

***In loving memory of***

Richard & Gloria Bibb

Clifford Kramer

***by***

Andy, Denise, Julia &  
Luke Wren

Ida Kramer

***Fill the Stable***

To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God  
To the Glory of God

by Janet & Bob Yocum  
by Cynthia & Bill Fultz  
by JoAnn Skovira  
by Herb & Marianne Moore  
by Dale A. Sinniger

***In Honor of***

Sharon Beard

Our Great Grand Children

Mary Lou Hoffman &

Kathryn Erdman

by Bob & Blanche Reider

Martin & Carol Hahn

***In loving memory of***

Arthur Telford &  
Peter & Helen Wren  
Mary E. Riemondy  
Gen. Augustus A. Riemondy  
Thomas A. Riemondy  
John Riemondy  
Joel Wiand & Janet K. Wiand

Our Siblings  
Alice Treichler

Richard W. & Joan Eckert, Parents,  
Grandparents  
James & Martha Shrake, Parents  
Grandparents  
Grandparents & Great-Grandparents

Florence & Walter Stoops  
Henry & Mary Reinhard  
Lester Hoffman &  
Donald Erdman  
Elizabeth, Clyde &  
Jack Reinhard  
Martin & Leona Hahn

***In loving memory of***

Leo A. Krupilis  
Leo "Skip" Krupilis  
Nancy Turpin  
Jim Swartz  
James R. Swartz  
James M. Smith  
Dale & Marjorie Rhen  
John & Grace DeHart

***by***

Andy, Denise, Julia  
& Luke Wren  
Elizabeth Riemondy  
Elizabeth Riemondy  
Elizabeth Riemondy  
Elizabeth Riemondy  
Art Wiand, Tiffany Rose,  
Becky & Samuel  
Walter & Regina Heagy  
Jean Lippy

Pastor, Kathy, Anne, Emily  
& Andrew Eckert  
Pastor, Kathy, Anne, Emily  
& Andrew Eckert  
Pastor, Kathy, Anne, Emily  
& Andrew Eckert  
The Stoops Family  
Martin & Carol Hahn  
Martin & Carol Hahn  
  
Martin & Carol Hahn  
  
Martin & Carol Hahn

***by***

wife, Lillie  
mother, Lillie  
Lillie Krupilis  
Nancy Swartz  
Ann Swartz & family  
Louise M. Smith  
Their loving Family  
Rachel & Rebecca Allen