

Candlelight
Christmas Eve
- SERVICE -

St. Peter Lutheran Church
422 N. Pierce Street
Delphos, Ohio

The mission of St. Peter Lutheran Church is to grow our faith in Jesus as we journey together and serve others.

Christmas Eve Service
Wednesday, December 24, 2025
4:00 PM

INTRODUCTION

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. 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.

PRELUDE

Alida R. Pletcher, organist

(Please enter silently and listen prayerfully.)

*(Congregational responses are in **bold print**. The symbol † before a section signifies that the assembly is to stand.)*

†CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus is the light of the world. **Jesus is the light of our lives.**
Sing to God a new song! **A song of hope, joy, and peace around the world.**

CHRISTMAS WREATH LIGHTING by the Trentman Family
"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" ELW #276

- 1 Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!
- 2 Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!

†PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. 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.**

†GATHERING SONG: ELW #275
"Angels, From the Realms of Glory"

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 4 All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this! A reading from the 9th chapter of Isaiah:

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

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

In the second lesson tonight, the appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. In the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance. A reading from the 2nd chapter of Titus:

¹¹The 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.**

The holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory be to God.**

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-5

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace. A reading from the 2nd chapter of Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

- 1 **O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**
- 2 **For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!**
- 3 **How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**
- 4 **O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!**

The Gospel continues.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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 in the guest room.

HYMN:

ELW # 277

“Away in a Manger”

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

GOSPEL: Luke 2:8-14

The Gospel concludes.

⁸Now in that same 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!”

HYMN:

ELW # 289

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.**

Refrain

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.**

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav’nly song? *Refrain***
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain***

SERMON

Pastor Carol Pretorius

†HYMN OF THE DAY:

ELW #283

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

- 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

**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*

†APOSTLES' CREED

Let us say what we believe in the words of the 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.

†PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

(...God of wonder and grace. **Hear our prayer.**)

CHILDREN'S SERMON

OFFERING SONG

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

ELW #294

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of glory, **great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

†DIALOGUE

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 him thanks and praise.

†PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to the love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the church, one earth, and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Sung to "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing")

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of heav'n and earth
adored. O how blest is he who comes in the
holy name of God. Joyful, all you nations rise;
join the triumph of the skies; With angelic
hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the
newborn king!"***

†WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

†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

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

(All who are baptized and believe that Jesus is Lord may share Holy Communion with us. Children who have not yet received instruction may come forward for a blessing. Grape juice is available as an alternative for those who cannot drink wine--just ask the server for it.)

*After receiving the bread and the cup each person may respond: **Amen.***

HYMNS SUNG DURING COMMUNION:

"Joy to the World"

ELW #267

- 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.

"What Child Is This?"

ELW #296

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

The body and blood our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

†PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Incarnate God, **you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. Amen.**

†THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION

The minister lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the minister's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.

†THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION: John 1:1-14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

† PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS

Gracious and Mighty Lord, who entered our world on this night many centuries ago, we pray that you will once again enter our world to

overcome all within us that resists your reign and rule. Send us to the world to glorify and give praise to you for all that we have heard and seen. Hear our prayer, gracious God, as we lift our hearts, our voices and these candles in praise for the birth of our Savior, your Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world. **Amen.**

†HYMN OF LIGHT:

ELW #281

“Silent Night, Holy Night!”

- 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.**

†BLESSING

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, † bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

The candles are extinguished.

†SENDING HYMN:

ELW #290

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. Refrain**

**2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain**

**3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. Refrain**

†DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**
Go in joy, Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

ORGAN POSTLUDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Liturgy from Sundays and Seasons, © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS003440.

Scripture readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible, © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

Hymn texts are all in Public Domain.

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church Delphos, OH

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Pastor | Pastor Carol Pretorius |
| Organist | Emily Martin |
| Church Phone | 419.695.2616 |
| Pastor's Phone | 419.512.4490 |
| Pastor's Email | stpetercarolp@gmail.com |
| Church Secretary | Lauren Trentman |
| Secretary's Phone | 419.296.3955 |
| Secretary's Email | stpeterdelphos@gmail.com |

Welcome to St. Peter Lutheran Church! We're glad that God has brought you here today. We believe that Jesus offers his love, peace, and forgiveness to all people – and that includes you. We pray that the Holy Spirit will touch your heart today as you worship.

Servants of the Lord for Christmas Eve, December 24th

Counters – Rick Dienstberger | Deb Trentman

Altar Guild – Angie Miller | Sarah Miller | Donna Berger

Acolyte - Caleb Trentman | Austin Munshower

Communion – Jenny Snipes | Dave Stemen

Ushers – Alan Trentman | Dan Kramer

Servants of the Lord for Sunday, December 28

Counters – Alan Trentman | Dan Marlow

Altar Guild – Angie Miller | Sarah Miller | Donna Berger

Acolyte – Alayna Beverly

Communion – Ryan Trentman

Usher – Alan Trentman

The radio ministry is given to the glory of God by Dave Mayer, Ron and Sue Kloeppel and family, and Matt and Carrie Calvelage and family

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God in honor of Jesus' birth and in honor and memory of those listed on the back.

Please pray for the following family and friends:

Jimmy, Roger, Mark, Stella, Joe, Julie, Linda, Henry, Tyler, Bianca, Rose, Hailey, Kristy, Ginger, Dawn

GriefShare is a biblically based, nationally recognized, locally presented non-denominational program created to assist those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, regardless of the cause of that loss, or when it occurred. GriefShare offers compassion and understanding and help in finding a path forward as a grief survivor. Our third annual GriefShare series sessions will begin Thursday evening, January 8, 2026 at the St. John's Annex on South Jefferson Street in Delphos from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. These sessions will be held each Thursday evening through March 26, 2026 and are free to attend. Everyone involved in presenting these programs has navigated the grief journey you may be walking. For more information please contact Kathy Ulm 419-516-3994, program coordinator or Delphos St. John the Evangelist Ministry Center at 419-695-4050.

COMBATting ANXIETY & DEPRESSION: A SIX WEEK SESSION TO HELP HEAL FROM ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Where: St. Peter Lutheran Church

When: January 12, 19, February 2, 9, 16, and 23 (6:30 – 8:00 PM)

Call 419-512-4490 to Register

Led by Pastor Carol Pretorius, Ordained Pastor who has a background in: Healing Care Prayer Practices as well as Masters Degrees in Education and Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Mark your calendars for January 18th to attend a special birthday celebration for all of us! We will have cake and cupcakes for each month of the year. We will gather & celebrate, eat cake, and fellowship.

Poinsettias for Christmas 2025

Given by Bob and Denise Kloeppel, in honor of our children and grandchildren and in memory of Harry & Pat Dunlap and Melvin & Alma Kloeppel

Given by Dave and Rhonda Blockberger, in memory of Rolland & Irene Blockberger and Ronald & Marilyn Utrup

Given by David Blockberger and Denise Lindeman, in memory of Debra Blockberger

Given by Ron and Sue Kloeppel, in loving memory of our parents

Given by Dave Mayer, in memory of Norm & Alice Mayer and Linda Mayer

Given by Linda Downey, in memory of Caleb Tyler

Given by Rick and Lynn Miller, in honor of our children & grandchildren and in memory of our parents

Given by Sue and Dan Rode, in memory of all the loved ones gone before us

Given by Pastor Carol, in memory of her mother, Barbara Humphreys and her twin, Rick Humphreys

Given by Larry and Amy Miller, in memory of Elmer & Margene Freund

Given by Sam, Angie, and Sarah Miller, in memory of Nathan Miller, Vern & Jane Gonyea, Dan Gonyea and Jeff & Mary Miller