

**ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

February 8, 2026, Virtual Prayer and Preaching

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**The CHURCH'S GATHERING**

**CONFESSiON and FORGIVENESS**

We bless the holy Trinity,  $\dagger$  one God,  
the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being,  
the Wind stirring the waters. **Amen**



We turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.* Mighty God, lover of justice,  
**you call us to life in community, but we have served our own  
interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit  
where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts  
are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and  
give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and  
walk humbly with you, our God. Amen**

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares:  
Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness  
of Christ, and forgives your sin in  $\dagger$  Jesus' name. May their Spirit give you  
strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace. **Amen**

**GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY**

The gracious love of God, the faithfulness of Jesus Christ,  
and their Spirit's overflowing joy, is with you all.

**And also with you.**

Holy One, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* Lord God, with endless mercy  
you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the  
things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through  
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

**GOD'S WORD**

**READING: Isaiah 58:1-12**      *Common English Bible*

*Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were  
troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that  
outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts  
of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing  
the naked.*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 58.

Shout loudly; don't hold back;

    raise your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their crime,

    to the house of Jacob their sins.

They seek me day after day,

    desiring knowledge of my ways

        like a nation that acted righteously,

        that didn't abandon their God.

They ask me for righteous judgments,

    wanting to be close to God.

"Why do we fast and you don't see;

    why afflict ourselves and you don't notice?"

Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want,

    and oppress all your workers.

You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast;

    you hit each other violently with your fists.

You shouldn't fast as you are doing today

    if you want to make your voice heard on high.

Is this the kind of fast I choose,

    a day of self-affliction,

        of bending one's head like a reed

    and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes?

Is this what you call a fast,

    a day acceptable to the LORD?

Isn't this the fast I choose:

    releasing wicked restraints,

        unting the ropes of a yoke,

    setting free the mistreated,

        and breaking every yoke?

Isn't it sharing your bread with the hungry

    and bringing the homeless poor into your house,

        covering the naked when you see them,

    and not hiding from your own family in need?

Then your light will break out like the dawn,

    and you will be healed quickly.

Your own righteousness will walk before you,

    and the LORD's glory will be your rear guard.

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;

    you will cry for help, and God will say, "I'm here."

If you remove the yoke from among you,

    the finger-pointing, the wicked speech;

    if you open your heart to the hungry,

and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,  
your light will shine in the darkness,  
and your gloom will be like the noon.

The LORD will guide you continually  
and provide for you, even in parched places.  
God will rescue your bones.  
You will be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water that won't run dry.  
They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account;  
the foundations of generations past you will restore.  
You will be called Mender of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Livable Streets.  
This is God's Word and our life.

**HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 5:13-20** *Common English Bible*  
*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God's commandments.*

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Matthew, the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
Jesus preached to the crowds on the mountain:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.

"Don't even begin to think that I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I haven't come to do away with them but to fulfill them. I say to you very seriously that as long as heaven and earth exist, neither the smallest letter nor even the smallest stroke of a pen will be erased from the Law until everything there becomes a reality. Therefore, whoever ignores one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called the lowest in the realm of heaven. But whoever keeps these commands and teaches people to keep them will be called great in the realm of heaven. I say to you that unless your righteousness is greater than the righteousness of the legal experts and the Pharisees, you will never enter the realm of heaven."

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

**HYMN of the DAY: # 677 "This Little Light of Mine"**

- 1 This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 2 Ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 3 Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 4 Put it under a basket, NO! I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Put it under a basket, NO! I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
Put it under a basket, NO! I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
- 5 When others can see me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
When others can see me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;  
When others can see me, I'm goin'-a let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Text: African American spiritual

**MESSAGE:**      ***Water, Salt, and Light***      *silence for reflection follows*

**The CHURCH PRAYS**

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

*A brief silence.*

Your church does ministry in many and various ways. Keep the baptized true to the mind of Christ, that our works and witness bring hope to a troubled world. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Your marvelous creation cries out to you. Restore polluted air, soil, and water sources to wholeness. Guard honeybees, elephants, great whales and songbirds from harm, and renew the face of the earth. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Your people in every nation suffer injustice, poverty, and the threat of violence. Guide those in authority to govern with compassion, and bring peace to the war zones of Ukraine & Russia, Gaza & Israel. We pray for our enemies. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Your wisdom guides this congregation and its ministries. Sustain our ordained leaders, staff, lay leaders, and volunteers. Form us to be salt and light for the neighbors we serve, following the example of Christ. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Your blessings are poured out for all in need. Help and heal any who experience trauma, discrimination, disease, hunger, abuse, or persecution. Comfort those who are sick or grieving. We pray for John, Greg, Lori, Mary Lue, Lynn, Will, Bea, our at-home worshippers, ... Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Your saints rejoice at your heavenly banquet. We give thanks for their lives of faith, trusting that we also will be embraced by your eternal love. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

We pray that God's rule will appear, as Jesus has taught us.

**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**

### **SPIRIT'S SENDING**

#### **PRAYER for MISSION**

Holy God, hear our prayer. *A brief silence.* Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. You have drawn us to your heart. Send us with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Leader and Savior. **Amen**

## **BLESSING and PEACE**

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth  
and tuned your heart for praise, bless + you now and forever. **Amen**  
"Those who walked in the dark have seen a bright light.

**And it shines upon everyone who lives  
in the land of darkest shadows."**

The peace of Christ is always with you. **And also with you.**

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### ***Today's Sponsorships***

*Today's Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God*

In Honor of my daughter, Carol Rook's February 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by Linda Heinbaugh.

In Celebration of Jeff's and Michelle's February 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> birthdays.  
Given by Doris Alkire.

*Today's Worship Folders are Given to the Glory of God*

In Loving Memory of my father, Henry Milke,  
and my brother, Charles Milke.  
Given by Arlene Roth.

*Attendance for Sunday, February 1, 2026: 27*

### ***Learning, Serving, and Fellowship Opportunities***

**Valentine's Day Dance:** Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup> from 7-11 pm. at Epiphany Lutheran (4301 Raspe Ave., 21206). Admission is \$20/person and includes: soda, wine, chips, pretzels, and live music! Guests are invited to bring their own beer, bottle and food. Contact Elaine Wagenfuehr at [melainepenn@gmail.com](mailto:melainepenn@gmail.com) or 443-854-1490, or Denise Loverde at [trueblueforever2006@yahoo.com](mailto:trueblueforever2006@yahoo.com) or 410-207-6389.

**Holiday Closures:** The church office and SPES will be closed on Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup> in observance of Presidents' Day.

**Shrove Tuesday Dinner:** Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. St. Luke (7001 Harford Rd., 21234) invites you to a pancake supper and pretzel making! Admission is free. Call the church office for details (410-444-5171).

**Ash Wednesday Worship:** Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. in the church.

**Lent at St. Peter's:** Pr. Lans will be presenting *The Small Catechism* via Zoom on Thursdays, beginning March 5th. Contact the church office for the link.

**St. Peter's Annual Meeting:** The church council voted to postpone the Annual Meeting, scheduled for February 22<sup>nd</sup>, to Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> between services. The meeting was postponed because of the possibility of a bad weather winter, and not all financial information and audits will be available in time for a 2/22 meeting.

**Sponsorships Available:** Altar flowers on 3/1 & 29, and bulletins on 3/29 (contact the church office).

**St. Peter's Family Goods Center:** If you are interested in volunteering for the Family Goods Center, please contact Bill Lauer. This is a great opportunity for service hours for your middle or high school student, and volunteer hours for SPES families. Please place donations in the shopping cart in the Narthex.

**Give to St. Peter's On-line!** Did you know that you can make offering donations and sponsorship payments on-line through PayPal?? Login to your PayPal account and search for our tag: @Spl367 or St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Christian Day School. When submitting your donation or payment, you can note what it's for. It's THAT easy!

***News from St. Peter's Elementary School and PACE***

Open enrollment for the 2026-27 school year has begun! Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions or want to schedule a tour. Referrals are always welcome!

**World's Finest Chocolate** fundraiser continues through February 27th! Purchase a bar, or two, from an SPES student or at the school office!

**Upcoming Open Houses:** Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-2:30 pm., and Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-1:30 pm. Contact the school office for more information.