

The Fishnet

**St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Hilltown, PA
January 2025**



(Historic photo from St. Peter's collection)

Although masks are not required, the use of masks during Services is up to the attendee.

In addition to "in-person" worship, Services are viewable live each Sunday morning on St. Peter's Facebook page, at St. Peter's website and on St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Hilltown, PA YouTube page after the Service.

Pastor's Message

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to Everyone in this holy and blessed time of year as we move through the "candled" seasons, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany!

The wise men "set out *from Jerusalem*, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the *Christ Child* was." *Matthew 2:9*

Many years ago, one of Bil Keane's *Family Circus* comic strips depicted the delightful efforts of his whole cartoon family as they assembled the Nativity Set for their home. First, they sat the miniature stable on a table. Then, they put the figures of Mary and Joseph inside the stable. Between Mary and Joseph, they placed a manger. After that, they arranged the shepherds, the wise men, and assorted animals around the watchful couple. Finally, a highly exuberant Dolly picked up the baby Jesus and shouted, "Here He is, the Star of Bethlehem!"

This year, because of the proximity of the Epiphany of Our Lord, usually observed on January 6, to the first Sunday in January, we will observe the Epiphany on January 5. One of the oldest festivals of the church year, the Epiphany of Our Lord commemorates the visit of the wise men to the Christ Child. Indeed, a star led the wise men to "where the child was," but, as Dolly exuberantly noted, Jesus is clearly the Star of this holy season.

What did the wise men do on their visit to the Christ Child? Where did they go afterwards? The Gospel of Matthew (2:11-12) reports that the wise men offered the Christ Child “gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh,” and then they returned to their own country. The message of the wise men’s visit to the Christ Child, however, is not found in the details of the story but in the announcement of the good news of the Savior’s birth to the Gentiles, those outside of the Jewish faith at that time, particularly the wise men “from the East.” As such, by tradition, the Epiphany season is a time to emphasize the missionary, or outreach, work of the church. *Some material used from Edward T. Horn III, The Christian Year (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), pp. 86-87.*

“Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere,” we sing at this time of the year. “Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!” (ELW 290) As we begin this new year, may we look for new ways to proclaim the wonderful news of Jesus’ birth in our community and beyond!

Joy and Peace to All!
Pastor Raymond Miller

Here are some upcoming events in the life of our congregation:

January 5: The Epiphany of Our Lord

January 15: Deadline for Committee Reports for the Annual Report

January 19: Congregational Hymn Sing (by popular request)

February 2: The Presentation of Our Lord (watch for more info)

February 2: Annual Congregational Meeting (after worship)

March 2: Mardi Gras Lunch & Pre-Lent Workshop (after worship, watch for more info)

March 5: Ash Wednesday

The Joy of Welcoming Christ Anew: From the Christmas Message of Bishop Penman

Dear Beloved in Christ, *this time of year* often feels like a whirlwind in the church. The steady progression from Advent to Christmas overlays the festive chaos of the secular holiday season, making this time especially busy. Those who’ve worked with me over the years know that I’m a “special kind of crazy” when it comes to preparing worship *for Christmas*. Why? Because I take the hymn People, Look East to heart: *“People, look east. The time is near, of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.”* (ELW 248)

This year, we proclaim that same good news: Love, the Guest, is on the way! I sense that we may welcome many guests this Christmas—those seeking hope, peace, joy, and love. As we prepare our hearts and spaces for Christ’s birth, let us also prepare to welcome those worshipping for the first time with the love and grace that are hallmarks of our Lutheran faith.

Here are some practical ways to ensure our congregations are ready to embrace the stranger and make Love visible *for all*:

1. **Help people find the entrance.** *First-time worshippers often struggle to find the right door. Consider adding temporary signage to guide them to the sanctuary. Outdoor greeters can also create a welcoming path and ensure no one feels lost before they even arrive.*

2. **Help worshipers follow the service.** *Navigating worship can be daunting for those new to the church. An inclusive, single bulletin with clear instructions can make a huge difference.*
3. **Welcome warmly but not too aggressively.** *The holidays are a natural time for people to return to church or explore faith for the first time. A warm greeting like, “It’s wonderful to see you; the body of Christ is more complete with you here,” can make first-time worshippers feel valued without pressure. If that seems too churchy, a simple, “It’s nice to see you, you are welcome back anytime,” can be better way to invite someone back than saying, “We hope to see you again.”*
4. **The website’s where it’s at.** *Make sure your website and social media clearly list Christmas Eve service times and details. Clarity and visibility can help first-time worshippers feel confident about attending.*
5. **... It’s not why I came to your church.** *And while the above is all important, it’s not what causes people to come to church. Ultimately, most people visit a church because they were invited by someone they trust—a neighbor, friend, or coworker. This Christmas, I encourage you to extend a personal invitation to those who may be seeking a place to belong. The Holy Family was seeking a place to belong, maybe your neighbors are too.*

In all your preparations this season, I pray you experience the joy of welcoming Christ anew – for I know that Love the Guest is on the way. May we embrace not just the Christ Child but also the unexpected ways God is drawing people to our doors.

Bishop Bryan J. Penman, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Upcoming Dates (please mark your calendar)

December 24	3:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
December 25	no Service	The Birth of our Lord Jesus
December 29	9:00 am	Lessons & Carols Service
January 19	9:00 am	Hymn sing Service
February 2, 2025	10:00 am	Congregational mtg following Service

Canned and dry goods for FISH

Canned and dry goods donations are in dire need by FISH. January is one of the worst months for donations of food needs. Please help our local food pantry. Every donation helps!

Memorial Committee

The Memorial Committee has been designating a suggested area of interest or recipients for each quarter of the year to try to inspire ideas for Request for Memorial Funds. For this quarter of 2024, we have decided to focus on organizations that help the homeless, food banks and other groups that provide assistance with life’s basic needs which many of us take for granted. With the cooler weather coming quickly, now is the time these organizations need to stock up on supplies and funds to handle the influx of clients they will see shortly. We often think of the homeless residents in Philadelphia and other large metropolitan areas but there are homeless people living in tents in Hilltown and our surrounding area. We also have people who struggle to provide three square meals a day for them and their families. Please forward any request for these groups or any other request for Memorial Funds to Judy Smith, Linda Ertel or Lou Bell.

Christmas Putz

A Moravian-style Christmas Putz display was presented this year.



The Putz was open to the public and parishioners for visiting through Dec. 29, Saturdays 2:00-4:00 p.m. and Sundays 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Free, light refreshments were served and there was a craft for children to make.

Santa Lucia Service – December 15

On December 15, St. Peter's celebrated St. Lucy (aka Santa Lucia) at the end of the Service. Cookies were served to attendees as they left the Service.



(photos by Tammy Daubert)



PRAYER CONCERNS as of December 23, 2024

(* = new addition to list)

God's Protection and Safety:

On all who drive buses, trains & planes. For all the service men & women especially:

Petty Officer First Class Abigail L. Gall, US Coast Guard, daughter of Diane & Chris Gall
CAPT. Walker Gall, US Air Force, son of Diane & Chris Gall

God's Healing:

Parishioners: *John Snyder, *Leroy and *Sheryl Gladfelter, Mary Long, Spencer Butterwick, Kim Jerasa, Dave Reice, Heather Jerasa, Eleanor Peitzman, June Bair, Reed Jerasa, Janet Owens, Don Jerasa, Jim Lynch, Mary Ettore.

God's Healing:

Friends and family:

*Jean Mood (friend of Janet Owens), *Robyn Gulick (granddaughter of Janet Owens), Jim Fryling (Jerry & Joan Gerhart's cousin), Tom Korbas (Jerry & Joan Gerhart's brother-in-law), Marlon Cortolean Jane Hastings (Deb Detweiler's friends), Emily Kuykendall (Bev Gottshall's daughter), Heidi Beason, Rochelle Fly, and Ruth Miller (friends of Rita Bixler), Shirley Treichler (Hope Garrett' sister), Rich Welsh and John Moll (Wally Simpkins' friends), Keith Lewis (Lori Lombardo's brother), Tessa Bair (June Bair's granddaughter), Butch Trucksess (Donna Blackburn's brother-in-law), Bill Treichler (Hope Garrett's brother), David Hallman (Rita Bixler's friend), Judy Johnson (Marv & Betty Rohrs' daughter), Tammy Owens (Janet Owens' daughter-in-law), Rhelda Warriner (Rita Bixler's sister), Lindsey Hollingswoth (Lori Groves' niece), Caitlin(Cate) Fishman (Lori Groves' relative), Jim Trucksess (Donna Blackburn's nephew), Ann Sellers (Pastor Miller's mother-in-law), David Yarns (Tammy Daubert brother), Kay Moyer (Hope Garrett's friend), Danni Tyrrel (Kim Jerasa's great-niece), Terri Lewis (Lori Lewis' cousin), Terri Jewett-Larkin (Patti Dowse's sister), Aidan Drakeley (Carol Barringer's grandson), Beverly Goheen (Maureen Simpkins' sister), George Yarns (Tammy Daubert's father), Pat Daubert (Rick Daubert's sister).

God's Comfort & Peace:

For our homebound members: **Joe Haenn** (Lutheran Community at Telford), **Esther Saylor and Tillie Murray** (Hidden Meadows on the Ridge), **Ethel Geist** (Arden Court, King of Prussia).

God's Grace for the Family & Friends who mourn the death of:

*Paul Hershey (Chris Fellman's father), +Marie Slack, +Lorraine Leslie, Joseph Ferry, Richard Bair (June Bair brother-in-law), +Ron Beerkircher, Chase Yarns (Tammy Daubert's nephew), Amos Good (Joan & Jerry Gerhart's nephew); Helene Bell (Lou Bell's mother), Denise J. Spier (Leroy & Shirley Gladfelter's daughter), Sara Beaumont Barton, +Kerry Keel Furiga, +Sandie Driscoll, Sue Warfield (Donna Blackburn's friend), Holly Seward (Jim Seward's sister-in-law).

[+indicates a member of St. Peter's. Names will stay on the printed list for 1 year]

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day Church office closed	2	3	4
5 9 am Worship Service Epiphany Sunday	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 9 am Worship Service Baptism of Our Lord Sunday	13	14	15 Congregational reports due to church office (for mtg on 2/2)	16 Newsletter input due	17	18
19 9 am Hymn Sing Service	20 7 pm Council meeting	21	22 Newsletter mailed	23	24	25
26 9 am Worship Service	27	28	29	30	31	

Monthly Assisting Ministers Calendar – January 2025

Date	Time	Usher(s)	Acolyte	Crucifer	Scripture/ Prayer	Server	Altar Guild	Counters
Dec 29 Lessons & Carols Service	9:00 am Service		D Texter	N Driscoll	J Smith	S Fischer	P Dowse & E Rebnegger	R Bixler & J Smith
Jan 5	9:00 am Service	S & E Rebnegger	Lisa Bell	D Seward	K Rebnegger	Lou Bell	P Abaza & E Rebnegger	
Jan 12	9:00 am Service	J & D Snyder	J Seward	D Seward	J Snider	S Fischer	D & S Texter	J Snider & S Davenport
Jan 19 Hymn Sing	9:00 am Service	J & J Gerhart	E Park	F Park	J Smith	L Groves	R Bixler & L Lombardo	
Jan 26	9:00 am Service	D Texter	N Driscoll	P Abaza	T Daubert	P Tackett	K Park & L Ertel	P Dowse & N Driscoll
Feb 2 Cong Mtg after Service	9:00 am Service	J & J Gerhart	P Dowse	L Groves	L Ertel	S Fischer	P Dowse & E Rebnegger	

PLEASE NOTE:

- If you are unable to participate on your scheduled Sunday, please call one of the other individuals on the list and arrange to switch dates.