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**Church Council**  
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Barb Minor, Financial Secretary  
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## Christmas and Martyrs

- Pastor Sorenson

Christmas is more than one day on the calendar for the Church. In fact, the Christmas season is twelve days long. From December 25 until January 5, the Church continues to celebrate the birth of her Savior.

Within these twelve days of Christmas, there are four important feast days to celebrate. Unfortunately, amid the hustle and bustle of the season, these four days tend to be forgotten and neglected. Yet these four days reveal what the birth of Christ brings for the Church.

The first of these feasts is the feast of St. Stephen on the day after Christmas, December 26. Stephen was the first martyr after the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 6-7).

The second is the feast of St. John the next day, December 27. This day commemorates John the apostle and evangelist who wrote the Gospel according to John, 1-3 John, and Revelation.

The third is the feast of the Holy Innocents the next day on December 28. On this day, the church remembers those baby boys who Herod killed as he was trying to kill the Christ (Matt 2:16-18).

Perhaps most jarring is the fact that these three feasts occur in the three days immediately following Christmas. With this, the Church turns from the joys of a new baby to the harsh reality of martyrdom. This is no accident! As with all things in the church, these feast days have been placed here to teach.

The birth of Christ is a joyous event, worthy of twelve days of celebrations, but His birth also ushers in persecution and martyrdom for the Church. Christ Himself says, "You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake" (Luke 21:16-17).

So, the Church celebrates these feast days of three different kinds of martyrs. The feast of St. Stephen commemorates a martyr both in will and deed.

The feast of St. John commemorates a martyr of will, but not of deed, as John is said to be the only apostle who died a natural death.

The feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates martyrs of deed, but not of will.

These three feasts, then, teach the church about persecution and martyrdom in the light of the newborn Christ. What a stark contrast to the usual messages of the world at this time of year!

Then, on January 1, the fourth and final feast day of the Christmas season arrives: the circumcision and naming of Jesus. The baby Jesus was brought to the temple on the eighth day after His birth in order to be circumcised according to the Law. The circumcision of Christ is the one which ends all circumcisions according to the Law. The baby Jesus sheds blood in order to keep and fulfill the Law for you, foreshadowing His bloodshed on the cross for your forgiveness.

At the time of the circumcision, the baby was given His name, Jesus, which means "the Lord saves." Indeed, in the light of the circumcision of Christ, the Church rejoices in the One who has come to save His people from their sins.

During this Christmas season, then, rejoice in the birth of the Christ. Rejoice in the One who has come to save you even in the midst of persecution and death. Rejoice that you have been joined in your baptism to the circumcised One who has kept the Law perfectly for you.

# LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Lcms.org/stewardship

## *Repenting of “Yours” and “Mine”*

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (*LSB* 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

*Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine,  
that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost*

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

*That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,”  
assured that only what's withheld is lost.*

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.

## Elders' Corner

*(A monthly feature from the Board of Elders)*

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the Elders we hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving with family and friends. Now we enter the Christmas season.

If you look on the back of this newsletter, you will see a list of all the Advent services coming up. We begin with Thanksgiving Eve. Then on the Saturday after, we have the greening of the church. The next three Wednesdays have Advent services with a meal before starting at 6 PM.

There is so much to do this time of year, but we would please ask you to take time to come and worship and celebrate the birth of our Lord. It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of the season, but we ask you not to forget the reason for the season: the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas from the Elders.

Yours in Christ,

Elders of St Peter

### **WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION**

#### **Bible Studies:**

- **Sundays:** We will continue a study on the book of James.
- **Wednesday Night Bible Study:** Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. On break until after the new year. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future topics, please speak to Pastor.
- **Book of Concord Study:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, December 14<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 5:00 PM. We will continue our study of the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, with a pitch-in dinner following the study.

#### **Sermons and Devotional Resources:**

- Weekly sermons will be posted on our church website (<http://www.stpeterwaymansville.com>) on the sermon page under the "At St. Peter" tab. (Direct link to page - [https://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page\\_id=1965](https://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=1965))
- You can also find helpful resources for your home devotions on the "Devotional Resources" page under the "Resources" tab ([http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page\\_id=489](http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=489)). Now is a great time to begin, continue, and strengthen a home devotional pattern by yourself and with your family.

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May these resources assist you as you continue to hear the Word of God and cry out to Him in prayer.  
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### **IN OUR PRAYERS**

Throughout the year, this space will be used to encourage you to keep your brothers and sisters in Christ here at St. Peter in your prayers. As you pray for them, you may even ask them how you can pray for them. Families will be listed in alphabetical order throughout the year. During this month, you are encouraged to pray for:

- Steve & Jeanne Loesch
- David & Donna Losey
- Teresa Lucas
- Michael, Cindy, Mackenzie, Tristan, Danica, Isabella May
- Lynnette May
- Jennifer Milan
- Barb Minor
- John & Beth Muntzinger
- Kevin, Amy, Jackson & Holly Nagel
- Jeremy, Mandy, Audrey, John, Noah, Emma, & Ella Nye

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Advent Suppers:** There is a sign-up sheet on the conference room door for our Advent suppers this year. If you would like to provide a part of our meal, please see the sheet or talk to Janice Acree. Advent midweeks begin on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, with supper at 6 PM and service at 7 PM.

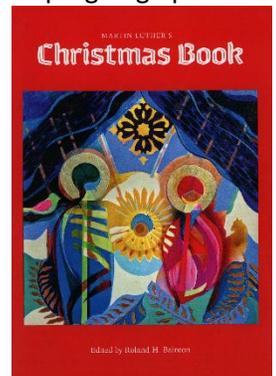
**Greening the Church:** Thank you to everyone who came out to help with greening the church. Thank you especially to the Vandercars for organizing it and providing a delicious meal for everyone!

**Poinsettias:** Order forms available in the narthex. Please have your orders in by Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Thank you!

**Missions:** This year we will be supporting a variety of missions. The missions we have supported include Clarity, Lakeview Ministries, Orphan Grain Train, Tiffany Smith (missionary for Lutheran Bible Translators serving in Tanzania), a seminary student, and our youth group. If you would like to submit a name of a seminary student or any other organization for consideration this year, please speak to an elder or to Pastor. May God continue to bless these missions as Christ is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

**Thrivent Action Teams:** If you have any Thrivent policies or products, you are eligible for two action teams a year. An action team includes \$250 seed money and may be used for a fundraiser, an educational event, or a service activity. As a church, we have used action teams for the fish fry, the youth golf scramble, Bible studies, etc. If you are interested in using your action teams for events at church or anywhere else, you can look for more information and help signing up on the Thrivent website or by speaking to Pastor.

**Book of the Month:** The Book of the Month will be available in the Parish Hall library. The December Book of the Month is *Martin Luther's Christmas Book* edited by Roland Bainton. Here is an excerpt from the book: "Our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a line of ancestors whom the Evangelist Matthew arranges with artistry into three groups of fourteen patriarchs, fourteen kings, and fourteen princes. Among the latter were a number of disreputable characters, as we learn from the book of Kings, and there were no savory women. God holds before us this mirror of sinners that we may know that he is sent to sinners, and from sinners is willing to be born."



**New Council Members:** We would like to thank Kyle Thomas (Financial Secretary) and John Dobrinski (Practical Services) for agreeing to serve on the church council beginning this upcoming year. We also thank all of our returning council members and our outgoing council members for their faithful service.

**Elder Position:** In our January quarterly voters' meeting (January 11<sup>th</sup>), we will elect one man for the position of elder. If you would like to volunteer for this position, please speak to a council member or elder.

**Altar Flowers:** If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, there is a sign-up sheet for 2025 & 2026 in the hallway between Pastor's study and the church office. The cost to sponsor the flowers is \$20, and the payment can be put in the offering plate or in the mail rack outside the church office door. The flowers are yours for the taking after the worship service. Please contact Barb Minor (812-372-4193) if you have any questions.

**Communion Assistance:** We are looking for people who may be interested in setting up and/or cleaning up communion. No need to worry about the linens, as those will be taken care of for you. If you are interested in learning more, please speak with Lynnette or Pastor. The sign-up sheet for 2025 & 2026 is also on the bulletin board.



**Vanco:** A new, online offering method is now available. You can find more information by scanning the QR code in the bulletin or by going to <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZMRA>.

**Church & Parish Hall Cleaning Volunteers:** If you are interested in helping to clean the Church and Parish Hall, there is a sign-up sheet in the hallway in the Parish Hall. You can sign-up for a month at a time and you can sign-up with another person/couple/family too. Prayerfully consider lending a hand in this way. You may also speak to Janice Acree or Jenni Acton for more information about the cleaning duties or the sheet on the bulletin board.

**Puzzle Sharing:** If you would like to borrow a puzzle or donate a puzzle, they can be found or placed in the cabinet in the Conference Room closest to the white board. Enjoy a variety of puzzles and some fellowship with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ!

## YOUTH GROUP & YOUTH CLASSES

**Youth Group:** The youth group will meet Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 5 PM for our youth night. We will have a meal, time to study God's Word, and our annual gingerbread building competition. Feel free to bring a friend! If you would like to be added to the text group to receive youth group notifications, please let Pastor know.

**Christmas Present Wrapping:** The youth group is planning on doing a Christmas present wrapping fundraiser twice in December. First, on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> during the holiday meal and game night and second, on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM – 12 PM.

## EVENTS

**Game Night & Holiday Meal :** Game Night & Fellowship Friday @ 5 will be on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 5:00 PM. All ages are welcome and bring a friend too! We will also be having a holiday meal that night prepared by the Elders. Feel free to bring your favorite games or a deck of cards. Mark your calendars and invite your friends and family to come along as well!

**Cookie Exchange:** We will be having a cookie exchange on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. If you have cookies that you'd like to share, please plan on bringing two dozen. We will enjoy some cookies during fellowship and Bible study and you will also be able to take a dozen (or more!) home to enjoy in the days leading up to Christmas.

**Epiphany Service:** Join us for a joint Epiphany service on Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. We will join with the saints from St. Paul's (Jonesville) and St. John's (White Creek) to worship our Lord and celebrate this festival day.

## LCMS COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

**Lutheran SGO:** Take full advantage of all the benefits of donating to the Lutheran SGO and support the students and families of Trinity Lutheran High School. For their generosity, donors may receive a 50% state tax credit. Donations can take many forms, from cash to credit cards to commodities. <https://www.lutheransgo.org/donations/index.php> Have questions or want to learn more? Contact Erin Brooks at 812-524-8547 or [ebrooks@trinitycougars.org](mailto:ebrooks@trinitycougars.org)

## FROM THE OFFICE

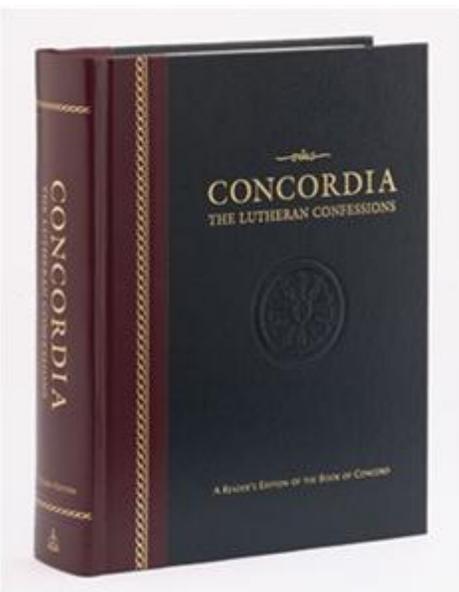
**Contact Information:** We would like to be able to contact everyone in a quick and timely manner. If you could please contact Camden or Pastor to update your contact information, especially phone number and email, that would help us tremendously and be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

**Church Constitution:** If you would like to sign the church constitution, please contact Camden.

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On the web: [www.stpeterwaymansville.com](http://www.stpeterwaymansville.com) • Facebook: [www.facebook.com/StPeterEvangelicalLutheranChurch](http://www.facebook.com/StPeterEvangelicalLutheranChurch)



### Book of Concord Corner

On the Lord's Prayer: "But praying, as the Second Commandment teaches, is to call upon God in every need. He requires this of us and has not left it to our choice. But it is our duty and obligation to pray, if we would be Christians, just as it is our duty and obligation to obey our parents and the government. For by calling upon God's name and praying, His name is honored and used well. This you must note above all things, so that you may silence and reject thoughts that would keep and deter us from prayer. It would be useless for a son to say to his father, 'What good does my obedience do me? I will go and do what I can. It makes no difference.' But there stands the commandment, 'You shall and must obey.' So here prayer is not left to my will to do or leave it undone, but it shall and must be offered at the risk of God's wrath and displeasure." (Large Catechism, Part III, 8-9)

# Advent and Christmas Services

Advent is a season when the Church prepares for the coming (or advent) of Jesus Christ. This preparation is done by gathering together to hear the Word of God, repent of our sins, and receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

Throughout this season, God reveals to us the three advents of Christ. First, He came in the flesh by His birth in Bethlehem. Second, He comes to us here and now in His Word and in His Sacraments. Third, He will come again on the last day to raise us from the dead.

As such, the Church uses this season to prepare for all three advents of Christ, celebrating the first, experiencing the second, and longing for the third. May this Advent and Christmas season be a blessed time of preparation for all of us here at St. Peter as we join together to delight in the Christ Child who comes to us now and will come again!

## The Midweek Services – The Saints of Christmas

**Wednesday, December 3, 7:00 PM – St. Stephen**

**Wednesday, December 10, 7:00 PM – St. John**

**Wednesday, December 17, 7:00 PM – The Holy Innocents**

## The Christmas Services

**Wednesday, December 24, 7:00 PM – Children's Christmas Program  
& Christmas Eve Candlelight**

**Thursday, December 25, 9:00 AM – Christmas Divine Service**



# Gift Wrapping

## Youth Group Fundraiser

All materials (wrapping paper, bags, boxes, etc.) are provided by the youth group, but feel free to bring your own for us to use too.

## Freewill Donation

Refreshments provided as you wait



**When: Two options!**

**Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 5 PM – 8 PM**

**Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM – 12 PM**

**Where: St. Peter Ev. Lutheran Church  
11750 W 930 S, Columbus, IN 47201**

# St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church Calendar

**December 2025**

**Ushers:** Max Thomas & Curt Acton

**Acolytes:**

**December 3** – John Nye

**December 14** – John Nye

**December 24** – John Nye

**December 31** – John Nye

**December 7** – Noah Nye

**December 17** – Noah Nye

**December 25** – Noah Nye

**December 10** – Abe Acton

**December 21** – Abe Acton

**December 28** – Abe Acton

**Communion Set-up & Clean-up:**

December 7, 25, 28 – Kathy Rebber

December 14 – AJ Trimpe

December 21, 31 – Judy Strasser

**Parish Hall Cleaning:** open

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Upcoming events:</i> 1/6: Epiphany Service	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>  10 AM – Elders Meeting	<b>3</b>  6 PM – Advent Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  5 PM – Holiday Meal & Game Night	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> <i>Second Sunday in Advent</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>  10 AM-2 PM – Pastor @ Circuit Meeting	<b>10</b>  6 PM – Advent Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek	<b>11</b>  6 PM – Council Meeting	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>  Sunday School Movie Night
<b>14</b> <i>Third Sunday in Advent</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis  5:00 PM – Book of Concord study	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  6 PM – Advent Supper 7 PM – Advent Midweek	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  10 AM – 12 PM - Gift Wrapping
<b>21</b> <i>Fourth Sunday in Advent</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 – Cookie Exchange, Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis  5:00 PM – Youth Group	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  7 PM – Children’s Program & Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> <i>Nativity of Our Lord</i>  9 AM – Christmas Divine Service	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> <i>First Sunday after Christmas</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  7:00 PM – New Year’s Eve Divine Service			