



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Highspire
Baptism of Our Lord
January 11, 2026

Introduction

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

Overview

The Power of a God Who Is Humble

From the time Jesus first presented himself for baptism by John until today, Christians have puzzled over why Jesus had to be baptized. The act of baptism was understood to be an act of repentance and the cleansing of one's sins. John does not understand why Jesus, whose sandals John is "not worthy to carry" (Matt. 3:11) should seek to be baptized. Instead, John declares to Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you" (Matt. 3:14). Why should the Son of God, who is without sin, need to be baptized?

Frederick Dale Bruner, in *Matthew: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), says that he considers Jesus' first miracle to have occurred at his baptism. The miracle is that Jesus was humble. The divine Son of God humbles himself by allowing John to baptize him. This act of humility is an act of obedience to God and solidarity with all humankind. Jesus has no sins to be forgiven. However, for us, he goes down to the river of repentance with all the other sinners to be baptized. Jesus' baptism, his first adult act as recorded in Matthew's gospel, gives us a clear indication of how Jesus will act for his entire life. The Son of God will come down with us, on our level, identifying with our needs. His baptism, then, foreshadows how his life will end, on the cross. In his death, Jesus experiences the worst we could ever experience as mortal humans. But, because Jesus united with us in baptism, we are united with him in both his death and resurrection. The barriers that separate us from God, including the barriers of sinfulness, mortality, and death, are broken by Jesus' obedience to God, through his humility to come down to us in the depths of our humanity.

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE Songs of Thankfulness and Praise Deb Dillane

The Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

ELW p. 119

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

C **Amen.**

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

*GATHERING HYMN Shall We Gather at the River ELW #423

*GREETING ELW p. 120

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: **Isaiah 42:1-9**

God's servant is endowed with God's spirit in order to bring justice to the nations. The servant will not exercise authority boisterously or with violence, nor will weariness ever prevent the fulfilling of the servant's task. God's old promises have been fulfilled; the servant's new assignment is to bring light to the nations.

1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.

2 He will not cry out or lift up his voice
 or make it heard in the street;

3 a bruised reed he will not break,
 and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.

4 He will not grow faint or be crushed

until he has established justice in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

5 Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:

6 I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,

7 to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

8 I am the Lord; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.

9 See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

L The word of the Lord

C **Thanks be to God**

PSALM: **Psalm 29** (read responsively)
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. (Ps. 29:3)

1 Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory
thunders; the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

**4 The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.**

5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

**6 the Lord makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

7 The voice of the Lord
bursts forth in lightning flashes.

**8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

9 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips
the forests bare. And in the temple of the Lord all are crying,
“Glory!”

**10 The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

11 O Lord, give strength to your people;
give them, O Lord, the blessings of peace.

SECOND READING: Acts 10:34-43

Peter crosses the sharp religious boundary separating Jews from Gentiles and proclaims the good news of God’s inclusive forgiveness in Jesus’ name to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. As a result of Peter’s preaching, Cornelius and his family become the first Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

34 Peter began to speak to [Cornelius and his household]: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. 36 You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. 37 That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on

a tree, 40 but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, 41 not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

L The word of the Lord

C **Thanks be to God**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Halle, Halle, Hallelujah ELW # 172
(2 times)

*GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17

P The holy gospel according to Matthew

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Before Jesus begins his ministry, he is baptized by John, touched by the Spirit, and identified publicly as God's child.

13 Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Rev. J. Richard Eckert

SERMON

Rev. J. Richard Eckert

*HYMN OF THE DAY When Jesus Came to Jordan ELW # 305

*NICENE CREED ELW p. 126

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.

INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The assembly is seated. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P The following people have been elected by the congregation to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will lead St. Peter in its common life and mutual mission as a congregation.

Grace Hoover, Robert Orendorf, Stephanie Strauss, Donald Sipe, Shanna Mulford, Doris Reynolds, Matthew Hunt, Kane High, and Patrick Hawkins

The presiding minister addresses those being installed.

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-7*)

You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church.

You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.

You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.

You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties to which you have been elected?

Response: **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

The assembly stands. Those being installed face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

Response: **We will, and we ask God to help us.**

Those being installed face the presiding minister, who addresses them.

I now declare you installed as council members of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ. Amen.

*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A 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.

Steadfast God, give courage to your servant church. Heal our divisions and unite us in mission. Uphold our lay leaders, missionaries, pastors, and bishops, and all who proclaim hope in a broken world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Restoring God, cleanse the life-giving waters of rivers, seas, and springs especially the Susquehanna River and Bird Run. Create in us an urgent desire to preserve the beauty and bounty of your good creation. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Righteous God, you guide the nations. Reconcile warring enemies and end cycles of violent retribution. Defend the rights of prisoners, detainees, and all who flee from persecution. Sustain international aid workers and peacemakers. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Compassionate God, you care for all in distress. Provide safety and support for those seeking asylum or in need of shelter. Be near to the dying, and comfort all who are grieving or ill especially *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachael Benkovic, Elijah Dean, Duck Harris, Rose Hoover, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, Rob Lipsitt, and Jeff Myers.* Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Loving God, awaken the gifts of the Spirit in this congregation, that we may serve Christ by loving one another, our neighbors, and our enemies. We pray for travelers and those who are homebound. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Promising God, in baptism we die and rise with Christ. We give thanks for those who have gone before us, and we trust that we will join them in your everlasting peace. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P 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.

C Amen.

*PEACE

ELW p. 128

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Let Us Break Bread Together

Bell Choir

The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*OFFERTORY HYMN

This Little Light of Mine

ELW# 677



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A Let us pray.

God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

ELW p. 129

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

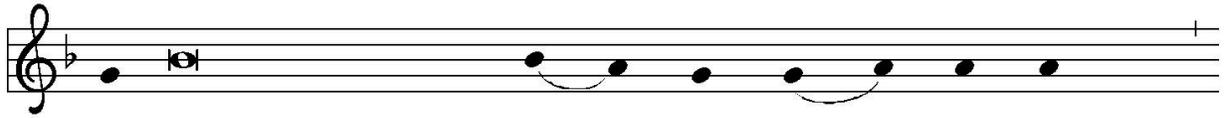
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

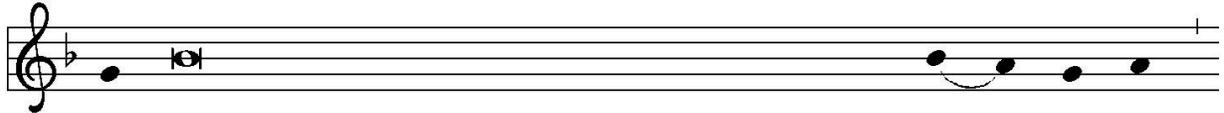
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures: 'The Lord be with you.' and 'And al - so with you.'. The second staff has two measures: 'Lift up your hearts.' and 'We lift them to the Lord.'. The third staff has one measure: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.'. The fourth staff has one measure: 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'. The lyrics are in a simple, sans-serif font, with some words in bold (Amen, Lift, We lift, It is right).

*PREFACE



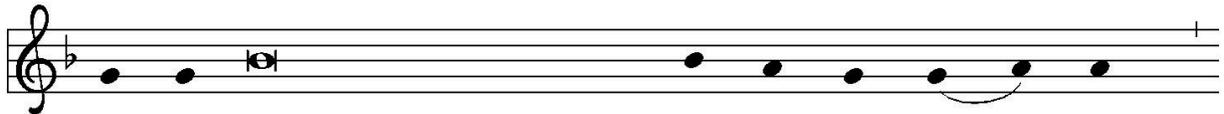
It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,



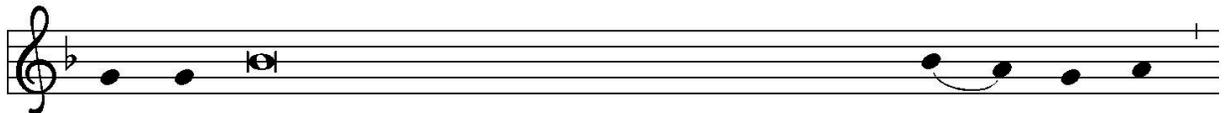
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,



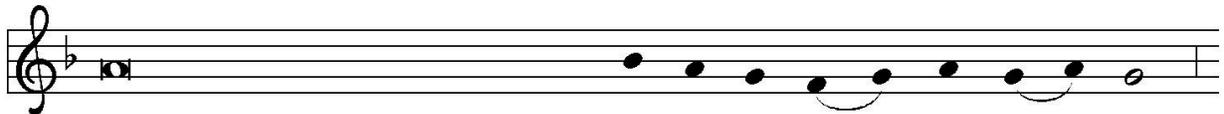
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.



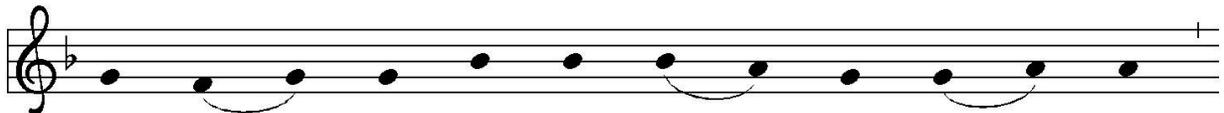
By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all na - tions;



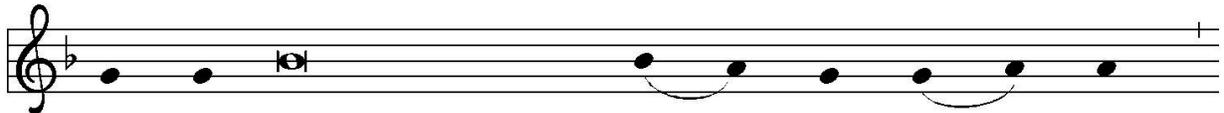
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your be - lov - ed Son,



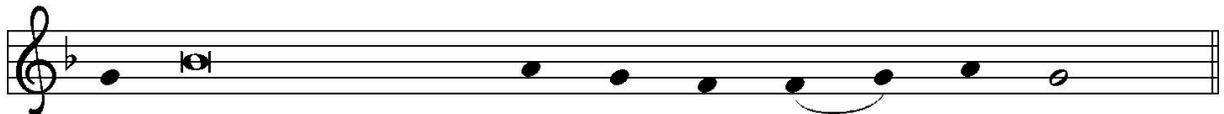
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he re - vealed your glo - ry.



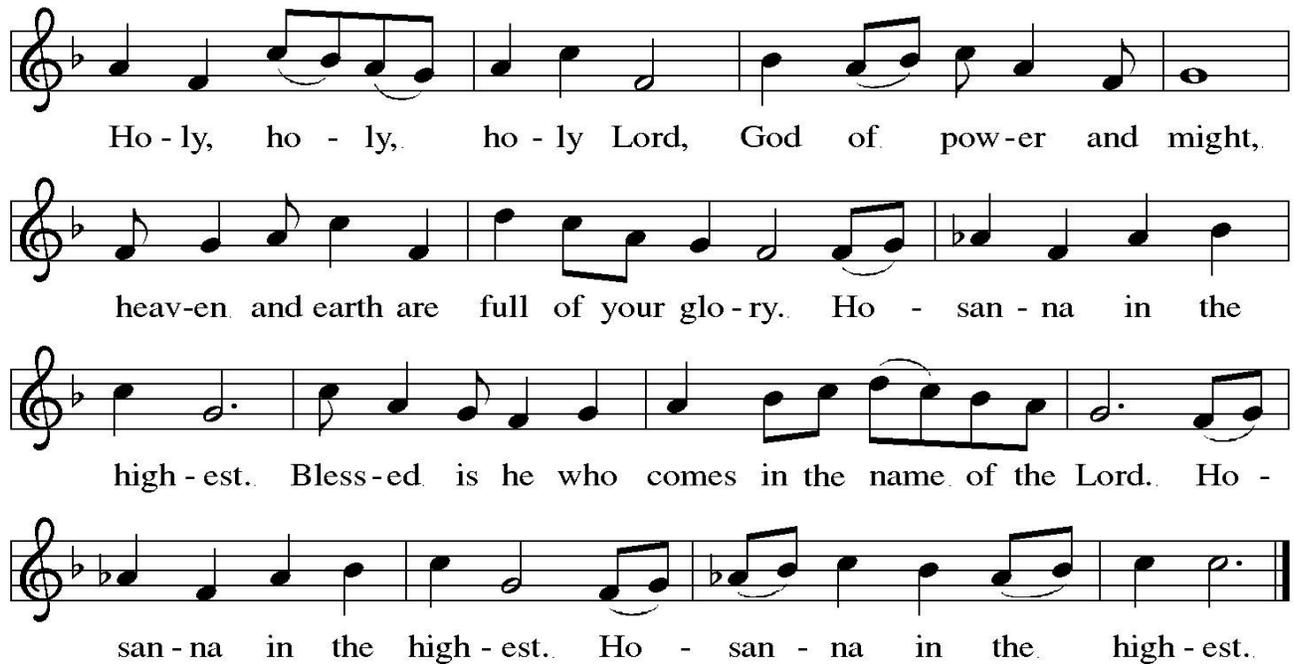
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,



with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,



we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

ELW p. 132

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
 Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
 Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
 Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
 Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
 Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
 Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

*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.*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

***SHARING THE MEAL**

P Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
Come to the table; taste and see.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

Lamb of God	ELW p.135
Wade in the Water	ELW# 459
Spirit of Gentleness	ELW# 396

The Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table 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 Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

*BLESSING

P May the triune God,
who has put a new song in your mouth
and tuned your heart for praise

✠ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

*SENDING HYMN Songs of Thankfulness and Praise ELW# 310

*DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE When Jesus Came to Jordan Deb Dillane

***Thank you, Rev. J. Richard Eckert for presiding over worship
today, you are a blessing to us.***

***We appreciate Deb Dillane for sharing her musical talent with
us this morning. Thank you, Deb.***

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Prelude - "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" Wayne Wold @Morningstar 1993 - Deb Dillane, organ

Gathering Hymn - "Shall We gather at the River" ELW #423 PUBLIC DOMAIN words & music - Robert Lowry

Gospel Acclamation - "Halle, Halle, Hallelujah" ELW #172 PUBLIC DOMAIN

Hymn of the Day - "When Jesus Came to Jordan" ELW #305 KING'S LYNN @1980 Hope Publishing Co. words - Fred Pratt Green music - English folk tune

Special Music - "Let Us Break Bread Together" arr. Anna Laura Page from Come to the Table @2016 Lorenz Publishing Co. Bell Choir

Offertory Hymn - "This Little Light of Mine" ELW #677 PUBLIC DOMAIN words & music - African American Spiritual

Sanctus - "Holy, Holy, Holy" p. 130, setting 2, ELW

Distribution of Communion - Lamb of God, p.135, ELW, setting 2

"Wade in the Water" ELW #459 PUBLIC DOMAIN words & music - African American Spiritual

"Spirit of Gentleness" ELW #396 words & music - James K. Manley @1978 James K. Manley

Sending hymn - "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" ELW #310 PUBLIC DOMAIN SALZBURG words - Christopher Wordsworth music - Jakob Hintze

Postlude - "When Jesus Came to Jordan" Wayne Wold KING'S LYNN @ Harmonies of Liberty: A Collection for Organ, 2003 Augsburg - Deb Dillane, organ

St. Peter's Lutheran Church Highspire Contact Information:

Saint Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

240 Broad St., P.O. Box 97

Highspire, Pennsylvania 17034-0097

Office Phone: 717-939-3492

E-mail: stpetershighspire240@gmail.com

For pastoral care, please reach out to the church office at 717-939-3492 or by email at stpetershighspire240@gmail.com. You can also call Rich Deutsch at 717-512-1136.

ALTAR FLOWERS

We are in need of sponsors for the altar flowers on the following Sunday's:

February 1st ; February 8th

If you would be interested, please reach out to Helene Hoch at 717-343-8397. Thank you!

Altar vases are presented to the Glory of God by Robert and Carole Orendorf in honor of Carol's birthday on January 5th.

Worship Participants for January 11, 2026

Presiding Minister	Pastor J. Richard Eckert
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Patrick Hawkins
Musician	Deb Dillane
Lector	Doris Reynolds

Worship Participants for January 18, 2026

Presiding Minister	Rev. Gail Wolling
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Brian Keyser
Musician	Juliet Mitton
Lector	Randy Hoover

CHOIR REHEARSALS

This Wednesday, January 14th, there will be rehearsal for the Bell Choir at 6:30pm and the choir at 7:15pm. Join us at rehearsals and offer your talents to the Lord through music! Any questions, call or text Steve at 717-265-6854.

All are Welcome Bible Study

The *All are Welcome Bible Study* meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm. We are currently reading Psalms. We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at

allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Mark your calendar for our Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on January 25th, 2026. There will be lunch provided by the Council. More information to come. Also, any committee reports should be submitted to church secretaries by January 16, 2026.

Come to church and stay for fellowship every Sunday in the Parlor. Enjoy coffee and snacks and friendly conversation! If you would be interested in "Hosting a Sunday" please check the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board located in the hallway outside the Music Room/Church Office.