



**OUR SAVIOR'S**  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*And he  
will be our*  
**PEACE.**

Micah 5:5



## **WELCOME**

On Christmas Eve a choir of angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” So, where is this peace on earth? Between nations? There are always wars going on somewhere. In our country? Disagreements have only grown more contentious, one group screaming angrily at another group. We might not even have perfect peace in our homes! So, what were the angels singing about? They were singing about peace between a holy God who hates sin and human beings who sin every day. Because of what Christ did as our Savior, there is no hostility between us and God, only peace and love. We have the peace of salvation in our hearts. As we draw near the end of life, like elderly Simeon or Anna, we have the peace of knowing of the glorious eternal life that is to come. As this peace with God fills our hearts, it moves us to live in peace with each other too.

## **PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP**

Father of lasting peace, show your mercy to me and to all who are gathered here to worship you. Enable me to behold my salvation in the Christ Child and, with Simeon of old, be well-prepared to depart in peace according to your Word. Amen.

## **OUR COMMUNION PRACTICE**

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we express unity with our Savior and those who share our faith and stand on the teachings of God’s Word. Therefore, we invite to our altar those who are members of Our Savior’s or members of the WELS/ELS. Visitors who wish to commune are asked to speak to a pastor before the service begins.

## **SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

- Minister ~ Pastor Jeff Mahnke
  - Organist ~ Marie Kurth
  - Ushers ~ Sawyer Burish, Robert Gresens
- (Next Sunday – Mark Krohn, Kurt Schubring)*



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# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 2023

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## Welcome

## Opening Hymn

CW 330

- 1 Peace came to earth at last that chosen night  
when angels clove the sky with song and light  
and God embodied love and sheathed his might—  
Who could but gasp: Immanuel!  
Who could but sing: Immanuel!
  
- 2 And who could be the same for having held  
the infant in their arms and later felt  
the wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled—  
Who could but sigh: Immanuel!  
Who could but shout: Immanuel!
  
- 3 You show the Father none has ever seen,  
in flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,  
in bread and wine you visit us again—  
Who could but see: Immanuel!  
Who could but thrill: Immanuel!
  
- 4 How else could I have known you, O my God!  
How else could I have loved you, O my God!  
How else could I embrace you, O my God!  
Who could but pray: Immanuel!  
Who could but praise: Immanuel!

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008

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In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

## **Confession**

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **Song of Praise**

CW 358 sts. 4–5

4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him, angel hosts his praises sing,  
pow'rs, dominions bow before him and extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring  
evermore and evermore.

5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee  
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unending praises be,  
honor, glory, and dominion and eternal victory  
evermore and evermore.

Text: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–c. 413, abr.; (st. 4): tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.; (st. 5): tr. Henry W. Baker, 1821–1877, alt.  
Text: Public domain

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming, deliver us from the corruption of our sin, and transform us into the likeness 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.**

## The Word

### First Reading

**Micah 5:2–5a**

<sup>2</sup>“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” <sup>3</sup>Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. <sup>4</sup>He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup>And he will be our peace.

### Sing to the LORD, Ye Distant Lands

*Psalms 96D*

- 1 Sing to the LORD, ye distant lands, ye tribes of ev'ry tongue;  
his newdiscovered grace demands a new and nobler song.  
Tell all the nations, “Jesus reigns, God’s own almighty Son;  
his pow’r the sinking world sustains, and grace surrounds his throne.”
- 2 Let heav’n proclaim the joyful day; let joy on earth be seen;  
let cities shine in bright array, and fields in cheerful green.  
Let joy above all joys surprise the islands of the sea;  
ye mountains sink; ye valleys rise; prepare the LORD his way.

Text: Isaac Watts  
Text: Public domain

## Second Reading

Colossians 3:12–17

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

<sup>14</sup>And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

<sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## Gospel Acclamation

Luke 2:30,31

Alleluia. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. Alleluia.

## Gospel

Luke 2:22–40

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup>and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

<sup>29</sup>“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
<sup>30</sup>For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
<sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup>so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. <sup>38</sup>Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup>When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

## Hymn of the Day

CW 355

- 1 Let all together praise our God before his highest throne;  
today he opens heav’n again and gives us his own Son,  
and gives us his own Son.
- 2 He leaves his heav’nly Father’s throne, is born an infant small,  
and in a manger, poor and lone, lies in a humble stall,  
lies in a humble stall.

- 3 He veils in flesh his pow'r divine a servant's form to take,  
in want and lowliness must pine who heav'n and earth did make,  
who heav'n and earth did make.
- 4 He undertakes a great exchange, puts on our human frame,  
and in return gives us his realm, his glory, and his name,  
his glory, and his name.
- 5 He serves that I a lord may be— a great exchange indeed!  
Could Jesus' love do more for me to help me in my need,  
to help me in my need?
- 6 For us he opens wide the door of paradise today.  
The angel guards the gate no more; to God our thanks we pay,  
to God our thanks we pay.

Text: Nicolaus Herman, c. 1480-1561, abr.; (sts. 1-3, 5-6): tr. August Crull, 1845-1923, sts. 1-3,5,6, alt.; (st. 4): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913-2001, st. 4

Text (sts. 1-3, 5-6): Public domain

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## Sermon

### Create in Me a Clean Heart

CW 942

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with your free Spirit. Amen.

Text: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, rev.

Text: Public domain



## Thank Offering & Friendship Register

*Members of Our Savior's give generous and free will gifts to honor the Lord and support our ministry of the gospel. Guests are welcome to give but should not feel obligated to do so.*

*As the offering is gathered, please sign the Friendship Register as it is passed down the pew.*

## Prayer of the Church

Eternal Lord God, in the fullness of time, you sent forth your Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as your children and heirs. Hear us, Father, as we call to you in his name. Give us grace to rejoice in Christ's blessed incarnation and grant us a glad new year. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Lead your Church, Lord, to follow the example of blessed Simeon, that all baptized Christians would embrace the Christ Child by Word and faith, and so be ready to depart whenever they are called. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Holy God, mighty Lord, you have given power to the nations and to those who govern for the good of their people. Bless our president, Congress, governor and all our leaders, that justice may prevail and your people would be free to live at peace with all. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, receive our prayers for those who suffer from loneliness. Comfort them with the sure and certain knowledge that You will never forsake them. Give them family and friends within the household of faith with whom they can find loving companionship. Lord, in Your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

## **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.**

## **The Sacrament**

### **Words of Institution**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**Amen.**

### **Distribution & Distribution Hymns**

**356 God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen**

**332 Let Us All with Gladsome Voice**

## **Song of Thanksgiving**

*Tune of "From Heaven Above"*

**Oh, thank the Lord, whose goodness sure  
And steadfast love fore'er endure!  
Our eyes have seen, our ears have heard,  
And we have tasted of His Word.**

**As His own servants we depart  
With His salvation in our heart.  
His saving power He has made known;  
His love through all the earth is shown.**

## **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**Amen.**

## Closing Hymn

CW 368 sts. 1, 4-6



1 Now greet the swift - ly chang - ing year with  
4 His love a - bun - dant far ex - ceeds the  
5 With him as Lord to lead our way in  
6 "All glo - ry be to God on high, and



joy and pen - i - tence sin - cere. Re - joice! Re-joyce! With  
vol - ume of a whole year's needs. Re - joice! Re-joyce! With  
want and in pros - per - i - ty, what need we fear in  
peace on earth!" the an - gels cry. Re - joice! Re-joyce! With



thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.  
thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.  
earth or space in this new year of grace?  
thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.

Text: tr. Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919-2008, alt.; Cithara Sanctorum, Levoca, 1636

Tune: Alfred V. Fedak, b. 1953

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***Thank you for worshipping with us.  
God's richest blessings in 2024!***

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**Serving the Pastoral Vacancy** – Pastor Jeff Mahnke from St. Peter Lutheran Church is serving as Our Savior's vacancy pastor. Should you need his pastoral guidance and service, call / text him anytime at 715.297.0132. His email address is [pastorm@mysaintpeter.org](mailto:pastorm@mysaintpeter.org).

### **Pick up today:**

- 2024 Offering Envelopes
- *Forward in Christ, Meditations, Portals of Prayer*
- Our Savior's Constitution & By-Laws

**Memorial** – We thank Juanita Landwehr for her gift given in memory of her aunt, Kathy Devantier, who passed away in November. Blessed be her memory. Thanks be to God for the love which led to this gift.

**Recap of Open Forum** – Please see the next page for a recap of the Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> congregational open forum. There is a lot of information for you to consider before our next meeting. We want your input!

**Contact Information Updates** – In January a new congregational directory will be printed. Please update your address, phone number, and email address as needed by writing a note on the Friendship Register, giving a note to the secretary, or by emailing the church office at [OSInfo@oursaviorswausau.org](mailto:OSInfo@oursaviorswausau.org).

Please also let us know if you wish to be added to the email list for bulletins and/or newsletters.

**Our Savior’s School Little Caesar’s Fundraiser** – Pizza kits, breads and cookies - have them on hand for quick dinners, parties or entertaining. Brochures are available in the narthex. Order online or fill out an order form with payment and give to the church office or a teacher. **Orders must be received by noon on Jan. 12.** Pick up time will be announced mid-January. Funds raised will go toward a water bottle filling station and a volleyball refereeing stand. Thank you in advance for your support.

**OWLS** – In January we’ll be making Valentine cards for the shut-ins. We will meet at Our Saviors on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:30. Guests are always welcome to join us. Questions contact Evan or Sandy at 715-693-1337.

**Bible Information Class** – The next Bible Information Class will begin on Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm in the lower level of the Ministry Center of the St. Peter Schofield Campus. While members are always welcome to attend for a review of the basic teachings of the Christian faith, “Life’s Big Questions” is especially intended for the unchurched, those interested in learning more about what our church teaches, and anyone who does not have a personal relationship with Jesus. Please invite your friends, relatives, associates at work, and neighbors to come. Remember, outreach is for everyone!

## This Week at Our Savior's

<b>Today</b>	9:00 AM	Worship with Communion <i>No Sunday School or Bible Class</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>		OS School Classes Resume
<b>Next Sunday 1/7</b>	9:00 AM 10:15 AM	Worship Sunday School <b>Congregational &amp; Voters Meeting</b>

## Growing Together

December 25, 2023

<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Vision</u>	<u>Debt Red</u>	<u>Advent</u>	<u>Chr Eve</u>	<u>Chr Day</u>
\$4,210.00	\$125.00	\$130.00	\$240.00	\$1,410.00	\$1,330.00

<u>Chr Gifts/Bags</u>	<u>NY Eve</u>	<u>Thanksgvg</u>	<u>Plate</u>	<u>School Fees</u>
\$165.00	\$100.00	\$10.00	\$206.50	\$106.00

Publications  
\$16.00

**Anticipated Weekly Offerings: \$4,077**

**Attendance:**     December 24 – 93  
                          December 25 – 59

**WELS Youth Night** - WELS Youth Night will be held at Marathon City Sports Center, in Marathon City, **February 4th** from 5-8pm. Teens 8th - 12th grade are invited to join us as we'll "take over" the bowling alley where they will find free food, free bowling, and the free Gospel. It will be a good time and we encourage all teens to come and invite friends (WELS or not). We'll bowl for fun, but we'll also "pin" some of our better bowlers against each other in a championship game for big prizes. We will have eight lanes to accommodate around 50 bowlers. No bowling ball, shoes or skill required!

## **Recap of Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> Open Forum** – Here are some highlights:

- Chairman Travis Kurth read a letter from the leaders of St Peter informing Our Savior's that, at least at this time, a merger of our ministries is not a feasible option.
- Tony Sulko, our congregation's treasurer, gave a financial update. He noted that while Our Savior's is currently holding its own financially during the pastoral vacancy, things would be very different should there be a pastor to support with salary, housing allowance and the necessary benefits. Tony also gave an update on the money that Our Savior's has in checking and savings accounts, as well as in stocks and other special accounts.
- There was discussion about the request of the Church Council that permission be granted to them to be able to spend down our savings in order to financially support having a pastor. It is estimated this could help for up to two years or so.
- There is a need to not only fill the openings on the Church Council but to also have members serving on committee and service groups. Copies will soon be made of Our Savior's by-laws with position and responsibility descriptions. Members are urged to read this information and consider how they can serve. Members of the Church Council in the new year will be reaching out with invitations to help by serving.
- There was discussion about helping our Christian Day School become accredited. This would also enable Our Savior's to enter the school choice program to potentially bring extra financial support.
- Members are encouraged to continue praying for our ministry.
- God willing, another Call meeting for a pastor will be held in mid January.
- **There will be a congregational meeting next Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:10 am.**

## **Acknowledgments**

Setting One from Christian Worship

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*Growing in Jesus, Sharing His Love*

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