



GLAD TIDINGS



Vol. 42 Iss. 10

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, MD

Dec 2023/Jan 2024

Advent and Christmas worship at POP

Join Advent and Christmas activities as you are able! Below is what's planned, along with links for you to learn more. Please share this information with others!



Advent Evening Prayer:

Holden Evening Prayer ([livestream on Facebook](#)) each Wednesday evening in Advent (December 6, 13, & 20) at 7:15 pm

A time of fellowship with wine, cheese and finger food will precede each service **beginning at 6:15 pm.**

Christmas Eve and Day Services:

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve Children's Service at 4 pm (in-person and [Livestream on Facebook](#))

Christmas Eve Carols and Holy Communion at 7 pm (in-person and [Livestream on Facebook](#))

Christmas Day:

Carols & Holy Communion at 10 am (in-person and [Livestream on Facebook](#))

For updates (or more information), please check our [Advent](#) and [Christmas](#) web pages.

Church & Community Christmas

Please Join Us for a Special Church & Community Christmas Program including The Christmas Story, a Carol Sing-Along, Hot Cocoa & Cookies, all in the Fellowship Hall, followed by an Old-Fashioned Outdoor Tree Lighting on the Patio. It all starts at 4:00 pm on Sunday, December 10. All are welcome.



Come and enjoy the warmth of the season! If you would like to help with Christmas Cookies and the decorating of the tree, please contact Pamela Cook at 301-806-8016 or cook1082@verizon.net

It's Poinsettia Time!

Poinsettias are available for \$14 each in Red, Pink, and White. If you would like to donate flowers for the altar this Christmas, please have your order and payment in **by Sunday, December 17** (no color choice after December 10). Flowers can be donated in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one. You may take your flowers home any time after Christmas Day. Order forms are available in the narthex or [email the office](#).



Christmas Giving Village at Rockville



PoP is collecting Christmas gifts this year for those who are alone and without gifts during the holiday season at the Village at Rockville Retirement Facility. Some elders are without family or funds anymore. To help bring them a little bit of Christmas, TVAR is asking for items listed [here](#). There is a decorated box in the Narthex to collect items. **The deadline for collecting is December 3.** Sign up. Any questions, ask [Susan Weiner](#).

Giving Tree

Make a child's Christmas joyful! Each year, PoP members can select a child's name from the Giving Tree and purchase a special Christmas gift for them. This year we are working with Brown Station Elementary School to provide a happy Christmas for selected students and their siblings. The tree is virtual again this year. You can sign-up [here](#). Gifts should be wrapped and include a removable tag (not taped on) with family number and letter (ex.: 1A, 2B). **Please bring your gift to POP no later than Sunday, December 17th.** Questions? Please contact [Rachel Carreras](#).





From Pastor Steve...

Pastor Steve Buechler
(pastor@poplutheran.org;
301-869-3666)

There are several themes that permeate the season of Advent. In our scripture readings and in our liturgies, we hear over and over again about the need to watch; and to wait; and to pray. Of course, these aren't unique to Advent, but in this season, we really emphasize them a lot. And sometimes, as we consider what it means to watch and wait and pray as we get ready for Christmas and a new year, we naturally think about what it means to wait with excitement for the family and friends we're looking forward to seeing around Christmas. We pray for what we hope will be a new year filled with peace and prosperity. And in the busyness of the season, we watch for things that might fall through the cracks because there's so much going on.

These are all perfectly good things to do! But the season of Advent calls us to do things like watch, wait, and pray not simply because this is a good time of year to do those things. Rather, this is a season of the year when it's good to practice those things, because we need to be good at those things all year long.

Sometimes, we can get the impression that if we spend some really good, quality time in Advent watching, waiting, and praying, that at the end of four weeks (actually, only three this year because Christmas Eve is the Fourth Sunday of Advent!), we'll have achieved some deep, spiritual revelation just in time for Christmas. That can happen, but it's not the point.

Rather, the point of all this watching, waiting, and praying is that we need Advent as a time to practice, because we always need to get good at those things. Throughout the year, we always need to watch for what God is doing in our lives, especially when things are crazy and chaotic in the world around us. Throughout the year, we always need to be ready to wait when God's time doesn't align so neatly with our timelines. And throughout the year, we always need to pray, so that we can be open to God's presence and guidance whether we're in a special season or not.

May this Advent be a time of practice for you, so that you're strengthened and ready for the seasons to come!

Yours in Christ,

December/January Highlights

Every Sunday

10:00 am Worship live and streamed on our Facebook Page

11:00 am Sunday School*

*No Sunday School December 24, December 31, January 21

Every Monday

6:30 pm Grace Notes Rehearsal

Every Tuesday

10:00 am Quilters

12:30 pm Women's Bible Study

Every Wednesday*

6:15 pm Fellowship Time

7:15 pm Holden Evening Prayers

*Only December 6, 13, and 20.

COMING UP...

December

3 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (pg 1)

6 Holden Evening Prayer (pg 1)

7 Women's Book Group (pg 7)

9 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (pg 1)

9 Saturday Worship Service (pg 3)

10 Christmas Pageant (pg 1)

12 Church Council Meeting

13 Holden Evening Prayer (pg 1)

14 PoP Ladies Christmas Event

20 Holden Evening Prayer (pg 1)

24 Christmas Eve (pg 1)

24 No Sunday School (pp 1, 5)

25 Christmas Day (pg 1)

26 Church Office Closed

31 New Year's Eve

31 No Sunday School (pg 1, 5)

January

1 New Year's Day

7 Confirmation Meets

9 Church Council Meeting

11 Women's Book Group (pg 7)

13 Saturday Worship Service (pg 3)

15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

21 No Sunday School (pp 1, 5)

21 Annual Congregational Meeting (pg 4)

February

8 Women's Book Group (pg 7)
10 Saturday Worship Service
13 Church Council Meeting
14 Valentine's Day
25 Confirmation Meeting
27 Anti-Defamation League Speaker (pg 4)

For a current calendar, see:

<https://poplutheran.org/church-calendars/>

Second Saturday Service - in order to provide an additional opportunity for worship apart from Sunday morning, we will hold a 5 pm Saturday service on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Our next services will be on Sat., December 9 and Sat., January 13. Saturday services will have the same sermon and readings as the following Sunday service but will not be livestreamed.

COUNCIL CORNER

November 2023

News and Views from the PoP Church Council

NEWS

Here are the updates from the November Church Council meeting.

Finances: Giving continues to be okay; although we are likely to end the year with a small deficit. ([Council notes](#)).

Solar panel project: Should be installed before the end of the year.

Feast Fund: Meetings and discussions are in progress for a bathroom refresh.

Christmas Program: On Sunday, December 10th at 4:00 pm, we will have our first ever Christmas Program/Tree Lighting. We will have a short Christmas Pageant, hot cocoa and cookies, a carol sing-along, and an outdoor tree lighting.

VIEWS

We are almost to Advent as I write this column. We are in holiday mode for food donations to Gaithersburg Help, the Giving Tree is up, gifts are being gathered for residents at the Village of Rockville and the Christmas Program is in rehearsal. I hope that you find peace and joy in this holiday season.

Thank you again for your continued support with both time and talents.

Respectfully,
Jon Conary

Council met on November 7. You can read notes from that meeting (including the Pastor's and Treasurer's report) [by clicking here](#).

SPECIAL PRAYERS

. . . My need was met because someone came and communicated . . . in words I could not express. . .
Pastor John B. McGarvey



PoP Members

Alice & James Baur, Madelyn Berkeley-Miltzer, Elizabeth Langum Chung, Brittany (DeGeorge) Daniel, Laura Hampe Garofalo, Carmen Hooks-Hill, Roy Johnson, Mike & Remi Langum, Anne Lomperis, Kaitlyn McGurgan & her family, Jim McNerney, Kathy Mellott, John Miltzer, Dick Moore, Heather Robinson, David & Martha Rogers, Sherry Schiebel, Denny Tritinger, Cynthia Watter, Susan Weiner, Laura Wilson

Sympathy

Family of Gerhard Eifel (father of Trish Taylor)
Family of Walter "Joe" Kanhofer
(brother of Jane Sahmel)
Family of Ines Soto
(mother of Sherry Schiebel's friend)
Family of Trevor Thompson (cousin of Lisa Conary)

Thanksgiving

Confirmation Class: Kate Bardill, Jason Cobb, Avery Hillman, Kieran McKnight, Nyla Mensah, Brody Meyer, Claire Spivak, Grady Webb and Noah Wooldridge

Ongoing

The people of Ukraine and all those who are suffering due to hatred, war, and acts of violence
Racial justice and equality
All those struggling with Covid-19 and their Caregivers
All those impacted by weather

The complete Prayer List is available in the Weekly Email sent on Thursdays.

Prince of Peace welcomes people as they are and embraces all the dimensions of diversity in which God has made us: race, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, physical ability, and cultural and religious backgrounds, among others. We are all loved by God.

SPOTLIGHT

New Members



Prince of Peace will be receiving new members on Sunday, December 17! If you are not an official member, but would like to join, please let [Pastor Steve](#) know!

Photo Directory

The updated PoP Photo Directory will be available in December. If you want an electronic version, please contact the [office](#). Paper copies can be found on the credenza in the Narthex.



Inclement Weather



During the winter months, if inclement weather requires us to cancel services or activities, a notice will appear on the [website homepage \(poplutheran.org\)](http://poplutheran.org).

JANUARY NOTES

Annual Congregational Meeting

PoP Members, mark your calendars and come to the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 21. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary immediately following the service. Sunday School will not be held that Sunday. Come vote on issues concerning our congregation and building for the next year, including new council members.

Annual ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Do you have a change jar or loose change in a bowl? Well, POP will hold its annual coin collection to "purchase Good Gifts" from the ELCA World Hunger Appeal catalog in January. Sunday School students will again select the gifts. Last spring the elementary school class chose a herd of goats while the middle school chose a cow, honeybees, and piglets. So, start collecting your coins now.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us on Tuesday evening, 2/27 from 6:30-7:30pm in the sanctuary, for an evening with the Anti-Defamation League

Social Justice Ministry, Shaare Torah, and Fairhaven Methodist will be hosting a speaker from the [Anti-Defamation League](#), which is a recognized leader in fighting all forms of antisemitism and

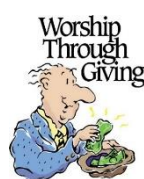
bias, and combating extremism. Hate incidents have been on the rise in our [schools](#) and our [community](#), most [recently](#) in the [Kentlands](#). Please join us and learn how to identify and address harmful tropes and stereotypes, and also how to advocate and be an ally for our Jewish neighbors at work, school, and within our churches. The event will be appropriate for pre-teens, teens, and adults.

OTHER EVENTS

Haven Universe "Saturday Night Alive!" - These events are hosted for individuals with special needs and their families and friends, many of whom are adults that attend with their caregivers. "Saturday Night Alive" event assistance is welcome on December 16 from 4:00-7:00pm at Lakelands Park Middle School (1200 Main St, Gaithersburg). This is a chance to see God's work through our hands. (High school students can also earn SSL hours by volunteering.) Contact [Ric](#) or [Sherry](#) Kienzle for questions. We hope you can join us to be a witness of Christ to others!

STEWARDSHIP

Giving Envelopes



Church Giving envelopes are available to all who would like them. Please contact [Helen Griffith](#) if you are interested in Envelopes for 2024. Email or call 301-518-4320 with questions regarding pickup.

Online Giving

It's easy and will make your life easier. Just go to the church [webpage \(poplutheran.org\)](http://poplutheran.org) and click the green Donate Online button. Giving online can help all of us easily provide consistent support for the church. Signup today! Online giving is a win for the church and for the congregation. Please contact Chris Michel (michel_christian@yahoo.com) or Kwame Mensah (mensahkn@gmail.com) with any questions.

Electronic Giving

To donate right now or become an E-Giver, go to poplutheran.org or scan this QR code with your smart phone or tablet. Thanks for supporting the ministries of Prince of Peace!



YOUTH MINISTRY

Sunday School

Turkeys for Families

PreK and Elementary learners made pinecone turkeys and turkey cards on Sunday, November 12 for the six families who received Thanksgiving dinners on Sunday, November 19. After the meals are gone, these decorations will be reminders of our care.



PB&J Count

The fall collection of PB&J for Gaithersburg Help yielded 44 jars of peanut butter (weighing 117 pounds) and 23 jars of jelly. Thanks to the congregation for supporting easy and filling lunches for children!

Bible Presentation

Some of our youth were presented with their Bibles on November 12! Congratulations to Juliet Dillon, Paul Long, Kate Spivak, and Sally Yanevsky.

In the Christmas Spirit

In December, PreK and Elementary classes will be centered on the Christmas story, and Ms. Anne will help our learners make washi tape ornaments!

Classes Won't Meet on These Dates

No Sunday School on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve - have a blessed time with your family!

No Sunday School on January 21 due to the Annual Congregational Meeting.

ADULT EDUCATION

Coffee and Conversation

Coffee and Conversation is the adult version of Sunday School. It is held at 11:00 am, after the service. Descriptions of the upcoming "lessons" follow.

12/3 - Speaker from the [New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance](#), regarding local refugee resettlement work. Come learn more about the [New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance](#) (NNIA), a local grassroots organization, at the Adult Education hour this week. Located in the Gaithersburg/North Potomac area and made up of both individual volunteers and faith organizations, NNIA provides emergency support and has sponsored move-ins for several local refugee families.

12/10 - Animate: Bible session

Each session of the [SparkHouse - Animate:Bible](#) will kick off with a video introduction, include journal pages to reference, and include lots of back and forth discussion among the group. Since each module is independent, it's possible to drop into the Bible study and participate any week that you are able. Hope to see you there!

12/17 - Session on [Sanctification](#) led by Sherry Kienzle

Come explore the topic of [sanctification](#) during the Adult Education Hour this week. What does it mean to be "set apart for special use or purpose", and be made holy or sacred when we are consecrated to God by being set apart from sin?

12/24 - Christmas break (no session this week)

12/31 - New Years break (no session this week)

1/7 - [Candace Wheeler](#) will be our guest speaker via [Zoom](#) - join us from the sanctuary or from home! She will speak about her work with [Restoration 1:99](#), a Christian organization that counsels victims of sex trafficking in the DMV area, as well as those who have suffered domestic sexual and physical abuse.

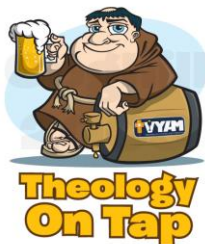
1/14 - Open, will likely be a session of Animate: Bible

1/21 - PoP Annual Meeting

1/29 - Open, will likely be a session of Animate: Bible

Theology on Tap

Join us for our next Theology on Tap session to talk about issues of faith. Pastor Steve leads one of these events each month. Check Weekly Email and the online worship notice for the next date and join us!



PoP Women's Bible Study



The Women's Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 12:30-2pm. We are currently discussing *Exodus*. Questions? Contact [Pastor Wendy Deeben](#).

MUSIC

Grace Notes

Is this the year to dust off your trumpet, trombone, saxophone, drums, guitar or other musical instrument and start playing again? Have you always wanted to sing or play with "the Band"? Grace Notes is looking for musicians and singers. We rehearse Monday nights from 6:30 to 8:00pm and are working toward the goal of playing once a month during our worship service.



Time commitment is rehearsal 3-4 times a month and playing at one Sunday service a month. Contact [Jon Conary](#) for more information.

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Gaithersburg HELP

URGENT NEED



All of the usual POP non-perishable food donations continue to be deeply appreciated. Due to budget constraints, unfortunately diapers are being eliminated as items that will be available to clients. So if you have been donating those, please switch to food items.

In order to reduce the 2023 deficit by year end, other cuts have also been identified, which will hopefully stem the budget overruns. Neighborhood need continues to increase, about 33% higher than in 2022, while donations and financial reserves have dropped to alarming levels. If you normally make year end charitable donations, please consider Gaithersburg HELP as part of your giving plan to help the large local population in need.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact your POP Delegate, [Hope Walker](#).

Quilters



Would you like to change the world for someone? Can you tie a knot or tear/cut a piece of cloth? Then join the Quilter's group, Tuesday mornings from 10:00 am till noon at the church or work from home. We also can use donations of cloth (cotton preferred). **We are changing the world one quilt at a time!**

Contact [Lisa Conary](#) for more information.

Fabric Donations Needed



Do you have some fabric in your home that you are not going to use? The PoP Quilters are in need of fabric and sheets for quilts. We use sheets for the backing and other pieces of cloth for squares. Cotton is best but blends work as well. Please leave any fabric donations in the church office or music room.

If you have questions, please contact [Lisa Conary](#).

Social Justice Ministry News

Bring in your candy wrappers for recycling! Social Justice Ministry is participating in the "Trash or Treasure" program to recycle candy wrappers from October through January, or until the recycling box in the narthex is full! Please bring your plastic, aluminum, and paper wrappers in for recycling. (Putting any other waste in the box can introduce contamination into the recycling process.) The plastic from the candy wrappers will be used to create doggy bags for animal shelters, and any paper or aluminum wrappers are recycled using traditional methods. Thank you for supporting this recycling effort!

Have you ever worried about the role of social media in your children's life or predators in our schools? **On January 7, 2024**, Candace Wheeler will speak on sexual trafficking and how we can protect our families or get involved in the fight to end this insufferable evil. **During the Sunday School hour of 11 a.m.** come hear from Candace founder of Restoration 1:99, an organization dedicated to rehabbing victims of sexual abuse in any form.

FELLOWSHIP

Women's Book Group

The next meeting of the Women's Book Group will be on **Thursday, December 7th at 6:30 pm** at Sharon Wahl's house. It will be our annual Christmas party and book exchange. Please let [Sharon](#) know if you will be there and if you plan to bring an appetizer or dessert. If you want to participate in the book exchange, please bring a new or gently used book, wrapped, without a tag.

The book we will discuss is *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume.

On **Thursday, January 11 at 6:30 pm**, we will meet at [Judy Bruening's](#) house to discuss *Exiles* by Jane Harper.

Future Book Selections and Hosts

February 8 *Lady Tan's Circle of Women*

by Amy Tan

host Hope Walker

March 14 *West With Giraffes*

by Lynda Rutledge

host Jennifer Maloney

April 11 *The Other Einstein*

by Marie Benedict

host Kathy Mellott

May 9 *One for the Blackbird, One for the Crow*

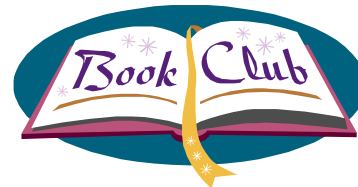
by Olivia Hawker

host Alice Benson

June 13 *The Making of Another Motion Picture Masterpiece*

by Tom Hanks

host Susan Victor



RECENT EVENTS

Adult Sunday School welcomed guest speaker Joelle Novey on Sunday, November 5 at 11am.

[Joelle Novey](#), the director of [Interfaith Power and Light](#), joined the Adult Education hour to talk about IPL's creation care efforts on the local and national level, and discussed how individuals can effectively advocate for issues they are passionate about. Joelle also demonstrated an induction cooktop (which can be used in place of gas appliances), and had a yummy treat to share! To learn more about going green at home, check out <https://ipldmv.org/go-green/at-home/>.



MATS, MERLOT AND MORE- Everyone (adults, teens, and younger kids) was invited for an evening of fellowship and service **after the second Saturday service on November 11**. They:

- wove mats from the plastic bags donated; these mats provide comfort to homeless individuals.
- assembled personal care kits for people fleeing conflict, disaster, and poverty.
- created and wrote holiday cards to asylum seekers and friends in immigration detention.



Crafts with Carmen - Visual artist (and PoP member) [Carmen Hooks-Hill](#) led a fun, interactive craft during the adult Sunday School hour at 11am on Sunday, November 12. Each participant made a Scripture-themed decorative tag! No prior art or crafting experience was necessary. Everyone took home a beautiful reminder of God's enduring love.



THANK YOU!



The box is overflowing!! Thanks to all who donated coats to help keep our new neighbors warm.

Many thanks to all who came out for "Mats, Merlot, and More." We assembled 25 personal care kits to meet the needs of refugees around the world, wove plastic bags into yarn to make mats for homeless individuals, and wrote more than 65 cards to people in immigrant detention. Thanks to Sophia Deng for leading our weaving project and to Joan Kowalik, Susan Victor, Tonya Meyer, Pamela Cook, Jamie Pflasterer, and Jennifer Maloney for coordinating and leading the evening. See pictures in Recent Events.

Thank you to everyone who helped with and contributed to the Adopted Families Thanksgiving project. Because of your generosity and caring, 68 people in our Community will truly have a Happy Thanksgiving. See pictures in Youth Sunday School and Recent Events.

POP OFFICE

Office Hours

Our office is now being staffed by Martha Rogers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm. However, it is always possible to:

- Call or email the office (or the Pastor directly) - we will be monitoring email and voicemail daily, so it's always possible to contact us;
- Drop off food for Gaithersburg HELP at the church - the bins continue to be located outside each door under the covered walkways.
- Send offering checks to the church (although [we're encouraging online donations](#) if you can do that.)

Recycling Toner/Ink Cartridges



Please continue saving used ink & toner cartridges for PoP. We still recycle them for store credit on office supplies. You can leave them in the box in the Narthex or in the labeled bin on the "Give & Take" table outside the back door.



Kitchen Care

Now that we are doing more in the building, help us keep the kitchen tidy and organized! Kitchen rules are posted in the kitchen, usually on the refrigerator, so that we can keep it clean and tidy and make it easier for everyone to use.



ELCA DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. With wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and earthquakes, there are many immediate needs here and around the world. Most current for many of us is the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, and the war in Ukraine. Visit the [ELCA Disaster Response webpage](https://elca.org/disaster) (<https://elca.org/disaster>) to donate or learn more about how you can help.

THINK ABOUT IT

It is difficult to fathom how the God of the universe chose to dwell with us on earth. (Matthew 1:23)

In this new year, God knows the plans He has for you....plans to prosper you....to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Glad Tidings is published monthly (July/August and December/January issues combined) by:
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