



GLAD TIDINGS



Vol. 43 Iss. 10 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, MD Dec 2024 / Jan 2025

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 (in person and [livestream on Facebook](#)) each Wednesday evening in Advent (December 4, 11, & 18) at 7:15 pm.

A time of fellowship with wine, cheese and finger food will precede the service on December 4 & 18, beginning at 6:15 pm. On December 11, Pastor Steve will lead an Advent Theology on Tap before the 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.

It's Poinsettia Time!



Poinsettias are available for \$14 each in Red and White. If you would like to donate flowers for the altar this Christmas, please have your order and payment in by Sunday, December 15.

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 Program, Tree Lighting, Sing Along, Cocoa and Cookies!



The Christmas Program - *Comfort & Joy* - is instant, interactive, and for our whole church family. The most important people will be you, the audience. You will be given the option of dressing up, if you wish to, as Angels, Mary or Joseph, Shepherds, or Wise people. We have costumes to lend, and the audience does not need any rehearsals. You might ask, why would I want to dress up? Answer: There will be a "Photo Booth" which includes a manger, donkey, a couple of hay bales, and some stars in case you would like a group photo made.

Where: The Fellowship Hall and Patio
When: Sunday, December 8, 4 pm

For more info and/or to sign up, contact [Jon or Lisa Conary](#) or sign up in the narthex.

The Giving Tree

Make a child's Christmas joyful!

Each year, PoP members have the opportunity to select a child's name from the Giving Tree and purchase a special Christmas gift for him/her. This year we are working with Brown Station Elementary School to provide a happy Christmas for selected students and their siblings. Use the [Sign-Up Genius](#) link to choose the child(ren) for whom you want to purchase a gift. Please return your wrapped gift(s) with the identification information found on the link securely attached with a sticky note or a ribbon. Please do not tape it to the gift. **Bring the gifts to church no later than Sunday, December 15th and place them in the large box in the Narthex. We plan on delivering them Monday, December 16th.** If you have any questions, please contact [Kathy Mellott](#).



*****See pages 3 & 4 for more holiday events!*****



From Pastor Steve...

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

This is the time of year when it's dark all the time! It's dark when we get up in the morning, and it's dark before many of us leave work in the evening. It can feel like it's late at night before it's even supertime.

But this is also a time in the church calendar when we celebrate Christmas and Epiphany - two seasons which celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world and being revealed to us through the person and work of Jesus. And one of the symbols of Christmas and Epiphany is the stars in the night sky.

Actually, a star only appears once in any of the stories - and only in Matthew's Gospel account of the Wise Men following the star to Bethlehem. Yet we also imagine stars in the night sky over the shepherds in Bethlehem. And stars adorn our Christmas trees, Christmas cards and other decorations.

And maybe that's because stars are only visible when it's dark. But they're always there. Yet in the daytime - and when the moon is particularly bright - we can't see even the few stars that are normally visible in our suburban skies. But in the darkness, we see them and appreciate their presence.

That, too, is an important theme of these seasons in the church. God is always present in our lives. God is always there. Yet sometimes, we can't see or feel that presence. And ironically, that sometimes happens because our days are "bright", and we don't particularly feel the need to look for God.

But in the physical darkness of this season, we're reminded by the stars of Christmas and Epiphany that the light of Christ is present in our lives in our dark moments as well as in the light when we're maybe not paying attention. And so, in these seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, may the stars you see both in the sky and in our holiday decorations remind you of that reality!

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 on 12/1, 12/8

Every Monday

6:30 pm Grace Notes Rehearsal

Every Tuesday

10:00 am Quilters**

12:30 pm Women's Bible Study**

**Not meeting on 12/24, 12/31

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 Saturday, December 14 and Saturday, January 11. Saturday services will have the same sermon and readings as the following Sunday service but will not be livestreamed.

COMING UP...

December

4 Advent Evening Prayer (pg 1)

5 PoP Ladies' Christmas Party (pg 3)

7 Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal

8 Christmas Pageant & Sing Along (pg 1)

11 Advent Evng Prayer w/Theology on Tap (pg 1)

12 Women's Book Group (pg 6)

14 Saturday Worship Service (pg 2)

15 Confirmation Meets

18 Advent Evening Prayer (pg 1)

24 Christmas Eve

24 Christmas Eve Children's Service (pg 1)

24 Christmas Eve Carols & Communion (pg 1)

25 Christmas Day

25 Christmas Day Carols & Communion (pg 1)

31 New Year's Eve

2024 → **2025**

January

5 Confirmation Meets

9 Women's Book Group (pg 6)

11 Saturday Worship Service (pg 2)

14 Church Council Meeting

16 Men's Book Club (pg 6)

20 Inauguration Day

26 Annual Congregational Meeting (pg 4)

26 Confirmation Meets

February

- 9 "Souper" Bowl Sunday
- 11 Church Council Meeting
- 13 Women's Book Group (pg 6)
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 23 Confirmation Meets

For a current calendar, see:

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

COUNCIL CORNER

November 2024

News and Views from the PoP Church Council

NEWS

Here are the updates from the November Church Council meeting.

Finances: Giving continues to be equal to 2023 but a little behind this year's expenses. (Council notes).

Annual Meeting: The 2025 annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 26 at 11:00am (after the service).

Heating and air conditioning upgrade: The work on the heating and cooling system at church is COMPLETE and THE HEAT IS ON! The BYC work is complete also. Now we need to replenish the Building Fund!

VIEWS

We are fortunate that we had a solid cash reserve in the Building Fund so that we were able to afford the heating and air conditioning upgrades. We do need to prayfully increase our giving to replenish the Building Fund.

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

Respectfully,
Jon Conary

Council met on November 12. 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, Baur, Elizabeth Langum Chung, Brittany (DeGeorge) Daniel, Sherry Fischer, Laura Hampe Garofalo, Zena Huen, Roy Johnson, Joan Kowalik, Mike & Remi Langum, Janet Levine, Anne Lomperis, Kaitlyn McGurgan & her family, Jim McNerney, Dick Moore, Heather Robinson, David & Martha Rogers, Sherry Schiebel, Susan Weiner, Laura Wilson, Chet Wolejsza

Sympathy

Family of Michael Baughman

(relative of Dave Molchany)

Family of James Baur (husband of Alice Baur)

Family of James McMillen

(cousin of Dave Molchany)

Family of Bill Ely (father-in-law of Clara Ely)

Thanksgiving

Baptism of Callum David Abdul-Wahid

Ongoing

The people of Ukraine and all those who are suffering due to hatred, war, and acts of violence

For racial justice and equality

All those struggling with Covid-19 and their

Caregivers

All those impacted by nature

The complete Prayer List is available in the Weekly

Email sent on Thursdays.

SPECIAL WEATHER NOTE



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).

SPOTLIGHT

PoP Ladies' Christmas Party

Ladies, please join us on Thursday, December 5th at 6pm for fellowship and to celebrate the

Christmas season. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share. We will meet at Wendy Dinova-Wimmer's house (12109 McDonald Chapel Dr, Gaithersburg).

RSVP on [SignupGenius](#).

Christmas drive for TVAR

This Christmas, PoP hopes to help low-income residents at The Village at Rockville by presenting each of them with a new fleece or other plush twin-bed blanket. This year we partner with a small group of Bible Study women from Rockville to spread a little cheer with something soft and warm. Also requested are bags of candy to share and lotions for hands and body. If you'd like to help sign up [here](#). Due date is Sunday, December 8.



Participate online in the [Gifts of Hope](#) program



These gifts support the mission and programs of area Lutheran social ministry organizations, camps, college or seminary, and our Synod's companion synods abroad. Your Gifts of Hope purchases will bring hope to others while you honor those on your gift list.

What's new with NNIA? Gifts for the Christ Child in Epiphany.

As a member congregation of New Neighbors Interfaith Alliance (NNIA), PoP helps families who have fled their home countries. They have come with their children, even infants, just as Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with baby Jesus. The families of NNIA need help with diapers and everything else for their babies. During Epiphany, we will shower them with "Gifts for the Christ Child." As we remember the journey of the Holy Family, let's take this opportunity to give to these little ones. Look for more details after Christmas!

JANUARY NOTES

Annual Congregational Meeting

PoP Members, mark your calendars and come to the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26. 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 buildings for the next year, including new council members.



OTHER EVENTS

Haven Universe "Saturday Night Alive!"

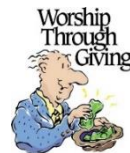
Non-profit, Haven Universe has been partnering with Prince of Peace for several years and invites you to volunteer (or be a guest!) at HU "Saturday Night Alive." These events are hosted for individuals with special needs and their families and friends, many of whom are adults that attend with their caregivers.

"Saturday Night Alive" events will occur on the following dates from 4:00-6:00pm at Lakelands Park Middle School (1200 Main St, Gaithersburg):

January 18	April 5
February 15	May 3
March 15	

Positions for potential volunteers include front desk check-in, gym setup/takedown, AV tech setup/takedown, craft table, merchandise sales, or just mingling with participants. 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



Church Giving Envelopes

Envelopes for 2025 will be available soon to all who would like them. Please contact [Helen Griffith](#) if you have any questions.

Online Giving

It's easy and will make your life easier. Just go to the church [webpage](#) (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

Prince of Peace Sunday School - Learning and Growing Together

Prince of Peace Sunday youth school finished up their unit on Moses, tracing his journey with the Israelites through the desert with its challenges (manna & quail, worshipping the golden calf) and the receipt of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. We learned how rules are there to keep us safe and protect us, and how God never abandons us, even when times are tough. Youth learners also met a new Bible Buddy, Radar the bat, and learned about how God gave his people instruction to build the Tabernacle as a holy and sacred place of worship. Learners also made bead garlands, to use on this year's outdoor Christmas tree!



Our learners did an awesome job with the story of Caleb and the spies today. We made a grape craft to illustrate what the Israelite spies found in the land God directed them to. BIG grapes! We also learned how God is always with us and helps us be brave.



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.

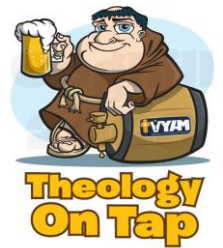
Join us weekly after services for the Adult Coffee and Conversation hour at 11am in the sanctuary. Throughout the year, we will include service activities at the church, welcome speakers from outside organizations, and host group Bible study and conversation. Join us at any time! To be added to the email list and get notifications of upcoming programs, please send an email to pop_adult_sunday_school+subscribe@googlegroups.com. To sign up to lead a session or activity on an upcoming Sunday, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/PoPAdultEd2024>

12/1 Happy Thanksgiving! No Sunday School
12/8 Bible Study, led by Sherry Kienzle
12/15 Bible Study, led by Sherry Kienzle
12/22 Merry Christmas! No Sunday School
12/29 Happy New Year! No Sunday School

1/5 Bible Study, led by Sherry Kienzle
1/12 [Izaak Walton League Salt Watch](#) - learn how to reduce the use of road salt at home and in your neighborhood, and how to test salt levels in your local creeks and streams
1/19 Social Justice Ministry - Meal prep in the Fellowship Hall for the [Stepping Stones Family Shelter](#) in Rockville
1/26 Annual Congregational Meeting

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. See page 1 for information about our next Theology on Tap event during Advent.



PoP Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 12:30-2pm. We are currently reading and discussing *Women of the Bible: 52 Bible Studies for Individuals and Groups* by Jean E. Syswerda.

Questions? Contact [Pastor Wendy Deeben](#).

NOTE: We will meet via Zoom on 12/17. We will not meet on 12/24 and 12/31.

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

 With cold weather and school vacations, so no free school lunches, please be thinking of nutritious non-perishable foods as we move into winter. The protein things (tuna, stew), beans, fruit and peanut butter are all in constant need.

Though 2024 has been better than 2023 financially, in part due to the great POP Coffee House fundraiser, year-end gifts are always appreciated.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact your POP Delegate, [Hope Walker](#). If you would like a tour of the Pantry on Muddy Branch Road, that can easily be arranged. The website is GaithersburgHelp.org for lots of great information.

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.

NOTE: We will not meet on 12/24 and 12/31.

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



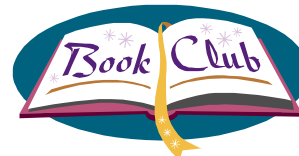
leave any fabric donations in the church office or music room.

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

FELLOWSHIP

Men's Book Club

The Men's Book Club will meet to discuss *It's Your Ship* by Michael Abrashoff on Thursday January 16 at 7:00 pm. Dick Moore will be our host.



Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group has chosen *The Stranger In The Lifeboat* by Mitch Albom for discussion on Thursday, December 12 at 6:30 pm at the home of Laura Dillon. This is the Annual Holiday Event. All members will bring either an appetizer or dessert, along with a wrapped, new or gently worn, book. This is always a fun event! Please RSVP by Monday, Dec. 9 to aldillon@yahoo.com. Note that the start time for December is 6:30 pm instead of the usual 7:30 pm.

And in January, the Women's Book Group will be discussing *None Of This Is True* by Lisa Jewel at the home of Nancy Wolejsza on Thursday, January 9 at 7:30 pm.

If any PoP women are interested in becoming part of this group, contact [Kathy Mellott](#).

Future Book Selections and Hosts

February 13 *The Women*
by Kristin Hannah
host Sharon Wahl
March 13 *The Art Thief...*
by Michael Finkel
host Nancy Morton

RECENT NEWS

The Heat is On!

Thanks to the sufficiency of the PoP Building Fund, we now have central heat/AC in the main building and Youth Center! Looking forward, additional contributions will be needed to replenish the Building Fund over time. Everyone is asked to make an extra donation to [PoP's Building Fund](#) to provide for our future building needs.

RECENT EVENTS

Fall PB&J Drive For Gaithersburg Help

Thank you to the congregation for all your generous peanut butter and jelly donations for Gaithersburg Help this fall! You helped us send 264 pounds of food to the food bank - that's 6,600 PB&J sandwiches for people in our community! Elementary and PreK/K Sunday School had a great time counting and packing the 68 jars of peanut butter and 39 jars of jelly for transport. Thank you for helping to feed our neighbors.



Christmas is Coming - Preparing for the Season

Both Youth Sunday School and the Adult Coffee and Conversation groups have been helping prepare for Christmas! On Sunday November 10th, both youth and adults made ornaments out of felt, foam, ribbons, beads, paint, and globes to decorate the outdoor tree. We have lots of artistic talent in the congregation! Special thanks to Pamela Cook and Melanie Zobel for getting all the ornament supplies and setting up all the crafting stations in the Fellowship Hall. Make sure to join us on **Sunday December 8th at 4pm** to see all their work at the outdoor tree lighting, Christmas program, and carols sing-a-long with cocoa and cookies!



Prince of Peace youth are hard at work, preparing to share the Christmas story with you! We hope you all can join us on Sunday December 8th at 4pm to see them in action at the outdoor tree lighting, Christmas program, and carols sing-a-long with cocoa and cookies! This is a great event to get into the Christmas spirit and experience the joy of the season.



Pop Middle School Youth Attend "Daring to Dream"

Athena Huen, Kalliope Spielman, and Luke Dillon attended the ELCA Maryland Synod's middle school retreat at Falling Waters, WV. Youth attendees enjoyed small group time, mini golf, and Saturday night worship by the bonfire. Big thanks to Laura Dillon for coordinating, driving, and chaperoning, and to the congregation for helping sponsor faith formation activities for youth.



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.



Sunday Service Extras

Prince of Peace is in full bloom with fresh flower arrangements on **Sundays!!** Please help us by ordering an arrangement. The cost will be \$40.00. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Pamela Cook at 301-806-8016 (call or text).



Snack after Sunday Service is back! If you are interested in helping, there is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Thank you for all your help! If you have any questions, you can contact Pamela Cook at 301-806-8016 (call or text).



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

December

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6)

January

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

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

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Articles for the February issue of *Glad Tidings* are due January 19. Please email articles to Martha Rogers at GladTidingsEditor@gmail.com. Photos and/or graphics are welcome!

Glad Tidings is online at www.poplutheran.org

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