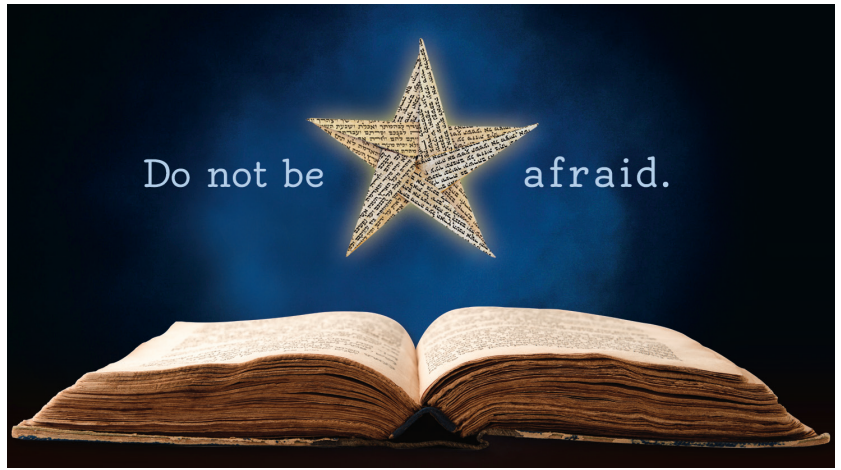




December 7 – 8, 2024

**Hold Hope**  
Luke 2:8-20



### MUSIC THIS WEEKEND

**PRAISE CHOIR WORSHIP**  
SAT 5:30 pm | SUN 10:30 am

**Joy To The World (Joyful Joyful)**  
**December Canon**  
**Glorious**  
**Silent Night**

**Go Tell It On The Mountain**

**CLASSIC | SUN 8:45 am**

CHOIR/ORGAN: **O Come Emmanuel**  
**Joy to the World (Joyful Joyful)**

CHOIR ANTHEM: **Breath of Heaven**  
**The First Noel**

FLUTE ENSEMBLE: MUSICAL OFFERING  
**Rejoice, Rejoice Believers**

MESSAGE: **Paul Dean**  
**Communion** (all services)

### JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

**Classic: Sun 8:45am | Contemporary: Sat 5:30pm, Sun 10:30am**

**Christmas Concert | December 14-15 | All Services | FREE**  
Celebration Choir, orchestra and soloists. Invite your friends!

**Service of Remembrance | December 17 | 7:00pm**  
Submit names/experiences to be read aloud by December 12.

**Christmas Eve Worship | December 24**  
Family: 3 & 4:30pm | Evening: 7 & 8:30pm | Online: 4:30 & 8:30pm

**Christmas Day Worship | December 25 | 10:00am**  
Worship in person with Pastor Paul Dean preaching,  
or experience a re-broadcast of the Christmas Concert online.

### JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY

**2025 Artist Calendars | \$15 each, to benefit FMSC**  
Available for purchase in the Community Room

**Great ADVENTure | Friday, December 13 | 6:00pm**  
Family ministry Advent celebration! [popmn.org/register](http://popmn.org/register)

### JOIN US IN GENEROSITY

Submit your statement of intent: [popmn.org/fall-stewardship](http://popmn.org/fall-stewardship)

**Submit year-end gifts before 11:59pm on December 31.**  
Make sure your gifts are credited in this tax year! Info →



Journey through Advent with using our new POP ADVENT CALENDAR: [popmn.org/2024-advent-calendar/](http://popmn.org/2024-advent-calendar/)

## Connect With Us

We are here to love God and all people by being the heart, hands and feet of Jesus in the world so that all might know that they are loved. We are an open and affirming church. We value growing a relationship with God and with each other, and showing up for people in need in this community and beyond. **Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church!**



**Connect** with Prince of Peace! Scan here to join our mailing list and find ways to get involved.



Scan here to donate to Prince of Peace's **Mission & Ministry.**



Scan here to make a **prayer request** or to have a member of the Spiritual Care Team contact you.

**PAPER COPIES OF THESE FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CONNECT DESK.**



Trust the Story | Do Not Be Afraid | **Hold Hope**

## **DARKNESS CAN BE SCARY.**

Darkness can be dangerous. Darkness can lie.

### **REFLECTION:**

**When have you been in total darkness? What did it feel like?  
Were you afraid? What did you do?**

Darkness tries to fool us into believing that nothing is there. The great lie that darkness tells us is that there is no hope. But that is the nature of darkness – it exists in the absence, specifically in the absence of light. That’s why darkness as a metaphor for all kinds of dangerous and scary things is so powerful. And that’s also why light as a metaphor for all kinds of beautiful and wonderful things is powerful, too.

### **REFLECTION:**

**When did light appear in your darkness? How did that feel? Did it change your situation?  
When have you used light as a metaphor for beautiful or wonderful things?  
Why do we talk about light that way?**

Out in the fields at night on what we now call Christmas Eve, there was a group of shepherds. They were in the dark. They may have had a small fire to keep warm, but they really were in the dark, surrounded by all kinds of potentially scary things. The reason they were with the sheep was to protect them from the potentially scary things out there. Their staffs were not walking sticks; they were weapons to ward off those scary things.

### **REFLECTION:**

**Do you usually think of shepherds this way at Christmas – scared people carrying weapons to protect their livestock, their living, from dangers that lurk in the darkness? How does that change the story?**

The shepherds were in the dark in another sense that night, too. They did not yet know that God was coming into the world in a whole new way. It was in their dark wilderness that a light shone around them, bringing them good news. Light in the middle of darkness brings comfort, even hope. It’s one of the main reasons why light is used to describe who Jesus is. It’s why we light up our houses and trees during this season. It’s why we light the hope candle. It’s a hope we can hold.

### **REFLECTION:**

**Why do you think the shepherds, in their dark night, were the first to hear about the birth of Jesus?  
How does this track with the Jesus who comforts people who are marginalized and alone?**

Lutherans talk about being the “hands and feet of Jesus” in the world. And we say that Jesus was born in human flesh and blood to let us know that we are not ever alone. This sounds good in theory, but might lose some power for people who are actually alone during these family-oriented holidays.

### **REFLECTION:**

**Could our purpose be the same as Jesus’ – to use our human flesh-and-blood presence to comfort those who need it and let them know that they are never alone?  
How can we, as individuals and as a community of faith, seek out those who are marginalized and alone first at Christmas time?  
How are you called to hold up the light of hope for those who need it?**