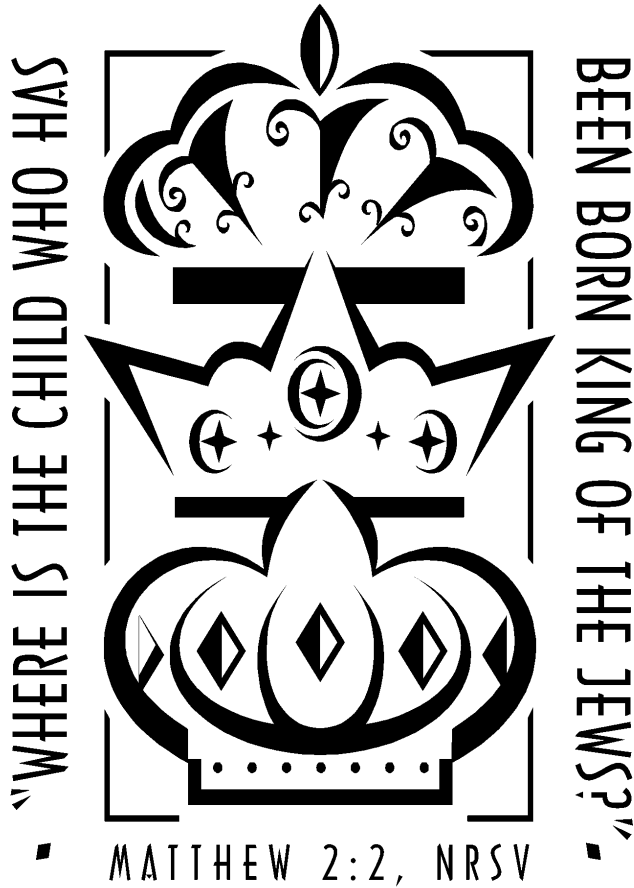


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



MYSTERY REVEALED:  
THE SAVIOR OF ALL NATIONS IS REVEALED  
*Epiphany*

# ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH | *Wisconsin Rapids, WI*

---

*January 3, 2021*



## WELCOME TO WORSHIP

If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. For worshippers joining us in person, we are happy you are here. If you have any questions, just ask an usher or other volunteer.

If you are worshipping online, we would love to see just what kind of impact our worship services are making. Please fill out our online Connect Card to let us know where you're worshipping from and how we might continue to serve you. You can find a link at [www.stpaulswr.org/watch](http://www.stpaulswr.org/watch). You can also contact us with any questions or prayer requests via email or phone ([churchoffice@stpaulswr.org](mailto:churchoffice@stpaulswr.org) or 715-421-3634).

## SPECIAL GUIDELINES DURING THE PANDEMIC

- † **Please practice social distancing whenever possible.** Keep close personal interactions to a minimum, especially when inside the building. Please feel free to worship from the Welcome Center, if you feel uncomfortable with the number of people in the sanctuary.
- † **Please practice good hygiene.** Masks, hand sanitizer, and kleenex are available in the Welcome Center. Our restrooms are located along the hallway on the west side of the worship space.
- † **Large print service folders, hearing devices, and printouts of the bible readings and hymns** are available on the Information Booth in the Welcome Center, if you need them.
- † **Your offering and connect card** can be placed in the slots on the top of the Information Booth in the Welcome Center. If you have a smartphone, you can fill out the online connect card. Empty offering plates will be brought forward and placed on the altar to symbolize our sacrifice to God.
- † **Children's bulletins** can be picked up at the Information Booth in the Welcome Center. If your children become fussy, you can quiet them in the Welcome Center. The Children's Message will still take place. However, the children will not be invited forward. Please keep them with you in your pew.

† **Please wait for the ushers to dismiss you.** Following post-service announcements, pastor(s) will leave down the side aisles and head outside to greet you. Ushers will dismiss worshipers from the back moving forward; and down the center aisle, as well as the side aisles. This is to minimize personal contact. Please take this service folder with you and dispose of it properly.

## SERVICE NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY



When the world looks at Jesus, they are confused. Even when believers look at Jesus, at times, there is still a mystery standing before us. During the season of Epiphany, Jesus reveals himself to the world at the beginning of his ministry, but also to the world now through various means. So, let us continue to adore him and see how we might know him more and better through his Word.

The liturgical color<sup>1</sup> for this Sunday is white, which signifies the unity of the entire Christian Church across the ages.

Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using the questions on page 10 of this service folder.

## COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) copyright © 2018 The Wartburg Project. All rights reserved. Used by permission: [www.wartburgproject.org](http://www.wartburgproject.org)

Service of the Word and Sacrament. Words and Music: *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net A-719903

Palm 72: *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net A-719903

---

<sup>1</sup> The liturgical color is found on the pastor's stole and the piece of cloth hanging from the pulpit.

# SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

---

*The service of word and sacrament proclaims the gospel through God's Word and the Lord's Supper.*

## WELCOME

## OPENING HYMN

*As with Gladness Men of Old | CW 83  
Verse 1-All; 2-Pastor; 3-Women; 4-Men; 5-All*

*Please stand.*

## INVOCATION

Minister (M): The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**Congregation (C): And also with you.**

*In the absolution, we receive God's promise from 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

## CONFESSION OF SINS

M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

**C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 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.

**C: Amen.**

## RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

C: **♪ O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.** *CW p.28*  
**Almighty God, merciful Father, you crown our life with your love,  
You take away our sin; you comfort our spirit;  
You make us pure and holy in your sight.  
You did not spare your only Son, but gave him up for us all.  
O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.  
O Son of God, eternal Word of the Father,  
You came to live with us; you made your Father known;  
You washed us from our sins in your own blood.  
You are the King of glory; you are the Lord!  
O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth. ♪**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

Lord God, by the leading of a star you once made known to the nations your one and only Son. Guide us, also, who know him now by faith, to come at last to the perfect joy of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## *The Word*

---

### FIRST LESSON

*Isaiah 60:1-6*

*Nations will come to the Lord's light.*

*After the reading, the announcement is made:*

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

## PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 72 | CW p.93*

*Read Responsively*

**All: Let the people praise you, O God.  
Let all the people praise you.**

M: Endow the King with your justice O God,  
The royal Son with your righteousness.

**C: He will defend the afflicted among the people  
And save the children of the needy.**

M: He will endure as long 'as the sun,  
As long as the moon, through all generations.

**C: He will be like rain falling on a mown field,  
Like showers watering the earth.**

**All: Let the people praise you, O God.  
Let all the people praise you.**

M: All kings will bow down to him,  
And all nations will serve him.

**C: All nations will be blessed through him,  
And they will call him blessed.**

M: Praise be to the LORD God, who alone does marvelous deeds.  
May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
And to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**All: Let the people praise you, O God.  
Let all the people praise you.**

## SECOND LESSON

*Ephesians 3:2-12*

*Jesus is the Savior of all nations still today.*

*After the reading, the announcement is made:*

M: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## VERSE OF THE DAY

M: Alleluia. We saw his star when it rose

C: **and have come to worship him. Alleluia.** (Matthew 2:2b)

*Please stand.*

**GOSPEL** - Matthew 2:1-12

*The Savior is revealed by a star.*

*After the reading, the announcement is made:*

M: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

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

*Please be seated.*

*The Verse of the Day serves to highlight one of the main themes for this Sunday of the Church Year. It also serves to prepare our hearts to receive God's teaching in the Gospel of the Day.*

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

*For the time being, please keep your children in the pews.*

## HYMN

*How Lovely Shines the Morning Star | CW 79*

*Verse 1-All; 2-Pastor; 3-Women; 4-Men; 5-All*

## SERMON

**Arise, Shine, for Your Light Has Come!**

*Please stand.*

**CONFESSION OF FAITH** - Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

*Christians all over the world confess this creed to tell others what they believe, and to confess their faith together in worship.*

**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 fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

*Be seated.*

## **THE THANK OFFERING**

*Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. Guests, please don't feel obligated to take part in the offering. We're just happy you're here as our guest to hear and take to heart the message of Jesus. If the gospel message has moved you to give and you would like an electronic option, you can scan this QR code with your mobile phone. It will connect you with our website's giving page.*



## **MUSICAL OFFERING**

*Remain seated.*

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**M:** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Mary's Son, in fullness of time you came into our world to save us from sin and death:

**C: You ushered in the day so long foretold.**

**M:** Beloved Son of the Father, revered by the Magi, baptized by John, you came preaching and teaching, healing and comforting, forgiving and encouraging:

**C: You brought the light of life to those walking in darkness, and the joy of salvation to those doomed to death.**

**M:** Prince of Peace, shine like a beacon for us and the people of our world. Let the good news of salvation be heard in the remotest corners of the earth. Open our own lips to speak your name to those around us who still live without faith or hope.

**C: Arouse us and our missionaries to flood the world with the light of your gospel.**

**M:** Lord of the Church, let your peace rule our hearts that we may use our gifts to serve you and each other in willing gratitude and joy. Watch over our loved ones near and far, that they may remember your love and rejoice in your salvation. Strengthen the faith of the sick and the disheartened. Give hope to those in despair and comfort those who mourn:



**C: Be gracious to all and lead us to reflect your love in everything we say and do.**

*Special prayers and intercessions.*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M: Finally, bring us and all your believers to the heavenly home where we will stand in the full light of your glory and with all your angels sing the everlasting song of triumph.

**C: Amen.**

*Please stand.*

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## *The Sacrament*

---

### **THE PREFACE**

*CW p. 33*

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. *In the past he spoke through the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, who is the radiance of his glory.* Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

**C: ♪ Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.**

*CW p. 34*

**The whole earth is full of your glory.**

**You are my God, and I will exalt you.**

**I will give you thanks,  
for you have become my salvation.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.  
The whole earth is full of your glory. ♪**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**M:** 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."

**M:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

*CW p.35*

**C:** **Amen.**

**C:** ♪ **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.  
Amen. ♪**

*Please be seated and await the direction of the ushers.*

### **QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION**

- † *Do I believe that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness?*
- † *Do I believe that Jesus died on the cross to win forgiveness for me?*
- † *Do I believe that Jesus offers his true body and blood with the bread and wine in this sacrament?*
- † *Do I believe this sacrament strengthens my faith and strengthens me to live a God-pleasing life?*
- † *Am I a member of a church that belongs to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) or Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)?*
- † *If you answered "no" to any of these questions, please hold off on communing with us today. Following worship, one of the pastors would be happy to explain why we ask you to do this.*

## **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*If you are in need of gluten free wafers or grape juice, please ask for directions from an usher.*

*Please stand.*

## THANKSGIVING

| p. 36

**C:** 🎵 Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev'ryone what he has done.

Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.

He renews his promises and leads his people forth in joy  
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia! Alleluia! 🎵

**M:** Let us pray together.

**C:** Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**M:** Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C:** Amen.

*Be seated.*

## CLOSING HYMN

*Hail, O Source of Every Blessing* | CW 87  
Verse 1-All; 2-Pastor; 3-All

*Notice how this hymn speaks to a number of the themes we heard in worship today, especially in verse 2:*

*Mystery hid in former ages,  
Mystery great of love divine!*

## TAKE HOME QUESTIONS

---

1. Looking across all three of today's readings, there are plenty of connections. For instance, in Isaiah 60:3 and Ephesians 3:6, there are references to Gentiles being brought into God's glory. What other connections can you find?
2. What specific things tend to get in the way of you letting the gospel make your heart "race with excitement and burst with joy," as Isaiah 60:5 speaks about?
3. What are some possibilities to explain how the Wise Men would have heard about the King of the Jews? Think about the Old Testament and the connection of Israel to lands in the East.
4. According to Ephesians 3:10, who are the main carriers of the gospel message? Do we show that with the way we tend to live our lives? How might we make adjustments to live out the words of Ephesians 3:10?

# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

---



## **THIS SUNDAY'S BIBLE STUDY** **END TIMES: Millennialism**

Join us in the cafeteria from 9:15 to 10:15 AM  
For the google meet link, contact a pastor.



## **WHAT'S WITH THE BIG WORDS?**

*Jan. 3 | 9:15 AM*

Sometimes when people talk about Jesus Second Coming, you will hear terms like premillennialism, postmillennialism, and dispensationalism. What does that all mean? Is it in the Bible? Find out on Sundays. Over the next three weeks, we are finishing up our study on the End Times. You are welcome to join in-person or remotely via telephone or internet (contact a pastor for instructions). If you want to study on your own, all of the lesson guides are posted on our website, look for the link at [stpaulswr.org/bible-study](http://stpaulswr.org/bible-study).

## **FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

*Jan. 7 | 6:30PM*

Start the new year with our new Bible information class. Pastor Plagenz will walk you through Foundations of the Christian Faith, a course comprised of work from numerous pastors in our synod. The twelve lessons cover the basics of Christianity and what we believe and teach at St. Paul's. Whether you've been at St. Paul's for weeks or decades, this course will teach you something new. Come to be refreshed with the core teachings of the Bible and to expand your knowledge. Better yet, invite a friend to come study with you.

## **MEET TIMOTHY AND TITUS**

*Jan. 6 | 6:30 PM*

Both Timothy and Titus accompanied the apostle Paul on some of his missionary journeys. They later became leaders in their local churches. The books 1&2 Timothy and Titus were written by Paul to encourage these men in their ministry. Come explore those books on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM beginning January 6. This group meets in the Resource Center.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT DIME & DOLLAR**

With the increase in donations, the Dime & Dollar Thrift Store in Stevens Point is having trouble keeping up. Help is needed in many areas: processing donations, cleaning, pricing, displaying goods, cashiering, and retail management. The store is open Monday-Saturday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, but some work can be done after hours. If you can volunteer short-term or long-term, please contact Jan Peronto (715-340-2809) or the store (715-341-0562). Consider teaming up with a friend or two, so you can carpool! Profits from the store benefit Northland Lutheran High School.

## **REMEMBER THE HUNGRY**

Business shut-downs, slow-downs, and long quarantines have affected many families in our area this year leading to more people turning to food banks. When you are at the grocery store, be sure to pick up something for a family in need. Your donations can be placed in the bin across from the church mail slots, or delivered directly to the SWEPS food pantry at 331 12<sup>th</sup> Ave S (M-F 8AM-4PM).

## **NOW HIRING: PART-TIME JANITOR**

We are seeking a self-motivated person to carry out janitorial duties at the church and school. Some responsibilities are taking out trash, cleaning the cafeteria, sweeping and mopping all floors in the school building, cleaning bathrooms, re-filling bathroom supplies, and picking up trash around the building. The hours are Monday-Friday 5:00 to 9:00 PM (20 hours per week). To apply contact Larry Wesenberg at 715-424-4996 or lwes@wctc.net.

## **ATTENDANCE & OFFERING REPORT**

Last Week's Attendance: 114 (No Monday Service)

Christmas Eve: 198                      Christmas Day: 78

From July 1, 2020 to December 25, 2020

Actual ministry income: \$471,772

Actual cost of ministry: \$509,442

Mortgage balance: \$1,318,628



# CALENDAR

January 3-10

---

<b>SUNDAY</b>	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Catechism Class in the Resource Center
	10:30 AM	Worship
<b>MONDAY</b>	11:00 AM	Worship for at-risk individuals
<b>TUESDAY</b>	6:45 AM	Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	9:45 AM	Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Unified Board Meeting in the church
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	8:55 AM	Chapel Service
	5:30 PM	Handbells in the balcony
	6:30 PM	Bible Book Group in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Contemporary Choir in the Balcony
<b>THURSDAY</b>	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	6:00 PM	Men's Devotional Basketball in the gym
	6:30 PM	Foundations of the Christian Faith in the Resource Center
<b>SUNDAY</b>	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Catechism Class in the Resource Center
	10:30 AM	Worship

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 17	Sanctity of Life Sunday
Jan. 19	Voters Meeting
Jan. 24	Christian Education Sunday
Jan. 31	Installation of Leaders





311 14th Ave S | Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495 | 715-421-3634 | [churchoffice@stpaulswr.org](mailto:churchoffice@stpaulswr.org)  
Pastor Lucas Proeber | 989-780-3184 | [pastorproeber@stpaulswr.org](mailto:pastorproeber@stpaulswr.org)  
Pastor Peter Plagenz | 920-689-3036 | [pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org](mailto:pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org)