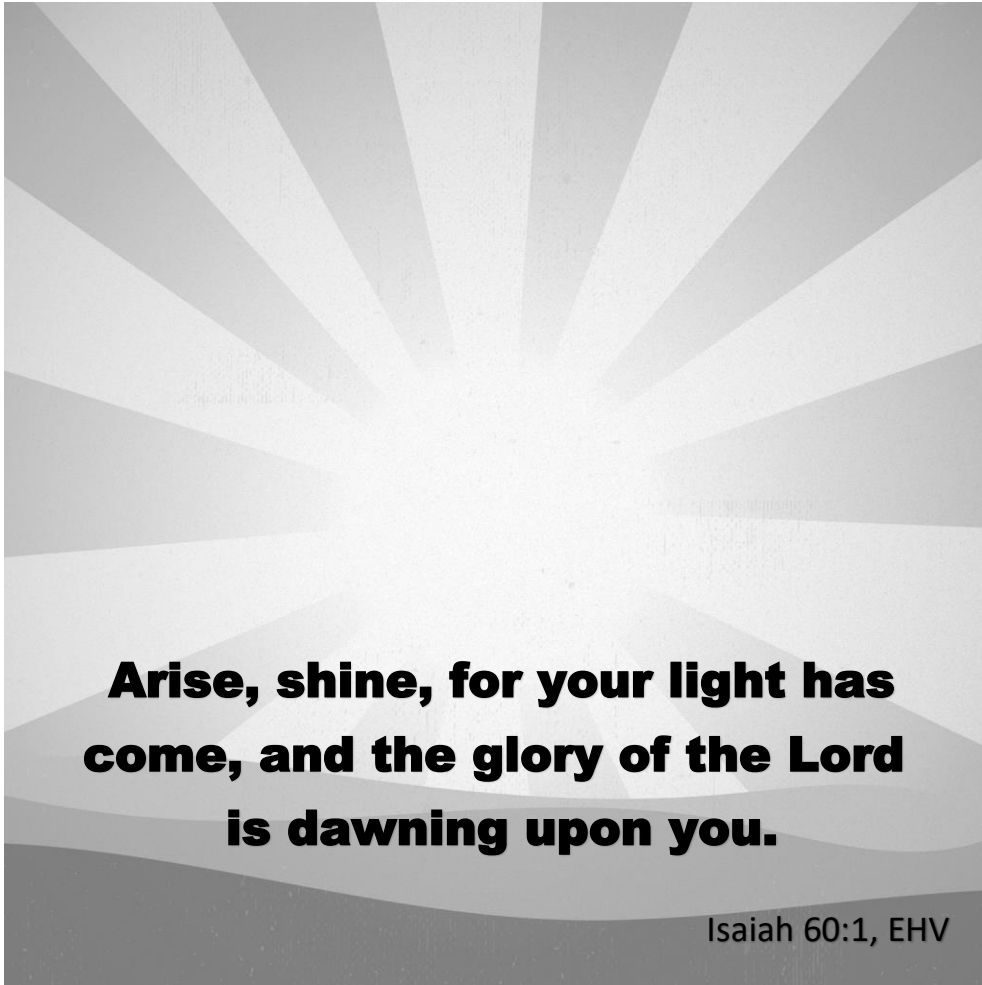


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



Christ the Savior is Born:  
Love's Pure Light Beams from Thy Holy Face  
*Epiphany Sunday*

January 4, 2026



## Welcome To Worship

If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. We are happy you are here. Please fill out a Connect Card to let us know how we might continue to serve you.

It's encouraging to see parents bring their families to worship the Lord. If your child becomes restless, you can use the Family Room to calm them. Quiet bags and children's bulletins are also available to keep little ones busy. Restrooms are located in the hallways along either side of the worship space. For those with special needs, large print copies of the service folder and listening devices are available from the ushers. One of our ushers can help you find the restrooms or family room and answer any other questions.

## Service Notes For This Service



We continue the Christmas celebration of the dawning of the light of all mankind. When the sun rises, we can see things that we haven't seen before. When Christ the Savior is born, the light of new revelation breaks over the world. When the Son rises, we can clearly see the grace of God, our Redeemer.

Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using the Questions for Examination on page 9 of this service folder or Christian Questions on page 295 of the blue hymnal.

## Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Organist: Sue Kulhanek; Musical Offering: Rose Paul

## Acknowledgements

Setting Three from Christian Worship. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) © 2017 Wartburg Project. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Liturgical and musical settings of Scripture based on text from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

# The Service

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## Welcome

### Hymn

374 The Star Proclaims the King Is Here

*Stand*

In the name of the Father and of the  $\text{T}$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### Confession

CW 188

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.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

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  $\text{T}$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**


### Glory to God in the Highest

CW 191


The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is a short instrumental introduction. The second staff begins with the lyrics 'Glo - ry to God in the high - est, glo - ry to'. The third staff continues with 'God, and peace to his peo - ple on earth,'. The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes with stems.



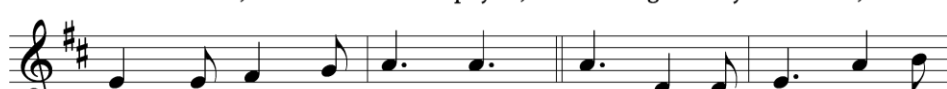
and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



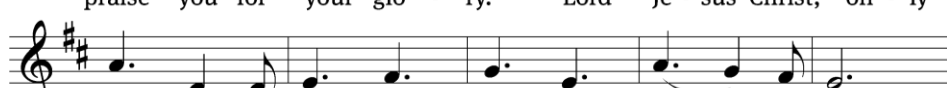
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and



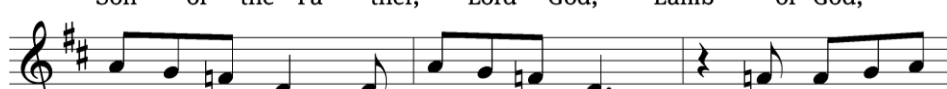
Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we



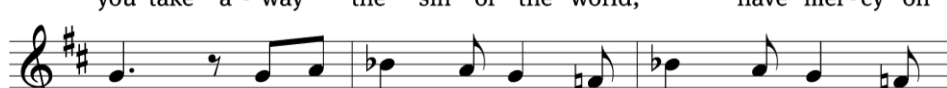
praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly



Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,




you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on



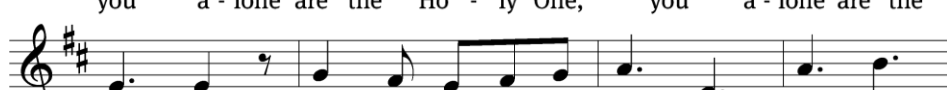
us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the



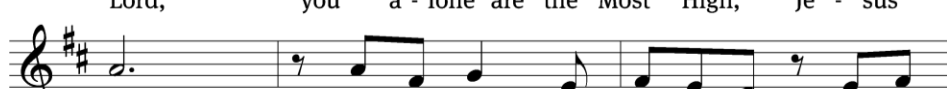
Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer. For



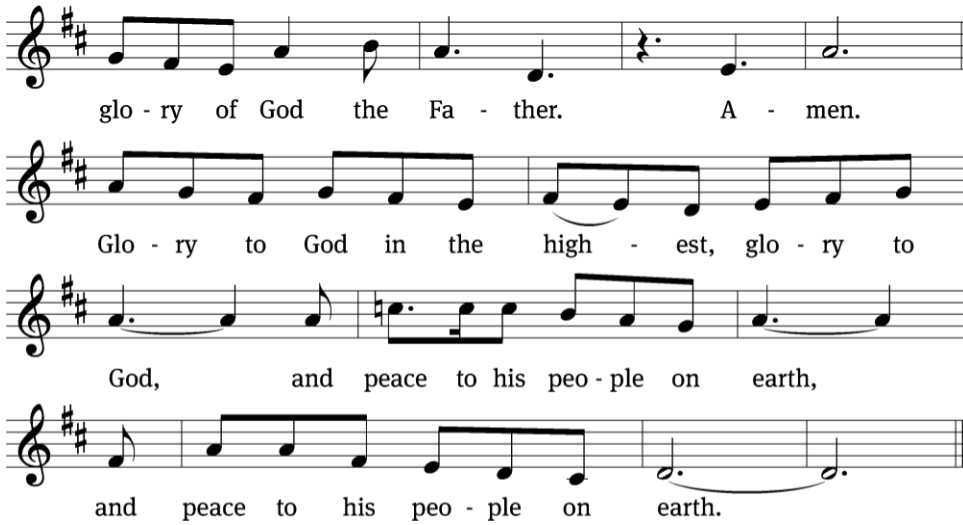
you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the



Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus



Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it in the



glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, glo - ry to

God, and peace to his peo - ple on earth,

and peace to his peo - ple on earth.

Tune: David Kauffman; William Gokelman; © 2010, 2021 GFTSMUSIC Publishing Company, Inc., admin. Music Services. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 719903

## The Word

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day

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 your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

### First Reading

*Isaiah 60:1–6*

*God promises that his righteousness and glory will be made known to all nations.*

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD is dawning upon you.

<sup>2</sup>Look, darkness covers the earth,  
and deep darkness covers the peoples,  
but the LORD will dawn upon you,  
and his glory will be seen over you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations will walk to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup>Look up. Look all around and see!  
All of them have been gathered. They are coming to you.  
Your sons will come from far away,  
and people will carry your daughters on their side.

<sup>5</sup>Then you will look and be radiant.  
Your heart will race with excitement and burst with joy.  
For great riches from the sea will be delivered to you.

The wealth of the nations will come to you.

<sup>6</sup>Caravans of camels will cover your land,  
young camels from Midian and Ephah.  
All those from Sheba will come.  
They will carry gold and incense,  
and they will announce the good news of the praise of the LORD. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm of the Day

*72E Hail to the Lord's Anointed*

*The Church sings Psalm 148 in services that praise God for keeping his promises.*



1 Hail to the Lord's a - noint - ed, great Da - vid's great - er Son!  
3 Kings shall bow down be - fore him and gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, his reign on earth be - gun!  
all na - tions shall a - dore him, his praise all peo - ple sing.



He comes to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free,  
To him shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows as - cend,



to take a - way trans-gres-sion, and rule in eq - ui - ty.  
his king - dom still in - creas - ing, a king - dom with - out end.

## Second Reading

Ephesians 3:2–12

*Paul prays that we might know God better.*

<sup>2</sup>Surely you have heard of the administration of God's grace given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation (as I have already written briefly). <sup>4</sup>When you read this, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. <sup>5</sup>This mystery was not made known to people in past generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup>This mystery is that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and people who also share in the promise through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup>I became a servant of this gospel, in keeping with the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>To me—even though I am the very least of all the saints—was given this grace: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ <sup>9</sup>and to enlighten everyone about the administration of this mystery. In past ages this mystery remained hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup>He did this so that, through the church, the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was done according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>12</sup>In him we can freely approach God with confidence through faith in him. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

## Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 2:2

Alleluia! Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?  
**We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. Alleluia!**

## Gospel

Matthew 2:1–12

*Through Jesus we discover the grace and truth of God the Father.*

<sup>1</sup>After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, <sup>2</sup>“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>He gathered together all the people's chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet: <sup>6</sup>You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel.”

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.”

<sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. <sup>11</sup>After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route. (EHV®)

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Be seated*

## **Children’s Message**

### **Hymn of the Day**

*370 How Lovely Shines the Morning Star*

### **Sermon**

*Stand*

### **Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Be seated*

## Special Prayers This Week

†  
†  
†  
†

## Prayer of the Church

*Today, the prayer will be offered by individual petitions. Each petition will end this way:*  
Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

*The final petition will end this way:*

*...who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**Amen.**

## Connect Card and Offering

*Please take a moment to fill out a Connect Card. After a few moments, the ushers will come forward to collect the offering. You may place your Connect Card and any offering you brought in the plate as it is passed. Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. 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

Noel

## 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, the pastor would be happy to explain why we ask you to do this.

# The Sacrament

Stand

## Preface

CW 199

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lived among us as a human being and revealed his glory as your only Son, full of grace and truth. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

## Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 200

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of nine staves of music. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of hosts, heav - en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

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## 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  $\text{T}$  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  $\text{T}$  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.**

## Lamb of God

CW 202



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; grant us, grant us peace.

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*Be seated*

## Distribution

### Distribution Hymn

674 *The Infant Priest Was Holy Born*

*Stand*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving-kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

### 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.**

### 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.**

### Hymn

372 *As with Gladness Men of Old*



# Take Home Questions

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## Isaiah 60:1-6

1. Isaiah says the nations are drawn to the light. What does this say about how God spreads his salvation?
2. Isaiah speaks to people surrounded by darkness. What kinds of darkness—personal or societal—make this promise of light especially meaningful today?

## Ephesians 3:2-12

3. Paul calls the inclusion of the Gentiles a “mystery” now revealed. For what reasons do you think this truth was so hard for people to grasp?
4. In what ways does knowing you “also share in the promise through the gospel” (v. 6) shape your confidence when you pray, worship, or face guilt?

## Matthew 2:1-12

5. Compare and contrast the varying responses to Jesus’ birth in this account (the Magi, Herod, the religious leaders). Which response do you see most often today—and why?
6. God used a star, Scripture, and faithful witnesses to lead the Magi to Jesus. What are some “guides” that God has used to draw you closer to Christ?
7. The Magi traveled far, risked much, and then worshiped and gave gifts. What does their example teach us about what true worship looks like?

# News & Announcements

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## **This Sunday's Bible Study Hour: Fellowship in Practice**

Join us in the cafeteria at 10:30 AM

## **Congregational & Call Meetings Scheduled**

Our Winter Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 11 at 10:30 am. In addition to regular ministry updates, we will also discuss aspects of the second-pastor role. Then on Monday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 pm, we will have a meeting to call a second pastor. Please check your mailslots for reports.

## **January Is About Lutheran Leadership**

In addition to our congregational meeting, this year's officers will be installed next Sunday. Later in the month, nine congregation members will be attending the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in Chicago. Then, every congregation member is invited to St. Paul's Lutheran Leadership Night on Tuesday, Jan. 27, where you will hear key insights from the conference. The hope is to sharpen our congregation's sense of purpose and encourage bold, joyful service to the Lord.

## **Offer a Warm Hello**

The greeter signup for the first part of 2026 has been posted on the Ministry Table. We are looking for people to serve for about a half hour before the service starts. You just stand near the entry and welcome people as they come through the door. You can sign up for as little as one Sunday.

## **Time to Think About High School**

Freshman registration at Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) is coming up at the end of January. There are four convenient date options: January 20, 21, 22 and 28. Two timeslots are available each day: 4:00-5:00 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm. To reserve your spot email Andrew Schoenfeld ([aschoenfeld@nlhs.org](mailto:aschoenfeld@nlhs.org)) or call the NLHS office at 715-359-3400.



## **Help with Sunday Refreshments**

Bring a treat, make coffee, or help with clean up. A signup sheet can be found on the Ministry Table or on our website at [stpaulswr.org/serve](http://stpaulswr.org/serve).

Sunday	9:00 AM	Sunday Worship
	10:30 AM	Bible Study in the Bible Study Room
	10:30 AM	Sunday School (Grades 3K-5 <sup>th</sup> )
Monday	1:30 PM	Spiritual Health Group in the chapel at Wisc Rapids Health Services
Tuesday	6:45 AM	Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	9:34 AM	Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center
Wednesday	8:45 AM	School Chapel Service
	6:00 PM	Bible & Brews Group at B's Tap House
	6:00 PM	Catechism Class in room 110
	6:30 PM	Bible Book Group in the Resource Center
Thursday	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
Sunday	9:00 AM	<b>Sunday Worship/Installation of Officers</b>
	10:30 AM	<b>Congregational Meeting in the church</b>
	10:30 AM	Sunday School (Grades 3K-5th)

## Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 199

## Next Sunday

Theme: Identity Revealed:

Jesus Is The Christ, The Anointed One

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-7, Acts 10:34-38, Matthew 3:13-17

## Upcoming Events

- Jan. 12 Panthers HOME Basketball Game
- Jan. 12 Pastoral Call Meeting
- Jan. 14 Compline Service
- Jan. 20 Freshman Registration Begins at NLHS
- Jan. 27 St. Paul's Leadership Night





[www.stpaulswr.org](http://www.stpaulswr.org)

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