

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



*When they
saw the star,
they rejoiced
exceedingly
with great joy.*

Matthew 2:10, ESV

The Gift of God:
The Gift of God is for All People
Epiphany Observed

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church | Wisconsin Rapids, WI

January 5, 2025



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



On Christmas Eve the angel told the shepherds, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people" (Luke 2:10). One wonders if those words struck those Jewish shepherds as odd. For centuries, God had given special attention to one nation—Israel. There were Jewish religious leaders who taught that only members of that special people would be saved. Not according to the Christmas angel! The birth of the Savior was good news for all people.

Today we celebrate the Festival of the Epiphany. Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning "reveal." When the Savior was born, he was first revealed to Israelites: the shepherds, Simeon, Anna. But today, we see the Lord miraculously guides foreigners across countless miles so the Savior could be revealed to them as well. How did the magi respond? "They were overjoyed" (Matthew 2:10). The Festival of Epiphany is sometimes known as "The Gentiles' Christmas." We Gentiles (non-Jews) rejoice in the good news that this Jewish baby is not just a gift for the Jews. He is a gift for all people—the Savior of the world.

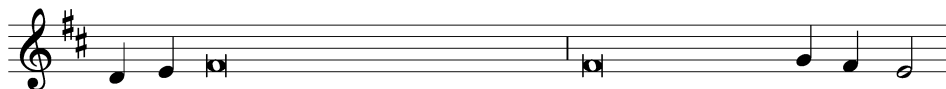
Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using the Questions for Examination on page 11 of this service folder or Christian Questions on page 295 of the blue hymnal.

Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Accompanist Sue Kulhanek; Soloist Emma Schroeder

Acknowledgements

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For the peace from above and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



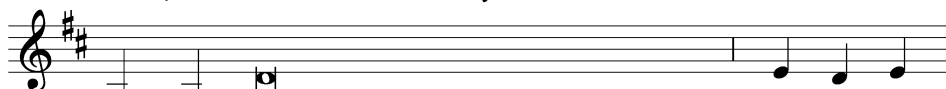
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the un - it - y of all, let us pray to the Lord.



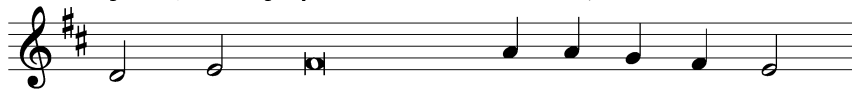
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and



praise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

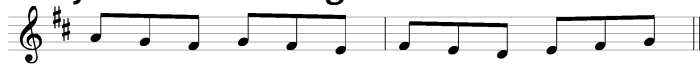


A - men. A - men.

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Glory to God in the Highest

CW 191



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.



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.

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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

1 Kings 10:1–9

An African queen visits Israel to test the wisdom of King Solomon. The result of her visit: she ends up praising the LORD for his love. The gift of God is for all people.

¹The Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame, which was connected with the fame of the LORD, so she came to test him with hard questions. ²She came to Jerusalem with a very great entourage—with camels carrying spices and a large quantity of gold and precious stones.

She came to Solomon and told him everything that was on her heart. ³Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.

⁴The Queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he built, ⁵and the food on his table. When she saw the council meeting of his officials, the careful attention of his ministers, as well as their attire, his cupbearers, and the whole burnt offerings which he offered at the House of the LORD, it took her breath away.

⁶She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your accomplishments and your wisdom is true. ⁷I did not believe the report until I came and saw it with my own eyes. The truth is, not even half of it was told to me! Your wisdom and wealth surpass the report which I heard. ⁸Blessed are your men, blessed are your servants, who stand before you continually hearing your wisdom! ⁹May the LORD your God be blessed, who was pleased to put you on the throne of Israel. Because the LORD loves Israel forever, he made you king to administer justice and righteousness.” (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

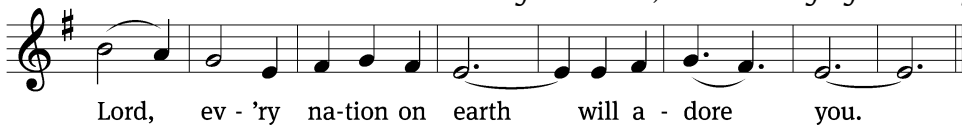
72A Lord, Every Nation on Earth Will Adore You

Recognizing the gift of God, every nation on earth adores the Lord.

The soloist will sing the refrain once, and the congregation will repeat it.

Refrain

Then the soloist will sing the verses, and the congregation sings the refrains.



Tone



Endow the king with your justice, / O God,
the royal son with your / righteousness.
May he endure as long / as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all gener- / ations.

May he be like rain falling on a / mown field,
like showers water- / ing the earth.
In his days may the righteous / flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon / is no more. **Refrain**

May all kings bow / down to him
and all nations / serve him.

Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be / given him.
May the kings of Sheba and Seba pre- / sent him gifts.

May people ever / pray for him
and bless him / all day long.

Then all nations will be / blessed through him,
and they will / call him blessed.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

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Second Reading

Acts 13:46–49

The focus of St. Paul's ministry would be to share the gift of eternal life with the Gentiles.

⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas responded fearlessly, "It was necessary that God's word be spoken to you first. But since you reject it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, look: We are now turning to the Gentiles! ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has instructed us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they were rejoicing and praising the word of the Lord. All who had been appointed for eternal life believed.

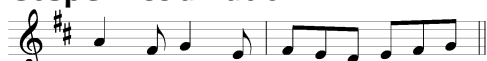
⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was being carried through the whole region. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 2:2



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Tone

Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

We saw his star when it rose and have come to wor - ship him.

Refrain

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Gospel

Matthew 2:1–12

The Lord miraculously led Magi across many hundreds of miles of difficult terrain, so that they might worship the child who offered the gift of salvation.

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ²“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He gathered together all the people’s chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet: ⁶“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.”

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸He 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.”

⁹After 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. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. ¹¹After 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. ¹²Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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

Nicene Creed

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

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 truly 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

Prayer of the Church

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

You ushered in the day of grace so long foretold.

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

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

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:

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

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.

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

Special prayers and intercession

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

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 saints and angels sing the everlasting song of triumph.
Amen.

Special Prayers This Week

- † For the loved ones of Linda Lucht, who passed away on Monday.
- † For the safety of the nation
- †
- †
- †
- †
- †

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

The People Who in Darkness

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.

The Sacrament

Stand

Preface

CW 199

The Lord be with you.

And al - so 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.

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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

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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Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, Lord God, eternal King and gracious Father. In love you made us the crown of your creation. In mercy you planned our salvation. In grace you sent your Son to redeem us from sin.

We remember and give you thanks that your eternal Son, Jesus Christ, became flesh and made his dwelling among us, that he willingly placed himself under law to redeem those under law, that he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross, that he has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood in this Sacrament. Forgive our sins, increase our faith, strengthen our fellowship, and deepen our longing for the day when Christ will welcome us to his eternal feast. Praise and thanks and honor and glory be to you, O God our Father, and to your Son and to 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.
Give us today our daily bread.

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 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 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

347 Angels from the Realms of Glory

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.

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 T give you peace.

Amen.

Be seated

Hymn

380 Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun (sts. 3 & 5)



Take Home Questions

1 Kings 10:1-9

1. Compare and contrast the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon with the Magi's visit to Jesus. What similarities do you see? What about differences?
2. This queen was drawn to Solomon's fame which came from the Lord (v. 1). What about Christ Jesus, the eternal King of Israel, draws you in and elicits your praise and precious gifts?

Acts 13:46-49

3. Read the verses leading up to this reading (vv. 42-45). What happened that led Paul and Barnabas to respond in this way?
4. The gospel work that brought you to faith could be traced back through the Church to the mission work of Paul and the other apostles. What impact does that have on you as you hear about its adversarial start?
5. In what ways did the Queen of Sheba and the Magi foreshadow what God would do for the Gentiles through the Apostle Paul?

Matthew 2:1-12

6. The visit of the Magi is a well-known event thanks to nativity decorations or other things around Christmas. However, the specific details surrounding this event may not be as well-known. Give these verses a careful read. What details caught your attention or are entirely new to you?
7. The Lord had set up a miraculous string of events to bring the Magi to the feet of Jesus Christ. To what equally remarkable lengths has the Lord gone to bring you to the Savior?

News & Announcements



**Grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**



2 Peter 3:18a (NIV)

Do you want to grow closer to God this year? That can happen by spending more time in His Word. Having a set schedule and accountability to others can help you do this. That is why being in a study group is so beneficial. Here is a list of our current bible study opportunities.

Sunday Bible Study: Our biggest study group meets on Sunday between the worship services (9:15-10:15 am) in the cafeteria. Pastor Plagenz usually leads this study. We are currently working through the book of 1 Peter. (If you have children in age 3 through 5th grade, they can attend Sunday School, while you are at the study.)

Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop on Tuesdays ~ 6:45-7:45 am. Led by Mike Anderson.

Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center on Tuesdays ~ 9:45-11:00 am. Led by Judy Anderson & Jeanne Jackson.

Principal to Parent Bible Study in the Welcome Center on Wednesdays ~ 8:35-8:55 am. Led by Andy Van Weele.

Bible Book Group in the Resource Center on Wednesday ~ 6:30-8:00 pm. Led by Tom Reitz & Chris Jardine. (See the announcement below about their new topic.)

Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop Topic on Thursdays ~ 7:00-7:45 am
Led by Dana Duncan.

Foundations of the Christian Faith: This class is for those exploring Christianity, new to our church, or long-time members that want a refresher. This workshop-style course will be held on Saturday mornings – Feb. 1, Feb. 15, Mar. 1, and Mar. 15 [note the date changes]. Contact Pastor Plagenz if you are interested (pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org ~ 920-689-3036).

Winter Connect Groups: These short-term groups start in February. They discuss the take-home questions in the bulletin. Look for more information coming soon.

What Is In the Shadows?

Jan. 8 | 6:30 pm

The book of Leviticus is filled with rules, rituals, and required sacrifices. Learn how “these are a shadow of the things that were to come” (Col. 2:17). Jesus came to be the one-an-for-all sacrifice, and out of thanksgiving we want to live holy lives. The Bible Book Group is beginning a study of the book of Leviticus this Wednesday, Jan. 8. They meet in the Resource Center from 6:30-8:00 pm on Wednesdays. Come join the group.

Congregational Meeting Scheduled

Jan. 19 | 12:30 pm

Our winter congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan. 19 at 12:30 pm. A fellowship meal will be held beforehand – from 11:30-12:30 pm. Gather with your church family and get updates on the ministry of our congregation.

Anniversary RSVP's Due Next Sunday!

If you haven't yet, please RSVP for the 125th Anniversary Celebration to be held on Sunday, Jan. 26. We have only one worship service that day. WE need your RSVP for the catered luncheon that follows. If you have lost your RSVP card, there are extras on the Ministry Table or you can contact the church office to reserve a spot. The cost is \$18.50 for adults, \$9.00 for children ages 6-12, and free for age 0-5. We hope you can attend.

K for a Day

Jan. 15 | 8:30 am

If your child will be in Kindergarten next year, we encourage you to bring them to “K for a Day” on Wednesday, Jan. 15. They can experience the classroom and meet the teacher. Activities begin at 8:30 am and finish up at 11:30 am.

Our Church Directory Wouldn't Be Complete Without You

That is why we might be giving you a call if you haven't signed up yet. With just a month before photo sessions begin, over half of our timeslots have been filled. If you want to be sure you get a certain day or time of day, give us a call (715-421-3634) or schedule on your own at <https://book.usesession.com/s/MotFamuJJ->. There is also a link on our website and a QR code on posters in the building. Photo sessions are on Feb. 6-8 & 10-12.

Service Opportunities

Event Coordinator: Having someone to organize logistics ahead of and during events like our BIC workshops would be extremely helpful. Please reach out to Pastor Plagenz, if you are able to support him and the gospel ministry in this way

Worship Technology: Operate the PowerPoint, or learn to run the sound board. Make DVDs of the service, or learn how to livestream. Work in rotation with other volunteers. Contact Veronica Klish at 715-421-3607.

Set Up for Communion: Prepare the bread and wine when communion is offered and clean up afterwards. Serve one month at a time, by yourself or with a friend/spouse. You may need to change parameters, display baptismal banner, or take care of other tasks in the chancel area. Training provided. Contact Veronica Klish at 715-421-3607.



Greeter for Photo Sessions: Greet people as they arrive and ensure that all of their paperwork is in order for the photographer. Contact Judy Stensberg at 715-421-3634.

Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
Monday	4:30 PM	Choir Practice in the Balcony
	5:30 PM	Men's Devotional Basketball in the gym
Tuesday	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
	4:30 PM	Parent Teacher Organization
	6:30 PM	Unified Board Meetings
Wednesday	8:30 AM	Principal to Parent Bible Study
	8:55 AM	School Chapel Service
	6:30 PM	Bible Book Group in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Catechism Class in the Bible Study Room
Thursday	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 181

New Year's Eve: 52

Next Sunday

Theme: Epiphany Moments:

Baptism Is the Cure for an Identity Crisis

Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 3:15-17,21-22

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 15 Compline Service
- Jan. 19 Congregational Meeting
- Jan. 26 125th Church Anniversary Celebration
- Feb. 1 Foundations of the Christian Faith
- Feb. 6 Photo Sessions for New Directory Begin

'I have made you
a light for the Gentiles,



that you may
bring salvation
to the end of the earth.'

Acts 13:47



www.stpaulswr.org

311 14th Ave S | Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495 | 715-421-3634 | churchoffice@stpaulswr.org
Pastor Peter Plagenz | 920-689-3036 | pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org