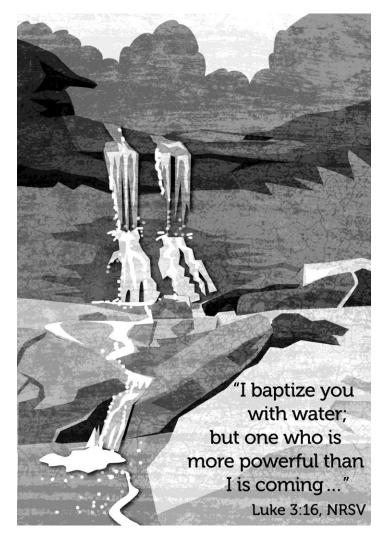
WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



Epiphany Moments:
Baptism Is the Cure for an Identity Crisis

First Sunday in Epiphany

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

Janaury 12, 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



"Who is Jesus?" For the longest time, people thought the answer to that question was, "Mary and Joseph's son" or "a carpenter from Nazareth." While true enough, those answers do not adequately describe Jesus. But when Jesus was baptized, God the Father spoke, declaring Jesus' true identity. Jesus was the dearly loved Son of God, chosen to be the Savior of the world.

"Who are you?" someone asks. Perhaps you would answer by providing your name. Maybe you would add additional information—where you are from or what you do for a living. Perhaps, in some dark corner of your mind, you would answer negatively. "I'm no one."

We need to understand that none of those things really describes who we are. To answer that question—Who are you?—we must look to our baptism. Baptism is the cure for an identity crisis. There, just like he did with Jesus, our Father declares us to be his dearly loved child. Moreover, in baptism God anointed us with power for a life of selfless service. May God grant us this epiphany moment!

Those Serving in Worship

Liturgist, Pastor Peter Plagenz; Preacher, Pastor John Melke from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Wisconsin Rapids; Accompanist, Kristi Perry

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.TM Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

The Service: Setting Three

Setting Three begins on page 188 of the hymnal.

Welcome

Hymn

379 Christ, Your Footprints through the Desert The song leaders will sing st. 1

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the \mathbb{T} Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Confession

Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded Baptism when he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

All of us are born into this world with a deep need for Baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. In Baptism, he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. We recall what Baptism means for our daily lives:

Baptism means that the sinful nature in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

As baptized children of God, we confess our sins:

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.

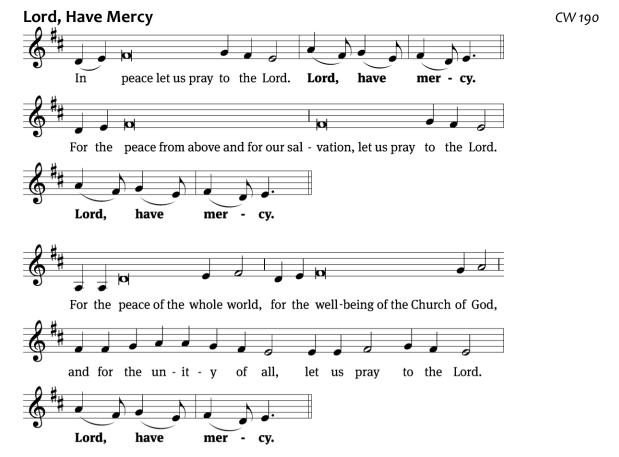
Silence for meditation and reflection

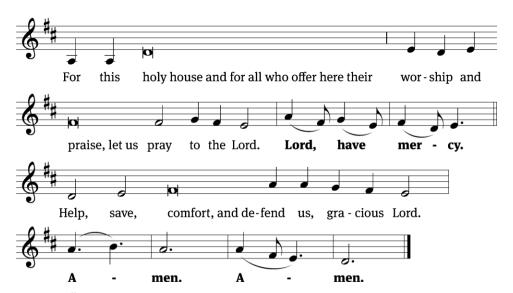
God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit and united us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Every day God forgives your sins, removes your guilt, and strengthens you to defeat Satan's power. His promise is for you and your children, and he will never forsake you. Your sins are forgiven. You are clothed with Christ. You are at peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

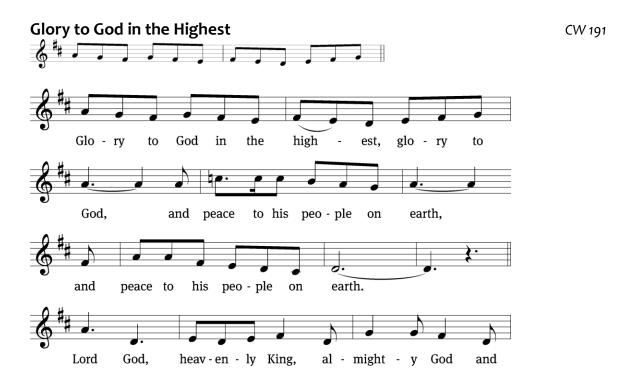
8:00 - Baptism of Wesley Douglas Kroells

Following the rite, the service continues with The Word on pg. 7 of the service folder.

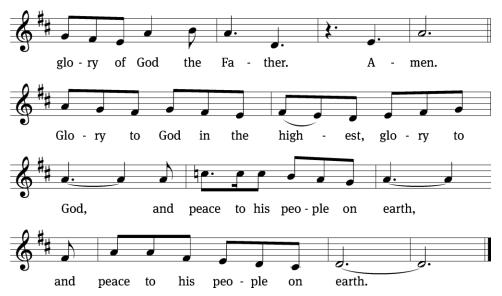




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The Word

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

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Father in heaven, at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Keep us who are baptized into Christ faithful in our calling as your children, and make us heirs with him of everlasting life; 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 Samuel 16:1–13

David was the youngest of eight brothers and a shepherd. Yet, at his anointing, the Lord declared his true identity—future king of Israel.

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I see a king for myself among his sons."

²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you are to do. You are to anoint for me the person that I point out to you."

⁴So Samuel did what the LORD had told him to do and went to Bethlehem. Trembling with fear, the elders of the city came to meet him. They said, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵He said, "Yes, in peace. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." He consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they had come, he looked at Eliab and said, "Certainly this is the LORD's anointed."

⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at how tall he is, because I have rejected him. For the LORD does not look at things the way man does. For man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."

⁹Then Jesse had Shammah pass by. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."

¹⁰Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel. Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, "Is that all of the young men?"

Jesse said, "There still is the youngest, but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him, for we cannot sit down to eat until he comes."

¹²He sent for him and brought him in. David had red hair and striking eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, "Get up! Anoint him, because this is the one."

 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers. The Spirit of the LORD rushed on David with power from that day forward. After that Samuel set out and returned to Ramah. (EHV*)

The Word of the Lord.

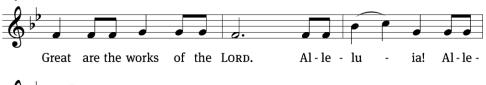
Thanks be to God.

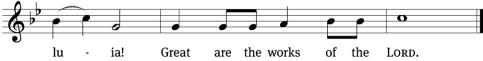
Psalm of the Day

2D Great Are the Works of the LORD

At his baptism, Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, is Anointed as the King and Lord of the entire world.

Refrain





Tone



Why do the nations / conspire and the peoples / plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together a-/gainst the LORD and against his A-/nointed. *Refrain*

The One enthroned in / heaven laughs;

the Lord / scoffs at them.

He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, / saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy / mountain." *Refrain*

I will proclaim the / LORD's decree:

He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your / Father."

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 Titus 3:4-7

In the eyes of the world, baptism appears to be just a religious ceremony. St. Paul explains baptism is so much more—a second birth that gives you the identity of God's child and heir.

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward mankind appeared, ⁵he saved us—not by righteous works that we did ourselves, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and the renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs in keeping with the hope of eternal life. (EHV*)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand



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Gospel Luke 3:15–17,21-22

People wondered if John the Baptist was the Messiah. He was a powerful preacher who lived a unique life. But at his baptism, Jesus was identified by his Father as the Anointed One.

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Christ. ¹⁶John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But someone mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his

threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

²¹When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. While he was praying, heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with you." (EHV®)

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

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day

377 To Jordan's River Came Our Lord

Sermon Why Baptism?

Stand

Creed Remembrance of Baptism

In Holy Baptism, God takes away our sins and gives us new life. We reject the devil and confess that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

I ask you: Do you reject the devil along with all his lies and empty promises? **Yes, and I ask God to help me.**

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty? Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son?
Yes, 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.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
Yes, 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.

Is it your sincere prayer and desire to remain faithful to your Lord Jesus, to value the Word and sacraments, and to live a life that pleases God?

Yes, and I ask God to help me.

May the eternal God, who saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Loving Father, lead us to rejoice every day as we remember our baptism. When we sin against you and others, give us power to put down the sinful nature that was drowned in the water of baptism. When we doubt your love, cause us to remember the promises you made when we came to the font.

When we feel weak, invigorate us with the hope of eternal life that awaits all who are baptized and believe in you.

Keep in your care all our brothers and sisters who are suffering in sickness, enduring hardship, carrying a cross, or mourning the death of someone they love. Let them also return to their baptism and remember the blessings you bestowed on them through the water and the Word. Keep all the baptized in your care and bring us at last to the river of the water of life in heaven.

Special prayers and intercession

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

All this we pray in the name of our baptized and anointed Lord Jesus, **Amen.**

Special Prayers This Week

- † For Wesley Douglas Kroells, the son of Seth & Emily Kroells, who was baptized today
- † For the people dealing with the wildfires in California
- †
- †
- +

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.



WELS Connection

Christian Aid and Relief - Doral, FL

Hymn

679 God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It The song leaders will sing st. 1

Stand

Prayer

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; 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 T give you peace.

Amen.

Be seated

Hymn

692 All Who Believe and Are Baptized



Take Home Questions

1 Samuel 16:1-13

- 1. What things was Samuel looking at when he suspected he had found the LORD's choice for a new king? Yet, what was the LORD looking at?
- 2. In what ways does that shape our understanding of faith which is a matter of the heart?

Titus 3:4-7

- 3. Read through these verses again and make a list of "I am..." statements which are true about you because you have been baptized.
 - I am... baptized.
 - I am... saved.
 - I am...
- 4. Respond to the following statement* in light of what God says about baptism in these verses. "Water Baptism is a decision made by the individual as a way to express their personal commitment to Christ." (*Taken from an area Christian church's statements about baptism)

Luke 3:15-17,21-22

- 5. For 30 years, Jesus had lived in anonymity. In what ways did that all change at his baptism?
- 6. What would this public anointing accomplish as Jesus walks away from the Jordan River and into his ministry?



This Sunday's Bible Study Hour: 1 Peter – Chapter 3

Join us in the cafeteria from 9:15 to 10:15 AM

Congregational Meeting Next Sunday

Jan. 19 | 12:30 pm

Gather with your church family and get updates on the ministry of our congregation. Come for our winter congregational meeting next Sunday, Jan. 19 at 12:30 pm. A fellowship meal will be held beforehand – from 11:30-12:30 pm. There is a packet of reports in your member mailslot, so you can read ahead and pray about the direction of our ministry. Everyone in the congregation is invited to the meal and meeting!

Anniversary RSVP's Due Today!

Our 125th Anniversary Celebration will be held on Sunday, Jan. 26. **We have only one worship service that day at 10:00 am.** We expect past called workers and other special guests.

Your RSVP to the catered luncheon is due today! If you have lost your RSVP card, there are extras on the Ministry Table and on the Welcome Table. You can also email the church office (churchoffice@stpaulswr.org) 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.

Set Up Crew Needed for Luncheon

Jan. 25

We need some people to help set up tables and chairs in the gym and to decorate for our 125th Anniversary Luncheon. Work begins at 9:00 am on Saturday, Jan. 25. Alan Verjinsky and Jan Peronto are heading up this project. We also need people who are willing to clean up after the meal. You can sign up for either of these tasks at the Ministry Table.

Compline Service on Wednesday

Jan. 15 | 6:30 pm

Our monthly evening compline service will be held this Wednesday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 pm. The service focuses on peace through Christ. Holy Communion will be offered.

K for a Day This Wednesday

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" this 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.



Winter Connect Groups

One of our Connect Groups was so anxious to get back together, they have already begun meeting. The Spiritual Health Group meets on Mondays at 1:30 pm in the chapel at Wisconsin Rapids Health Services, 1350 River Run Drive. They would love to have you join them. If you know of someone that resides in that facility, ask them to join you for the study.



The Bible & Brews Group plans to meet during the month of February. They gather at B's Tap House. This group is led by Greg Paul.

We are seeking more people willing to host/facilitate seasonal Connect Groups. These groups meet short-term – usually four weeks. The topic of discussion is the take-home questions in the bulletin. The groups also offer time for fellowship, just encouraging one-another in our faith walk. If you are willing to serve in this way, please contact Judy Stensberg at 715-421-3634.

Sisters on a Mission Meets Monday

Jan. 13 | 6:30 pm

Get to know some of the other women in our congregation, hear updates on mission work in our synod, and learn about upcoming events that might be of special interest to you. Sisters on a Mission meets in the Resource Center at 6:30 pm on the second Monday of the month. Look for them this Monday!

Be a Part of Our Tech Team

There is still a great need for people that can help with A/V and technology during worship services. If we do not have people assisting, there is a possibility that some future may not have livestreaming and/or slides. The Technology Director from St. Peters in Weyauwega will be here on Feb. 8 to help us learn more about how to operate our sound board. We would like to have a minimum of 5 people who are trained to operate this equipment. If this interests you, please contact either Chris Williams (507-279-0167 ~ cawilliams56@gmail.com) or Veronica Klish (715-421-3607 ~ spedbuggy@gmail.com).



Do you Love Basketball?

Mar. 29

Head over to Oshkosh Arena to see the Wisconsin Herd take on the San Diego Clippers! Join WELS members for an evening of fellowship, fun, and basketball at the annual WELS Night at the Herd on Saturday, March 29! WELS attendees will have the opportunity for post-game autographs with the team, on-court free throws, and a high five tunnel for all WELS kids. Order tickets by March 8 for the lowest rate and to be guaranteed seats with other WELS fans! Visit https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/herdwels.

It's Less than a Month Away

The photo sessions for our church directory begin on Feb. 6. If you haven't signed up yet, we encourage you to do so today. Two-thirds of our timeslots have already been filled. You can call the church (715-421-3634) or schedule on your own. There is a link on our website or use this QR code. Photo sessions are on Feb. 6-8 & 10-12. We'd like as many members as possible to participate.



Greeters Needed for Photo Sessions

Greet people as they arrive for their appointments and ensure that all of their paperwork is in order for the photographers. Contact Judy Stensberg (715-421-3634) to volunteer.

Event Host Needed for BIC Workshop

Feb. 1

Pastor is looking for a volunteer to help with hosting our BIC Workshops. The first session is Saturday, Feb. 1 from 8:30-12:30. Duties include making coffee, organizing snacks and lunch, etc. Contact Pastor Plagenz to volunteer.

Forge Ahead in Faith

Feb. 8

The sixteenth annual Men of His Word Conference will be held Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center in Oshkosh. Hear from keynote speaker, Pastor Earle Treptow. Enjoy music by the worship band, Koine'. Attend challenging breakout sessions. Register at www.menofhisword.org. There is an early bird discount until Jan. 21

Joy in the Journey

Feb. 28-Mar. 2

Take a weekend to retreat into God's Word, reflect on his teachings, and relax in his care at the Pathways to Christ Women's Retreat Feb. 28-Mar. 2 at the Cobblestone Suites in Oshkosh. Look at your journey through this life and into the next. In addition speakers, food, and music, there will be optional activities like water aerobics. To register, visit https://pathwaystochrist.org/

Upcoming Events

Jan. 19 Installation of Officers

Jan. 25 Set up for Anniversary Luncheon

Jan. 26 125th Church Anniversary Celebration

Feb. 1 Foundations of the Christian Faith

Feb. 6 Photo Sessions for New Directory Begin



It Is Time to Put Away Our Christmas Decorations

Saturday, Jan. 18 at 9:00 am

Lots of people will make this a quick task.

Calendar January 12-19

Sunday 8:00 AM Worship Bible Study in the cafeteria 9:15 AM Sunday School 9:15 AM 10:30 AM Worship 1:30 PM Spiritual Health Group at the chapel of WR Health Services Monday 4:30 PM Choir Practice in the Balcony 5:30 PM Men's Devotional Basketball in the gym Sister on a Mission in the Resource Center 6:30 PM **Tuesday** Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop 6:45 AM Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center 9:45 AM Stephen Ministers Peer Group in the Welcome Center 6:30 PM Wednesday 8:30 AM K for a Day in the Kindergarten Room 8:35 AM Principal to Parent Bible Study in the Welcome Center 8:55 AM School Chapel Service 6:30 PM Compline Service 6:30 PM Catechism Class in the Bible Study Room 7:00 PM Bible Book Group in the Resource Center Thursday 7:00 AM Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop Saturday Taking Down Christmas Decorations

Sunday 8:00 AM Worship

9:00 AM

9:15 AM Bible Study in the cafeteria

9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship

11:30 AM Fellowship Luncheon in the cafeteria

Winter Congregational Meeting in the cafeteria 12:30 PM

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 218

Next Sunday

Theme: Epiphany Moments:

God Delivers More Than We Ask, Not Less Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 2:1-11



