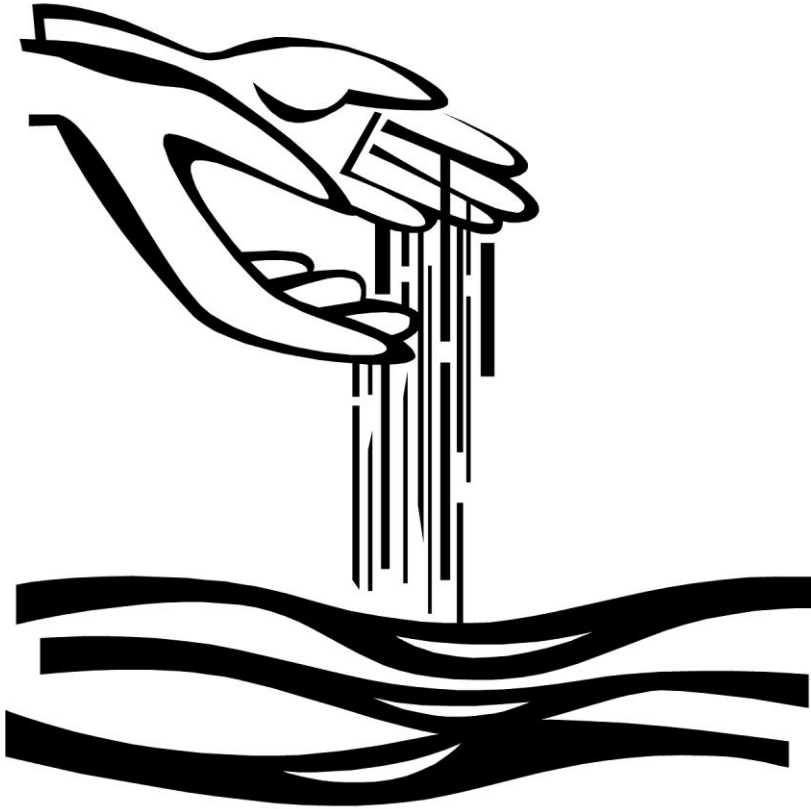


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



EPIPHANY REVEALS OUR LIFE WITH CHRIST:
It Begins with Baptism
First Sunday after Epiphany

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

January 14, 2024



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 try to hide our faults and failures from others. We want people to see us at our best. Perhaps we assume that if people knew what we were really like, they would want nothing to do with us. There's no hiding anything from God. He is all-seeing and all-knowing. Christ Jesus has witnessed our very worst, even the sins that only occurred in our heads. The psalmist says, "You perceive my thoughts from afar. You are familiar with all my ways" (139:2,3). Yet even though Jesus knows all our faults and failures, he badly wants something to do with us. So, he calls us to follow him. He wants us to be with him, secure in his love of forgiveness. Here is this week's epiphany: Jesus shows kindness when he calls us to discipleship. More, he shows kindness by giving us the ability to answer that call, so that we might always be near him and his blessing.

Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Organist Kristi Perry

Acknowledgements

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The Service: Setting Four

Setting Four is not found in the hymnal. Please use this service folder and the screens to guide your worship.

Welcome

Hymn

Christ, Your Footprints through the Desert

We will sing these words to a tune that is different than what is used in our current hymnal.

- 1 Christ, your footprints through the desert led to Jordan's flowing stream;
there you heard the herald crying Israel's old, prophetic dream:
"He is coming! He is coming! He will cleanse the earth with flame!
Sinners, plunge beneath the waters! Wash away your guilt and shame!"**
- 2 Christ, you heard the stirring summons as by Jordan's bank you stood;
bathed, though sinless, with your people in the river's cleansing flood.
High above, the heavens opened; came the Spirit as a dove;
spoke a voice beyond all hearing: "See my Son, the One I love!"**
- 3 Son of God, the road from Jordan led at last to Calv'ry's hill.
There upon the cross forsaken, you fulfilled the Father's will.
Lamb of God, we see you dying, sinless, yet for sinners slain.
But where death rose up to triumph, you began your glorious reign!**
- 4 God, in Baptism you have made us one with Christ, our risen Lord,
freed us, claimed us, cleansed, forgiven thro' the water and the Word.
Help us hear your urgent summons, calling us to serve you now.
Send us forth, your sons and daughters, with the cross upon our brow.**

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Stand

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

10:30 – Baptism of Audree Ann and Chloe Catherine Wirtz

CW 151

New Member Welcome

Following the rite, the service continues with the Word on pg. 5 of the service folder.

8:00 – Confession

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father, we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts. We have offended you and sinned against your holy law. We have done those things that we should not have done, and we have not done those things that we should have done. Have mercy on us, Lord! Spare us, forgive us, and restore us, according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, 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 unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

Glory to God in the Highest

The verses and the first refrain will be sung by the song leaders/pastor. Please join to sing the subsequent refrains.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est and peace to his peo - ple on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. **Refrain**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer, receive our prayer. **Refrain**

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. **Refrain**

Following the final refrain, sing:



Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God.

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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

Isaiah 49:1-6

The Messiah tells of the work he would do when he was anointed at his baptism.

¹ Listen to me, you coastlands. Pay attention, you faraway peoples! The Lord called me from the womb. When I was inside my mother, he mentioned my name. ² He made my mouth like a sharpened sword. He hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me a polished arrow. He concealed me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, “You are my servant Israel, in whom I will display my glory.”

⁴ But I said to myself, “I have labored in vain. I spent my strength and came up empty, with nothing. Yet a just verdict for me rests with the Lord, and my reward is with my God.”

⁵ But now the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to turn Jacob back to him, so that Israel might be gathered to him, so that I will be honored in the eyes of the Lord, because my God has been my strength—

⁶ the Lord said: It is too small a thing that you should just be my servant to raise up only the tribes of Jacob and to restore the ones I have preserved in Israel, so I will appoint you to be a light for the nations, so that my salvation will be known to the end of the earth. (EHV)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

2D Great Are the Works of the LORD

Refrain

Great are the works of the LORD. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
lu-ia! Great are the works of the LORD.

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

Romans 6:1–11

Our baptism connects us to Christ.

¹What shall we say then? Shall we keep on sinning so that grace may increase? ²Absolutely not! We died to sin. How can we go on living in it any longer? ³Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him by this baptism into his death, so that just as he was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too would also walk in a new life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.

⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him, to make our sinful body powerless, so that we would not continue to serve sin. ⁷For the person who has died has been declared free from sin. ⁸And since we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he will never die again. Death no longer has control over him. ¹⁰For the death he died, he died to sin once and for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹In the same way also consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (EHV)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Mark 1:11



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

You are my Son, / whom I love;
with you I am / well pleased.

Refrain

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Gospel

Mark 1:4–11

Jesus' public ministry begins with the anointing of baptism.

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. ⁶John was clothed in camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He preached, "One more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals! ⁸I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And 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

Stand

Confession of Faith

Remembrance of Baptism

Holy Baptism is the priceless means of grace by which our Father in heaven connects us with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. The apostle Paul wrote: "All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Again Paul wrote: "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." 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

8:00 – New Member Welcome

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.

Work in our hearts through the power of your gospel, so that we would remain close to you all our days.

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. Bring us at last to the river of the water of life in heaven.**

Special prayers and intercessions

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.
Amen.

Special Prayers This Week

† For our new members brought in through baptism and confirmation

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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

Hymn

679 *God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It*

Stand

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, 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.

Be seated

Hymn

692 *All Who Believe and Are Baptized*



Take Home Questions

1. The reading from Isaiah 49 prophetically introduces the Old Testament believers to the Messiah and what he would do.
 - a. Verse 2 highlights the atypical tools the Messiah would use—his "mouth like a sharpened sword." In what ways has the power of Jesus' words, the law and gospel, affected you? Try to think of specific instances in your life.
 - b. The Messiah declared that his labor would be in vain (v. 4a). From a human perspective, Jesus' work would appear to be a failure. Yet, in what ways would Jesus' humiliation and suffering lead to God's glory (v. 3)?
 - c. In what ways does that reshape our Christian suffering as we carry our crosses?
2. As we receive free and complete forgiveness through Christ, the sinful heart in us says, "Why not keep sinning? We'll be forgiven anyway. That would even make for more of God's grace, which is a good thing."
 - a. For what reasons is this such a dangerous temptation?
 - b. How does Paul address this thought process in this reading from Romans 6?
 - c. Given this context, in what ways have we, through baptism, been joined to Christ's death and resurrection?
3. Jesus' baptism is recorded or referenced in every gospel—Matthew 3:13-17; this reading from Mark 1; Luke 3:21-22; and John 1:29-34. Compare and contrast all of these accounts, reading each one. What is unique about Mark's account?
 - a. For one difference, look at the language used with heaven in verse 10. That same language is used at the end of Mark's gospel in 15:38. Read that verse and its context. In what ways does this imagery and these events express a divine reality for you who are joined to Christ in baptism?

News & Announcements



Sunday's Bible Study: When Our Children Marry

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

Winter Connect Groups Start This Week

Jan. 14-Feb. 14

Get to know some of the people in our church family better while you study God's Word together. Join a Connect Group. Most of these short-term seasonal small groups meet in people's homes. The winter session begins the week of Jan. 14 and meets for five weeks. Meetings take about 1-1/2 hours and usually involve food and fellowship as well as study. You can see a schedule in the calendar on page 15. Look for more information at the Ministry Table.

Membership Classes Start Saturday

Jan. 20

If you have been worshipping with us for a while or just new here, we invite you to learn more about what the Bible, and we here at St. Paul's, teach about God and your relationship to him. We have a workshop-style class beginning this Saturday, Jan. 20, 8:30-11:30 am. (Future meeting dates are Feb. 3, Feb. 17 and Mar. 2.) If you are interested, please contact Pastor Plagenz or look for the registration link under the Grow tab of our website.

Call Meeting & Voters' Meeting Scheduled

Jan. 28

Despite having so many calls accepted recently, we are still short of teachers for next fall. The next call meeting will take place on Sunday, January 28 at 12:30 pm. Our regular quarterly voters meeting will immediately follow the call meeting. There will be a time of food and fellowship after the second service until the time of the meeting – 11:30-12:30 pm. Chili will be served.

Compline Service on Wednesday

Jan. 17 | 6:30 pm

Our monthly compline service is this Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Communion will be offered. Everyone is welcome to attend this midweek service.

Help Needed for Home Basketball Games

St. Paul's Panthers will have their first home basketball games of the season this Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 4:30 & 5:30 pm. We need volunteers at all home games to help with the concession stand, scoreboard, and scorebook. Please consider signing up! There is a link to SignUp Genius on the school website (www.StPaulsWR.org/School).





The Next WELS Youth Night

Feb. 4 | 5:00-8:00 pm

Teens grade 8-12 are for a night of free bowling, free food, and fun prizes! Come to the Marathon City Sports Center (1200 S. St. Hwy 107) on Sunday, Feb. 4 from 5-8 pm. WELS membership not required, so invite your friends! A registration link can be found on our website under the What's Happening tab.

Freshman Registration at NLHS This Week

Jan. 16 & 17

Freshman registration at Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) is this Tuesday, Jan. 16 and Wednesday, Jan. 17. Call NLHS (715-359-3400) for an appointment to tour the school and to complete registration paperwork. NLHS is located in Kronenwetter and has free bussing from St. Paul's. Financial aid may be available.

Biblical Hospitality Webinar on Thursday

Jan. 18 | 7:00 pm

Want to learn about using hospitality to reconnect with others at your church and also as an evangelism tool? "Reviving Relationships through Biblical Hospitality," a new webinar from WELS Women's Ministry, will inspire you to rethink your relationships and get you thinking about your own church culture with new eyes. Panelists will talk about the importance of biblical hospitality in your home, at church, and even in public. The webinar will be held Thurs., Jan. 18, from 7:00-8:00 pm. Learn more and register at WELS.net/women.

Help Needed to Clean Classrooms

Now that the holidays are over and your plans for 2024 are clearer, please consider volunteering to clean the classrooms at least once during the remainder of the school year. This just involves vacuuming and emptying garbage and recycling. This job needs to be done twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday or Saturday. Your entire family can serve together. Sign up at the Ministry Table.

Marriage Enrichment Workshop in Merrill

Feb. 3 | 9:30 am

Trinity Lutheran Church of the Town of Berlin (located near Merrill, WI) will be having a marriage enrichment event entitled "Mysterious Marriage." on Saturday, Feb. 3, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Snacks, refreshments, and a catered lunch will be provided. The cost is \$80 a couple. To register, go to Eventbrite.com and search for "mysterious marriage." If you have any questions, call, text, or email Pastor Andy DeGier (pastorandydegier@gmail.com, 920-471-1770).

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 20 Grade School Basketball Tournament
- Jan. 22-26 Christian Education/School Spirit Week
- Jan. 28 Call Meeting & Voters Meeting



- Sunday** 8:00 AM Worship
 9:15 AM Bible Study in the cafeteria
 9:15 AM Orientation for Family Catechism
 9:15 AM Sunday School for grades 3K-6th
 10:30 AM Worship
 6:30 PM Connect Group at the home of Fred & Joyce Camacho
- Monday** 4:30 PM Choir Practice in the balcony
 5:30 PM Men's Devotional Basketball in the gym
 6:30 PM Connect Group at the home of Carole & John Melso
- 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
 1:30 PM Connect Group at Wisconsin Rapids Health Services
 4:30 PM HOME Panthers Basketball Game
 6:30 PM Leadership Council in the Resource Center
- Wednesday** 8:55 AM School Chapel Service
 5:30 PM Handbell Practice
 6:30 PM Compline Service
 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
 1:00 PM Newsletter Assembly in the Volunteer Workroom
 6:30 PM Connect Group at the home of Andy & Julie Reitz
- Saturday** **8:30 AM Foundations of the Christian Faith**
- Sunday** 8:00 AM Worship
 9:15 AM Bible Study in the cafeteria
 9:15 AM Sunday School for grades 3K-6th
 10:30 AM Worship

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 230

Next Sunday

Theme: Epiphany Reveals Our Life with Christ:

He Commits Us to a Lofty Charge

Readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Mark 1:14-20





www.stpaulswr.org

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