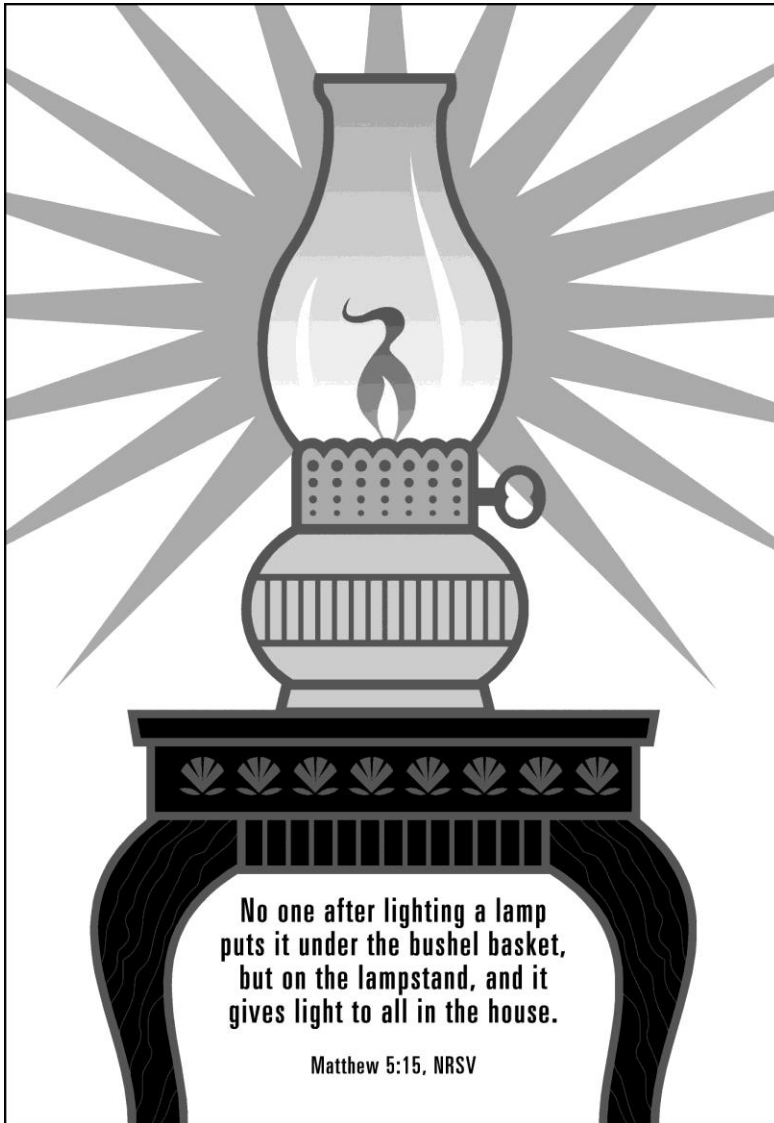


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



Identity Revealed: Jesus Calls You Salt and Light

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 8, 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



In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us that form and function are closely connected. That means that who we are influences what we do. When God called us to faith, he declared that we were something new: light, salt, his children. Jesus encourages us to be what God says we are as a way of blessing the world through us.

Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Organist: Tammy Paul; Soloist: Chris Williams

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

Welcome

Hymn

854 Church of God, Elect and Glorious

Stand

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

Amen.

Confession

CW 189

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

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 T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Glory to God in the Highest

CW 191

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of ten staves of music. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the final staff.

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.

Tune: William Gokelman; David Kauffman

Tune: © 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.

Almighty God, you sent your one and only Son as the Word of life for our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Help us believe what the Scriptures proclaim about him and do the things that are pleasing in your sight; 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

Exodus 19:1–8a

God made something special out of Israel, a nation of slaves.

¹In the third month after the Israelites had left the land of Egypt, on that same day of the month, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. ²After they set out from Rephidim and came to the Wilderness of Sinai, they camped in the wilderness. Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

³Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and to tell the people of Israel: ⁴‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you will carefully listen to my voice and keep my covenant, then you will be my special treasure out of all the nations, although the entire earth is mine. ⁶You will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites.”

⁷Moses went and summoned the elders of the people, and he set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸All the people answered together, “Everything that the LORD has said, we will do.” (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 5:16

Alleluia! Let your light shine before others,

that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 5:13–20

Jesus explains that his disciples are blessings to this dark, decaying world.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its flavor, how will it become salty again? Then it is no good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶In the same way let your light shine in people’s presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸Amen I tell you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter, or even part of a letter, will in any way pass away from the Law until everything is fulfilled. ¹⁹So whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰Indeed I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and experts in the law, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (EHV®)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Children’s Message

Hymn of the Day

630 Thy Strong Word

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

Special Prayers This Week

- † For Georgene Provost, whose health is declining.
- † For the family of Phyllis Price, who passed away on Thursday. Phyllis is the mother of Pam Williams.
- † For one of St. Paul's former teachers, Trisha Engelbrecht. Trisha's father passed away.
- † For Pastor Jeremiah Wallander, whom we called to serve as our second pastor.
- †

Prayer of the Church

Loving God and Lord, you created the universe that surrounds us and the globe on which we live. You control all things through your Son, who sits at your right hand in glory.

Comfort us with the promise of your eternal presence.

Give your Word power as it works in our hearts and minds. Clear away our confusion, and demolish our doubts. Send your Spirit to strengthen both our confidence in your promises and our desire to live according to your will.

Take away our love of sinning, and restore us each day by your grace.

The signs of the times warn us that the end of time is near. Protect us from scoffers who sneer at your truth. Spare us and Christians around the world from all forms of hate and persecution.

Give us courage to carry the cross with patience and joy.

Instill in the hearts of our children a desire to follow you as they prepare for future days. Help them distinguish between what is passing and what is eternal, between instant thrills and lasting joy. Encourage more young people to prepare for service in the public ministry of the gospel.

Mold us and move us to be good examples for our youth.

Hold in your care, Lord, those who are experiencing physical or emotional pain and all who are afflicted by disease or facing death. Pour out your compassion on the grieving, and comfort the mourners who miss someone they loved.

Move us to pray for these brothers and sisters and to help when we can.

Special prayers and intercession

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Whether we pray together or alone, you have promised to hear and answer us. Give us patience to accept your blessings in whatever way you send them. In your love and wisdom, prepare us for the day when you will take us to be with you forever.

Hear us for Jesus' sake. 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.



WELS Connection

MLC Congregational Partner Grant

Stand

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 give you peace.
Amen.

Hymn

697 May We Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill



Take Home Questions

Exodus 19:1-8

1. Before asking anything of Israel, the Lord reminds them of what he has already done (v. 4). For what reasons is it important for God's people to remember God's rescue before our responsibility?
2. God says, "Out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession." In what ways might this statement have shaped Israel's sense of worth while living among much larger and more powerful nations?
3. God's words in Exodus 19 sound very similar to what Peter later says about Christians in 1 Peter 2. Compare and contrast God's two-way covenant with Israel in the Old Testament (vv. 5,6) with the one-way covenant God makes with believers in the New Testament. (See Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15.)

1 Peter 2:9-12

4. Peter uses powerful identity language: chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's special possession. Compare and contrast each title/identity. Which of these stands out most to you and why?
5. In what ways does knowing who you are in Christ shape how you interact with people who do not share your faith?

Matthew 5:13-20

6. Jesus doesn't say, "Try to be salt and light," but "You **ARE** the salt of the earth... the light of the world." For what reasons is that distinction important?
7. In what ways can we guard against self-righteousness or pride as we live lives filled with good works?
8. Consider the different vocations you have in your life—spouse, parent, worker, student, neighbor, friend, etc. In what ways can you live an extraordinary life in these ordinary vocations?

News & Announcements



This Sunday's Bible Study: We Glory in Christ's Cross

Come to the Bible Study Room from 10:30-11:30 am

Ash Wednesday Is Feb 18

We are returning to two midweek services during Lent—4:00 and 6:30 pm. Our first midweek service is on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18. During these services, we will be looking at the prophecies of Zechariah that point to Jesus' passion and death. A meal will be served between the services (about 5:00-6:00 pm).

Help Serve a Lenten Meal

The Board of Fellowship is seeking groups to help serve meals on Wednesdays during Lent. A freewill offering is taken to cover the cost of the food, and any profit can go to your group's preferred ministry. There is a signup sheet on the Ministry Table.

Support Our Student

Today's WELS Connection video is about the Congregational Partner Grant program at Martin Luther College (MLC). We currently have one member, Emma Schroeder, attending MLC and training for the teaching ministry. If you would like to support this future called worker, you can give a special gift to St. Paul's for this grant program. Just note "MLC Grant" on your offering envelope.

NLHS Strategic Ministry Meeting at St. Paul's

Feb. 24

Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) is hosting an interactive evening of discussion and collaboration at St. Paul's designed to add your voice to their Strategic Ministry Plan. Together, we will reflect on where NLHS has been, consider where God may be leading them, and explore how we can TOGETHER train leaders by following Christ. Come on Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 6:00 - 7:30 pm for this important and exciting step forward.

Got Cabin Fever?

Feb. 15

Co-ed Adult Volleyball starts next Sunday. Join in some rousing and friendly competition from 2:00-5:00 pm. Bring a friend or bring your spouse. The group will meet every Sunday, except Easter, through early May.





Rooted in Faith. Active in Love.

March 6-8

Retreat into God's Word, reflect on his teachings, and rest in his care at the Pathways to Christ Women's Retreat in Oshkosh on March 6-8. See how an active faith brings joy and purpose to your daily walk. For more information, visit pathwaystochrist.org.

Teen Tubing Event in Wausau

Feb. 22

Teens in grades 8-12 are invited for tubing at Sylvan Hill in Wausau on Sunday, Feb. 22. Come between 1:30 and 3:00 pm. There will be a devotion and pizza at 3:00 pm in the Sylvan Hill Party Room. There will also be hot cocoa and snacks. You are welcome to bring a friend. The event wraps up at 5:00 pm. [Register](http://www.mysaintpeter.org/wels-youth-night) at www.mysaintpeter.org/wels-youth-night.

Volunteer for Easter for Kids

March 28

Help share the Easter message with children ages 3-10. Volunteer to help at Easter for Kids, which is on Saturday, March 28. We need both helpers and activity leaders. You can find signups on the Ministry Table or on our website under the Serve tab (ww.stpaulswr.org/serve).

Courage under Fire

Feb. 21

The Men of His Word Conference on Feb. 21 in Oshkosh, WI, is a day of worship, encouragement, and biblical teaching for men. This year's theme, "Courage Under Fire", reminds us that even in life's toughest moments God equips us through his Word to stand firm and lead well in our families, churches, and communities. Visit menofhisword.org

The Igloo Is Finished

Thank you to everyone who donated milk/water jugs to the preschool igloo build. That project is now complete, and the children love it. If you are saving jugs for us, please recycle them instead. Also, we no longer take ink/toner cartridges for recycling or pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Thank you for your past donations.

Call to Serve... Lunch?

Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) is seeking volunteers to cook and serve hot lunch once a month as a blessing to their students. Interested in serving? Contact Sarah Archer at sarcher@nlhs.org.

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday Service at 4:00 & 6:30 pm
- Feb. 19-20 No School - Teachers' Conference
- Feb. 24 NLHS Strategic Ministry Meeting at St. Paul's
- Feb. 28 Grade School Basketball Tournament at NLHS



Sunday	9:00 AM	Sunday Worship
	10:30 AM	Bible Study in the Bible Study Room
	10:30 AM	Sunday School (Grades 3K-5 th)
	11:30 AM	Foundations of the Christian Faith in the Bible Study Room
Monday	1:30 PM	Spiritual Health Group in the chapel at Wisc Rapids Health Services
	6:00 PM	Choir Practice in the balcony
	6:30 PM	Sisters on a Mission in the Resource Center
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
	6:30 PM	Stephen Ministers Peer Group in the Resource Center
Wednesday	8:45 AM	School Chapel Service
	6:00 PM	Bible & Brews in the Bible Study Room
	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	Sunday Worship
	10:30 AM	Bible Study in the Bible Study Room
	10:30 AM	Sunday School (Grades 3K-5 th)
	11:30 AM	Foundations of the Christian Faith in the Bible Study Room
	2:00 PM	Coed Volleyball in the Gym

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 194

Next Sunday

Theme: Identity Revealed:

Jesus Is the Son of God in Glory

Readings: Exodus 24:9-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21,

Matthew 17:1-9



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Feb. 18 at 4:00 & 6:30 PM

Supper served 5:00-6:00



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