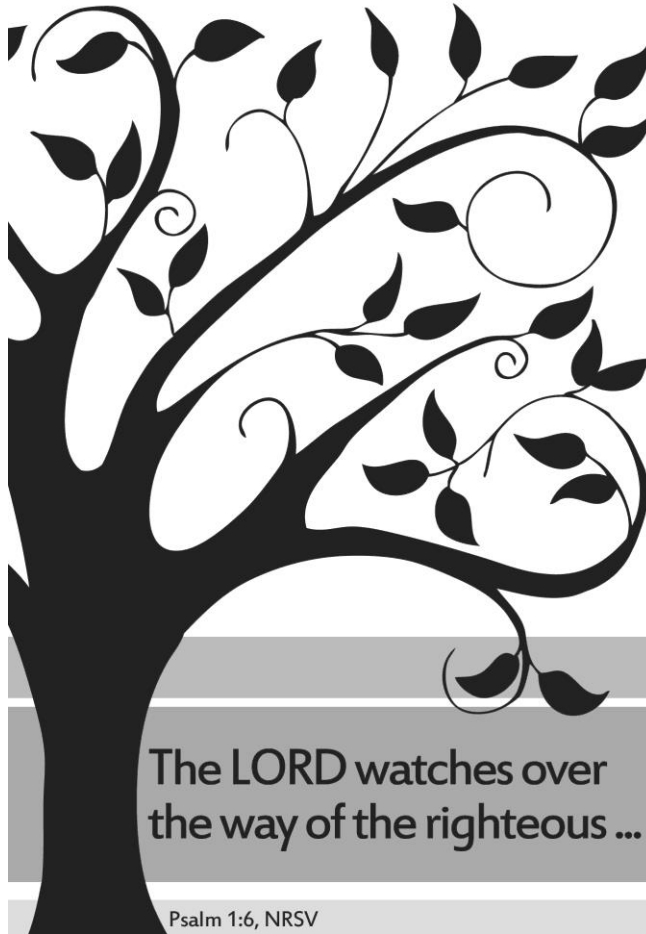


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



Epiphany Moments:  
Blessings Are Cursed; Curses Are Blessed  
*Sixth Sunday in Epiphany*

February 16, 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



*"This is good. That is bad."* We often think life is that simple. We believe we can assess a situation accurately determine if it is positive or negative. It's hubris. As Jesus gathered followers, he taught them that his kingdom runs exactly opposite to the principles and priorities of the world. Therefore, much that we think is good is bad, and vice-versa.

If we want to accurately see the world, we need to have this epiphany. That which the world considers a blessing can often be a curse. Things like success and wealth and health can lead us away from our God. We become so enamored with those blessings that we forget about the Blessor. Conversely, there are hidden blessings in what we would normally consider curses. When we fail, when we suffer, and when things don't go our way, it forces us to put our trust in God and for our souls to be satisfied in him. The reality is that perceived blessings can be cursed and perceived curses can be used for our blessing.

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, Destinee Fiecko

## 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: Setting Three

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*Setting Three begins on page 188 of the hymnal.*

## Welcome

## Hymn

838 *The Will of God Is Always Best*

*Stand*

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

**Amen.**

## Confession

CW 188

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  $\text{T}$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

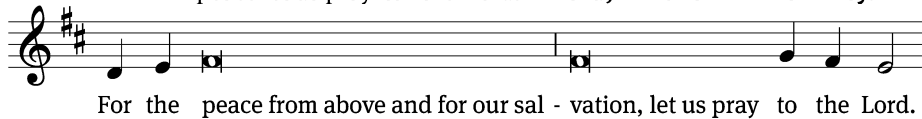
**Amen.**

# Lord, Have Mercy

CW 190



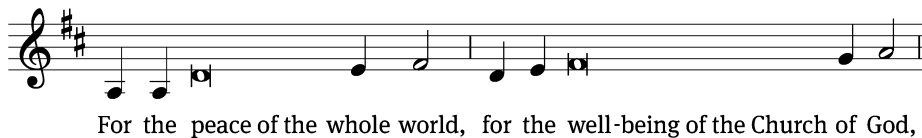
In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



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



**Lord, have mer - cy.**



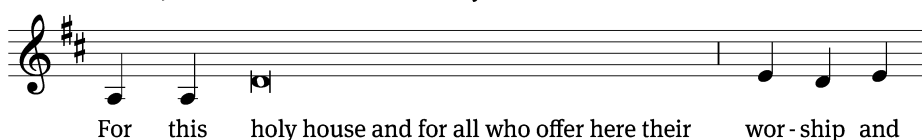
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



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



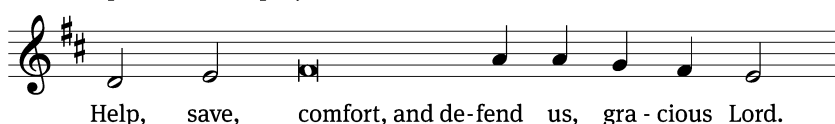
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



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.

O God of power and might, you know that we live in the midst of many great dangers, and in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Give us strength and protection to support us in all peril, and carry us through all temptations; 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

Jeremiah 17:5–8

A blessed life is not connected to outward circumstances like health or wealth. Rather, the one who is blessed is the one who has been given the gift of faith, whose trust is in the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>This is what the LORD says. Cursed is anyone who trusts in mankind, who seeks his strength from human flesh, and who turns his heart away from the LORD. <sup>6</sup>He will be like a juniper bush in the wasteland. He will not see good things when they come. He lives in a dry place in the wilderness, in a salty land where no one lives. <sup>7</sup>But blessed is anyone who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. <sup>8</sup>He will be like a tree planted by water. It sends out its roots to the stream. It does not fear the heat when it comes. Its leaves will remain green. It is not concerned about a time of drought. It does not stop producing fruit. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## Psalm of the Day

1A Blessed Are They

Even in weakness and suffering, we are blessed as we hope in the Lord.

Refrain

Bless - ed are they, bless - ed are  
they who hope in the LORD.

Tone

Blessed is the one who / does not walk  
in step with the / wicked  
**or stand in the way that / sinners take**  
**or sit in the company of / mockers,**  
but whose delight is in the law / of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law / day and night.  
**That person is like a tree planted by streams of / water,**  
**which yields its fruit in / season**  
and whose leaf does not / wither—  
whatever they do / prospers. **Refrain**

Not so the / wicked!

They are like chaff that the wind / blows away.

**Therefore the wicked will not stand in the / judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the / righteous. Refrain**

For the LORD watches over the way of the / righteous,

but the way of the wicked leads to de- / struction.

**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

2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

*Paul had some infirmity he initially viewed as a weakness. He came to see it as a blessing as it forced him to rely on God's strength.*

I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me, so that I would not become arrogant. <sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that he would take it away from me. <sup>9</sup>And he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will be glad to boast all the more in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may shelter me.

<sup>10</sup>That is why I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For whenever I am weak, then am I strong. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Stand

## Gospel Acclamation

Psalms 121:8



Refrain



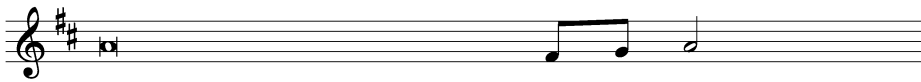
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



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



*Tone*



The LORD will watch over your coming and go - ing



both now and for - ev - er - more.

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## Gospel

Luke 6:17–26

*In one of his most famous sermons Jesus teaches that the good things we seek are found in places we would least expect.*

<sup>17</sup>He went down with them and stood on a level place with a large crowd of his disciples, and a large number of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, as well as from the coastal area of Tyre and Sidon. These people came to listen to him and to be healed of their diseases. <sup>18</sup>Those who were troubled by unclean spirits were also cured. <sup>19</sup>The whole crowd kept trying to touch him, because power was going out from him and healing them all.

<sup>20</sup>He lifted up his eyes to his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor, because yours is the kingdom of God.

<sup>21</sup>Blessed are you who hunger now, because you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup>Blessed are you whenever people hate you, and whenever they exclude and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man.

<sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day and leap for joy because of this: Your reward is great in heaven! The fact is, their fathers constantly did the same things to the prophets.

<sup>24</sup>But woe to you who are rich, because you are receiving your comfort now.

<sup>25</sup>Woe to you who are well fed now, because you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, because you will be mourning and weeping.

<sup>26</sup>Woe to you when all people speak well of you, because that is how their fathers constantly treated the false prophets.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Be seated*

## Children's Message

## Hymn of the Day

803 Day by Day

## 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**

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

Lord, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

*The final petition will end this way:*

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

**Amen.**

### **Special Prayers This Week**

- † John Batzer was placed on hospice care
- † For Tara Winecki, who we called to serve as a primary grade teacher
- † For Destinee Fiecko who holds a call to serve in Doral , FL
- †
- †
- †

## 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

### Questions for Examination

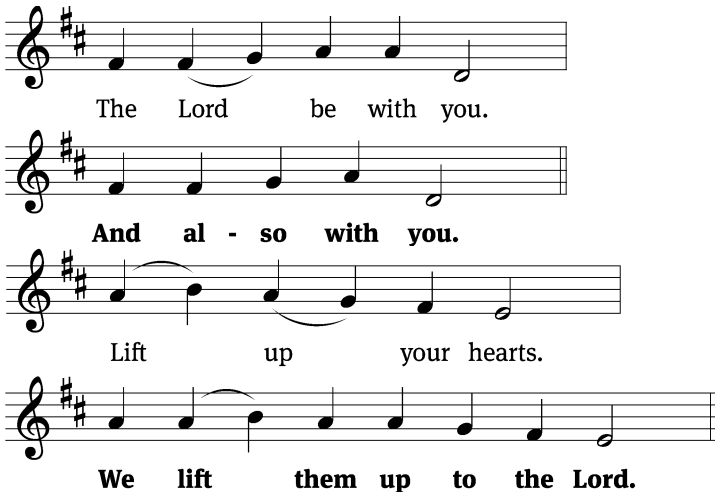
- † Do I believe that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness?
- † Do I believe that Jesus died on the cross to win forgiveness for me?
- † Do I believe that Jesus offers his true body and blood with the bread and wine in this sacrament?
- † Do I believe this sacrament strengthens my faith and strengthens 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

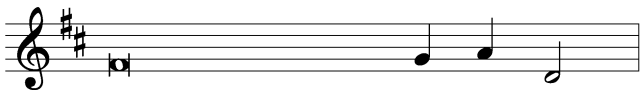


The Lord be with you.

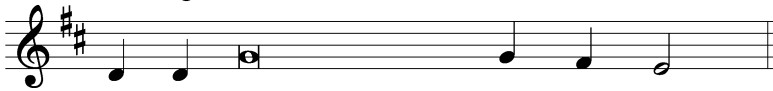
And al - so with you.

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.**

## **Words of Institution**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my  $\text{T}$  body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my  $\text{T}$  blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

## Lamb of God

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

816 *I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus*

*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 give you peace.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **Hymn**

*626 My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness*



# Take Home Questions

---

## Jeremiah 17:5-8

1. This reading sounds very much like the Psalm of the Day, Psalm 1. Read Psalm 1 and discuss the difference between those who trust human beings and those who trust in the Lord.
2. What would “trust[ing] in mankind” look like in our place, time, and culture? What would “trust[ing] in the LORD look like?

## 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

3. In what ways was Paul’s prayer really answered, even though his thorn was not taken away? (Consider Paul’s motivation to have the thorn removed.)
4. What paradox did Paul see at work in his life?
5. How do these verses answer someone who says, “If a Christian believes strongly enough, God will remove every problem”?

## Luke 6:17-26

6. Look at each characteristic of those who are blessed. What is the nature of their blessing?
7. How does Jesus’ declaration of blessings encourage suffering Christians to persevere?



# News & Announcements

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## **This Sunday's Bible Study Hour: 1 Peter**

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

## **School Open House on Tuesday**

Your child is not a test score. At St. Paul's, they have the opportunity to grow socially, academically, physically, and spiritually while remaining a kid - with three recesses a day. Find out what sets our school apart at the school open house this Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 3:30-5:00 pm. If you cannot make the open house, you can book a tour at our school website ([stpaulsrapids.com](http://stpaulsrapids.com)).

## **Imagine No Soap**

No way to wash your body, your dishes, your clothes. That is a reality for some people. Food stamps cannot be used to buy toothpaste, laundry detergent, or even toilet paper - items we find essential. That is why once a year communities across our state hold a special drive to collect hygiene products and cleaning supplies. Your donations will stay with local charities like FOCUS and The Family Center. The Hygiene Drive runs Feb. 23-Mar. 16. Look for the collection bins in the Welcome Center next week.

## **Co-ed Volleyball Begin This Sunday**

*Feb. 16*

Get ready to bump, set, spike. Join in some rousing and friendly competition at Co-ed Volleyball starting this Sunday, Feb. 16, 2:00-5:00 pm. Bring a friend or bring your spouse. The group will meet every Sunday (except Easter) through early May.

## **Only One Midweek Lenten Service This Year**

Ash Wednesday is March 5. This year we are trying a new schedule for our midweek worship and fellowship meal. We will have only one worship service at 5:00 pm with a meal to follow at 5:45 pm. With so many things vying for time and pulling groups apart, we hope this change will help us as a congregation come together as one family of believers at the foot of the cross.



## Help Get the Word Out: Easter for Kids

April 12

Please check your mailslot for flyers on Easter for Kids, which will be held on April 12. Please share these flyers with families in your neighborhood, co-workers, or others you know who have children. There are also packets of posters on the Ministry Table. These can be hung at the businesses listed on the cover sheet. Your help is appreciated.

## Over 20% of Goal

So far we have given \$27,161 to pay down the principal on our mortgage. This is over 20% of our goal to raise \$125,000 in 125 days. Let's keep that momentum going. You can find special offering envelopes in the Welcome Center. Your gifts can go in the special drop box, or use your normal means of making a donation. (Note: This should be an extra gift above and beyond your normal giving.) The campaign continues through May 31.

## Help with After School Care

We are seeking people to help with after school care from 3:30-4:30 pm on school days. This can be paid or volunteer. Help is needed five days a week, but if you can only help two or three days a week we may be able to work something out. Duties might include supervising kids in the gym, on the playground, or during quieter activities. Contact Mrs. Jane Petoskey for more information (616-534-5634).

## Little Caesars' Orders Due Monday

If you would like to order a pizza kit from the school's Little Caesars fundraiser, be sure to submit your order by Monday, Feb. 17. Visit [PizzaKit.com](http://PizzaKit.com). Browse options under the Products tab / View All. When you are ready to order, go to Shop (under the Products tab) and enter Fundraiser ID: 445647. If you prefer paper forms, you can add your order to the form on the Ministry Table. Delivery is expected in early March.

## Use Scrip for Everyday Purchases

St. Paul's School Scrip program gives you an easy way to support Christian education without spending extra money. Purchase gift cards through the scrip program and use them to pay for your regular purchases. In January, purchases like this earned \$367.58 for our school's tuition assistant fund to help families afford Christian education at St. Paul's. Learn more at the scrip table.

## Upcoming Events

- Feb. 18 School Open House
- Feb. 23 Hygiene Drive Begins
- Mar. 5 Ash Wednesday Service at 5:00 pm

Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	2:00 PM	<b>Co-ed Volleyball in the gym</b>
Monday	1:30 PM	Spiritual Health Group at the chapel of WR Health Services
	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
	3:30 PM	<b>School Open House</b>
	4:30 PM	PTO Meeting in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Leadership Council in the Resource Center
Wednesday	8:35 AM	Principal to Parent Bible Study in the Welcome Center
	8:55 AM	School Chapel Service
	5:30 PM	Handbell Practice in the balcony
	6:30 PM	Catechism Class in the Bible Study Room
	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
	1:00 PM	Newsletter Assembly in the Volunteer Workroom
	6:00 PM	Bible & Brews at B's Tap House
Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	2:00 PM	Co-ed Volleyball in the gym

## Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 184

## Next Sunday

Theme: Love Your Enemies, Overcoming Evil with Good

Readings: Genesis 45:3-15; Romans 12:14-21; Luke 6:27-38





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

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