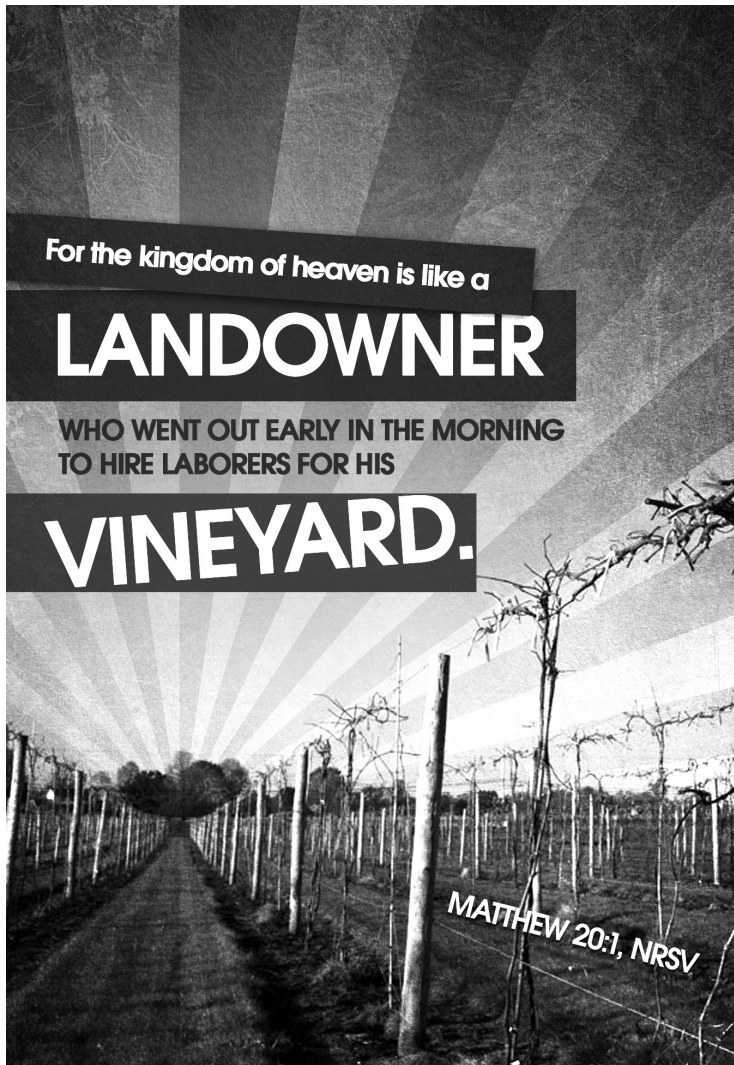


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



DIFFICULT PARABLES:
THE LAST WILL BE FIRST AND THE FIRST WILL BE
LAST

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2020

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. For worshippers joining us in person, we are happy you are here. If you have any questions, just ask an usher or other volunteer.

We would love to see just what kind of impact our worship services are making. Please fill out our online Connect Card to let us know where you're worshipping from and how we might continue to serve you. You can find a link at www.stpaulswr.org/watch. You can also contact us via email or phone (churchoffice@stpaulswr.org or 715-421-3634) with any questions or prayer requests.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES DURING THE PANDEMIC

- † **Please practice social distancing whenever possible.** Keep close personal interactions to a minimum, especially when inside the building. If you feel uncomfortable with the number of people in the sanctuary, feel free to worship from the Welcome Center. Please refrain from shaking hands or hugging.
- † **Please practice good hygiene.** Masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and kleenex are available in the Welcome Center. Our restrooms are located along the hallway on west side of the worship space.
- † **Large print service folders, hearing devices, and printouts of the hymns** are available on the Information Booth in the Welcome Center, if you need them.
- † **Offering plates and friendship registers will not be distributed.** Your offering and Connect Card can be placed in the slots on the top of the Information Booth in the Welcome Center. If you prefer, you can give electronically or fill out the online Connect Card, visit our website www.stpaulswr.org.
- † **The children's quiet activity bags have been removed.** However, children's bulletins can be picked up at the Information Booth in the Welcome Center. If your children become fussy, you can quiet them in the Welcome Center. The Children's Message will still take place. However, the children will not be invited forward. Please keep them with you in your pew.

† **Please wait for the ushers to dismiss you.** Following post-service announcements, pastor(s) will leave down the side aisles and head outside to greet you. Ushers will dismiss worshipers from the back moving forward; and down the center aisle, as well as the side aisles. This is to minimize personal contact. Please take this service folder with you and dispose of it properly.

SERVICE NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY

Through today's Bible readings, we are called to ponder whether or not God is fair. By human standards, he is most certainly not fair, as we hear in the Verse of the Day. But that's actually not a problem; because God's unfairness results in incalculable grace for us and for so many others who would otherwise be lost and condemned creatures.

The liturgical color* for this Sunday is green, which represents our growing faith in God and knowledge of God as we gather around his means of grace.

Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using the questions below.



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 not, 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.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Scripture quotations marked (NIV84®) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Hymns and liturgy marked CW can be found in the red hymnals in the pew racks, Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. Common Service. Words and Music. © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net A-719903

* The liturgical color is found on the pastor's stole and the piece of cloth hanging from the pulpit.

THE COMMON SERVICE

The common service is a version of the historic liturgy of the Christian church.

WELCOME

OPENING SONG

Salvation Unto us Has Come | CW 390 (1-5)

Verse 1-All; 2-Pastors; 3-Women; 4-Men; 5-All

Please stand.

INVOCATION

Minister (M): In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation (C): Amen.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 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 Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS - CW p.16

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

God is gracious and merciful. He forgives us for Christ's sake. This assures us that we can receive the rest of his gifts through the service and return thanks for those gifts, having been set free from the burden of sin.

C: ♪ Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
We glorify you, we give thanks to you, for your great glory,
O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
You take away the sin of the world; receive our prayer.
You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.
For you only are holy; you only are the Lord.
You only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
Are most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen. ♪

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.
Lord God, you call us to work in your kingdom and leave no one standing idle.
Help us to order our lives by your wisdom and to serve you in willing obedience;
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated.

The Word

FIRST LESSON

Jonah 3:10-4:11

God confronts Jonah when he becomes angry over God's mercy.

After the reading, the announcement is made:

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 115| CWS
Read responsively*

All: Not unto us, O Lord, but to your name be the glory.

M: Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.

**C: Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?"
Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.**

M: The LORD remembers us and will bless us:
He will bless the house of Israel,

**C: he will bless those who fear the LORD—
small and great alike.**

All: Not unto us, O Lord, but to your name be the glory.

M: May the LORD make you increase,
both you and your children.

**C: May you be blessed by the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.**

M: The highest heavens belong to the LORD,
but the earth he has given to man.

**C: It is not the dead who praise the LORD,
it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore.**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

All: Not unto us, O Lord, but to your name be the glory.

*Notice the phrases
that talk about
God's goodness
not being based on
fairness, but on his
mercy.*

SECOND LESSON

Romans 9:6-16

God will show mercy to whom he will show mercy.

After the reading, the announcement is made:

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

VERSE OF THE DAY

M: Alleluia! Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways,

C: **and my plans are higher than your plans. Alleluia!** (*Isaiah 55:9*)

Please stand.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 20:1-16

God's generosity is not based on what we think is fair.

After the Gospel, the announcement is made:

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

CONFESSION OF FAITH

The 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 fully 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

God Moves in a Mysterious Way | CW 420

Verse 1-Pastors; 2-Women; 3-Men; 4-All

SERMON - GOD IS NOT FAIR

Please stand.

RESPONSE

| CW p.20

♪ **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.
Amen.** ♪

Be seated.

OFFERING

St. Paul's members offer their first and their best to their Savior in order to support the sharing of the Gospel through our church and our worldwide church body, the WELS. Our guests do not need to feel obligated to participate. 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

Please stand.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: O Lord, our God, you are wise and powerful, good and gracious. Your mercies are new every morning. Each day you open your hand and provide for the needs of your children on earth.

C: **We praise you for every grace and blessing.**

M: Strengthen your Church in all the world. Let your comforting message of salvation in Christ Jesus be proclaimed to troubled souls everywhere.

C: **Use our ministries and offerings to extend your healing and your hope.**

M: We bring our requests for various structures of our society. Bless our national, state, and local governments.

C: **Grant us civil servants who are worthy of honor and respect.**

In the era of the Reformation, announcements about births, deaths, and marriages were made after the sermon. Then prayers were offered. This is why the Prayer of the Church is often placed here in the service.

- M: Grant prosperity to our businesses and industries. Give employers a sense of fairness toward their workers, and employees a feeling of joy and pride in their workmanship.
- C: Help us find satisfaction in all work well done.**
- M: Invigorate the schools of our land. Give success to every effort that helps students read, think, and communicate in ways that will promote an informed and responsible citizenry. Arouse curious minds to discover the wonders of your created order.
- C: Give us teachers and students who pursue excellence.**
- M: Strengthen the families of our country. Give fathers and mothers a renewed commitment to be good parents. Give children and young people the wisdom to regard their parents as your representatives.
- C: Lead us to love one another as you have loved us.**
Special prayers and intercessions
- M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.
Silent prayer.
- M: Gracious Father, we pray boldly as Jesus taught, with the confidence that you will hear and with the faith that you will respond for our welfare.
- C: 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.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

PREFACE

| CW p. 21

- M: The Lord be with you.
- C: And also with you.**
- M: Lift up your hearts.
- C: We lift them up unto the Lord.**
- P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.
- C: It is good and right so to do.**

M: 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 promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock till he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

C: ♪ **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of heavenly hosts:** | CW p. 22
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he, blessed is he, blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. ♪

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: 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 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 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."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always. | CW p.23

C: ♪ **Amen.**

C: ♪ **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.
Amen. ♪

Please be seated and await the direction of the ushers.

The communicant members of our congregation will be invited to receive the Lord's Supper. Because the Bible has convinced us that Jesus' body and blood are present in the sacrament, and that receiving the sacrament together is a public statement of oneness in our beliefs and commitment, we ask our guests to speak with the pastor prior to communing. We don't want to be presumptuous and put you in the position of stating your agreement with our convictions before we've had an opportunity to explain and prove them from Scripture. The pastor would be happy to explore our convictions with you, on the basis of God's Word, so that you might commune with us in the future!

THE DISTRIBUTION

Please stand.

THANKSGIVING

| CW p.24

C: ♪ Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before
the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles
and the glory of your people Israel. ♪

M: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: And his mercy endures forever.

M: Let us pray together.

C: 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 in 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.

M: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

CLOSING HYMN

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me | CW 389

Verse 1-All; 2-Men; 3-Women; 4-All



This hymn appeared in England in 1776, alongside an article stating that the national debt was so large that the government would never be able to pay it off. The article also calculated the number of sins a person might commit from birth to age 80. At the rate of one sin per second, the debt would stand at 2.5 billion sins. Only Jesus' blood can pay a debt like this; only God could be that generous.

TAKE HOME QUESTIONS

1. It's easy to point out the sin of Jonah being angry over God's mercy. What are some examples of how we might get angry over God's decisions to bless or forgive someone in our lives?
2. For what reasons is it downright silly to get upset over God's generosity and mercy?
3. Read all of Romans 9. While the doctrine of election is difficult for us to fully understand from our human perspective, what words or phrases in this chapter help you see things from God's perspective?
4. Jesus reverses the fortunes of many with his words, "The last will be first, and the first, last." Where else in Scripture does this same kind of reversal happen? What are the effects of such reversals?

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



THIS SUNDAY'S BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah – The Book of Immanuel (Chapters 7-12)
Join us in the cafeteria from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.



SUNDAY SCHOOL GOES VIRTUAL

Sept. 13

Sunday School begins next Sunday in a different format. The lessons will be shown on Youtube, so families can watch them at home. Printed student lessons that will be mailed directly to families at no charge. If you haven't received a letter from us about this, be sure to contact Kent Schroeder (715-421-4202 or knks@wctc.net) to register your child.

BIBLE COURSE BEGINS ON WEDNESDAY

Sept. 9 | 6:30PM

Pastor Plagenz will lead you through a fourteen-week course on Christian doctrine, entitled *People Close to God* on Wednesday evenings at 6:30PM. The course is broken down into three sections: Four Key Concepts, Faith-Builders, and Growing in Grace. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come and be refreshed in the foundations of our faith. For more information or to find out about an online option, contact Pastor Plagenz at pastorplagenz@stpaulswr.org or 715-421-3634 ext. 1122.

ANOTHER STUDY OPTION

Sept. 16 | 6:30PM

Do you prefer to focus on a book of the bible rather than doing a topical study? Then come for the Bible Book Group on Wednesdays at 6:30-8:00PM. After a summer break, the group is looking at Judges and Ruth and then moving to the New Testament books of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. They use the *People's Bible Commentary* as a resource. For more information, contact Tom Reitz at retline76@gmail.com or 715-323-2785.

DISCOUNTED READS

Subscribe to *Forward in Christ* magazine for real faith stories, enriching discussions, and biblical insights. See God at work in all corners of our synod. Get this monthly magazine at the discounted price of \$13.50/year by subscribing through the church.

Meditations is an inspiring, personal devotional booklet of Scripture-based, soul-searching studies that will inspire you to trust in God and live out the Gospel. The booklet is placed in your church mailslot each quarter for the discounted price of \$15.50/year. To subscribe, contact the church office.

APPLES, APPLES, APPLES

It will soon be time to make those delicious apple pies for the Willing Workers bake sale in early November. We need your donations of apples NOW and throughout the rest of the picking season. Please bring in your apples to the kitchen anytime the building is open and clearly mark as apples. Also, please consider donating some time and effort to the pie making process later in September and in October. We need a large crew to wash, peel and cut apples, mix pie ingredients, make crusts, and package for freezing. Watch for sign up opportunities online and at church as work days are posted. To learn more about the bake sale and other events, come to the Willing Workers meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 6:30PM in the cafeteria. (Note: This is a date change from what was printed in the monthly newsletter.)

WILDCAT OPEN IS ON

Sept. 20 | 1:00PM

Northland Lutheran High School's (NLHS) annual golf outing, the Wildcat Open, is take place on Saturday, Sept. 20 at Pine Valley Golf Course in Marathon. This fundraiser is a four-person scramble with a shotgun start. Singles, doubles and triples are welcome. The entry fee includes 18 holes of golf, cart, food and prizes, and all proceed benefit Northland's athletics and engineering programs. For more information, visit nlhs.org.

LITTLE LAMB'S CHILD CARE - HELP NEEDED

Little Lambs is seeking another person to help with before and after school care, morning 6:30-8:30AM and afternoon 3:30-5:30PM. This is a paid position. You would be watching children that are either 3-5 years old or 6 years and older - supervising outdoor play, games, some homework help if needed. It would not be every day and could be flexible with your schedule. Even one or two days a week would be helpful. If this sounds like something you could do please contact Carole Melso or Kellie Jensen at littlelambs@stpaulswr.org or 715-421-3634 ext. 1119.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING

Small efforts add up. By simply using the smile.amazon.com site rather than the regular amazon site, members earned \$64.01 for our church between April 1 and June 30, 2020. Plus people saving their Coke caps and carton codes earned our school \$28.65. Thank you to everyone who made the effort to help.

SUNDAY	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Catechism Class
	10:30 AM	Worship
MONDAY	11:00 AM	Worship for at-risk individuals
TUESDAY	6:45 AM	Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
WEDNESDAY	8:55 AM	Chapel Service
	6:00 PM	Contemporary Choir Practice
	6:30 PM	People Close to God Class
THURSDAY	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
SUNDAY	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Catechism Class
	10:30 AM	Worship

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 13 Virtual Sunday School Begins
- Sept. 15 Willing Workers
- Sept. 16 Bible Book Group Begins
- Sept. 20 NLHS Wildcat Open

OFFERING REPORT

Last Week's Attendance:

From July 1, 2020 to August 28, 2020

Actual ministry income: \$145,622

Actual cost of ministry: \$168,135

Mortgage balance: \$1,367,1471



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