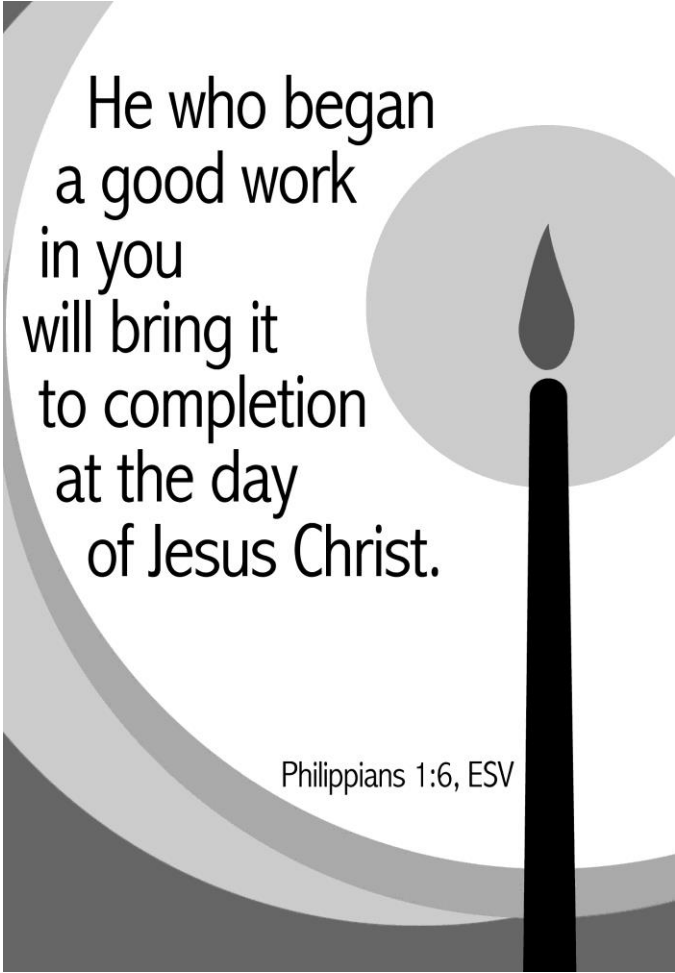


WELCOME TO WORSHIP!



He who began
a good work
in you
will bring it
to completion
at the day
of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6, ESV

A Real Christmas Is Rooted
in Repentance
Second Sunday in Advent

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

December 8, 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



The closer we get to Christmas, the greater the pressure. There is so much work to be done! We want our houses to look good for out-of-town guests. We want to impress people with the thoughtfulness of our gifts. What a welcome relief, therefore, to hear what is required to really be ready for Christmas: only repentance. You see, repentance is the opposite of work. It is the candid and honest admission of our sin combined with the joyful trust that everything needed to bring us close to God has already been done by Christ.

At this frenetic time of year, the call to repent is not another demand to do something more. It is gracious invitation to set down our work to make way for Christ's work. Rooted in that repentant rest, we can fully enjoy a real Christmas.

Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Accompanist Kristi Perry

Acknowledgements

Setting One 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 One

After the gathering rite, the service continues with The Word on page 160 of the hymnal.

Welcome

Hymn

308 *There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying*

Stand

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

Amen.

Confession

God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

James 4:6,10

Dear friends, the season of Advent is a time of preparation as we await Christ's second coming on the Last Day. We prepare our hearts to meet him as we humbly seek his forgiveness.

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

If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness; therefore, you are feared.

Psalms 130:3,4

Response

956 Holy Is Your Name (sts. 1,2)



1 My _____ soul is filled with joy as I
2 I am low - ly as a child, but I



sing to God, my Sav - ior. You have looked up - on your
know from this day for - ward that my name will be re -



ser - vant, you have vis - it - ed your peo - ple.
mem - bered, and the world will call me bless - ed.

Refrain



And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -



a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the



peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt.. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

Absolution

God's promise to Abraham and his descendants was fulfilled in the coming of his Son. Jesus Christ humbled himself by submitting to God's law. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross. God promises to lift up the humble and fill the hungry with good things because of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,
so that we through his poverty might become rich.**

2 Corinthians 8:9

Even as we await Christ's second coming, he comes to us here and now in the words he gives his messengers to speak: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Response

956 Holy Is Your Name (sts. 3,4)



3 I pro - claim your pow'r, O God! You work
4 To the hun - gry you give food, send the



won - ders for your ser - vants; you have scat - tered the proud -
rich a - way with noth - ing. In your mer - cy you are

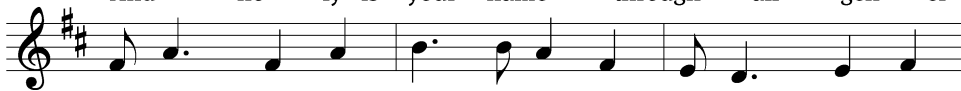


heart - ed, you have lift - ed up the low - ly.
mind - ful of the peo - ple you have cho - sen.

Refrain



And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -



a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the



peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt.. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light two Advent candles, remembering Jesus, who came in history. He came into a world of sin and death.

We remember Jesus, who came as the promised Messiah. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord.

We hear his call to repent.

We light two Advent candles as a sign of our repentance and desire for renewal.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blest.

While the candles are being lit, the congregation sings:

Hymn

956 Holy Is Your Name (st. 5)

5 In your love you now ful - fill all you
prom - ised to your peo - ple. I will praise you, God, my
Sav - ior, ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy.
Refrain
And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -
a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the
peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt.. Tune: Scottish. Text and tune: Public domain

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming, give us strength in our conflicts, and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; 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

Malachi 3:1–7b

Through God's Word and the messengers who proclaim it, the Lord encourages his people to return to him in humble repentance.

¹Look! I am sending my messenger! He will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord, whom you are seeking, will come to his temple! The Messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight, will surely come, says the LORD of Armies.

²But who can endure the day when he comes? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like launderers' bleach! ³He will be seated like a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and like silver. They will belong to the LORD and bring him an offering in righteousness.

⁴Judah and Jerusalem's offerings will be pleasing to the LORD as they were in the days of old, in years long ago. ⁵I will approach you to judge you. I will be quick to give testimony against those who practice occult arts, those who commit adultery, those who swear false oaths, those who cheat workers out of their wages, those who wrong a widow and a fatherless child, those who turn away a resident alien—all those who do not fear me, says the LORD of Armies.

⁶Certainly I, the LORD, do not change. That is why you, sons of Jacob, have not come to an end. ⁷Since the days of your fathers, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. "Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of Armies. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

66A Let All the Earth Cry Out to the Lord

We joyfully praise God for his saving activity in our lives, beginning with the repentance he works in our hearts

*The pastor will sing the first refrain; then the congregation will repeat the refrain.
Thereafter, the pastor will sing the verses, and the congregation the refrains.*

Refrain

Let all the earth cry out to the
Lord, cry out to the Lord with joy!

- 1 Sing to the Lord, all you on earth,
sing praise to the grandeur of God;
proclaim his glorious name! (Refrain)

2 Let the whole world worship and sing,
acclaiming his wonderful deeds;
the might of God is at hand! (Refrain)

3 Listen now, all you who trust in the Lord,
our God has done great things for us,
answered our prayers with his kindness. (Refrain)

Tune: Steven C. Warner © 1984 Steven C. Warner Published by OCP. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 719903

Second Reading

Philippians 1:3–11

God began his good work in us at our baptism, empowering us to love, to demonstrate discernment, and to produce fruits of repentance.

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴Every time I pray for all of you, I always pray with joy, ⁵because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am convinced of this very thing: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷I am equally convinced that it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, for both in my chains and in my defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all share in this grace with me. ⁸Yes, God is my witness of how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹And I pray that your love may still increase more and more in knowledge and every insight. ¹⁰This will result in your approval of the things that really matter, so that you will be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 3:4,6



Refrain



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

**Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.
And all people will see God's salvation. (Refrain)**

Tune: © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 719903

Gospel

Luke 3:1–6

John the Baptist prepared people to meet their Savior by preaching a message of repentance and forgiveness.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene— ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. ³He went into the whole region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴Just as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

“Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth.

⁶And everyone will see the salvation of God.” (EHV®)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Children's Message

Hymn of the Day

316 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**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.**

**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.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Gracious Lord, you sent your Son into our world to destroy the power of Satan and restore the human race as your children and heirs. Work in us during this Advent season so that we may rejoice in the coming of our Savior and long for his coming again.

Make us eager to receive the King who comes to save us.

Use the preaching of your holy law to rid us of all delusions that we can gain your love with our own efforts. Move us to realize how hopeless we are because of sin and to feel sorrow for what we have done wrong.

Lead us to be honest about our sinful status in your sight.

Lift up our hearts to see the King who comes to save. Reveal to us his willingness to take on our human form and stand in our place. Show us the power he extends in his Word and sacraments to make us your children and keep us in faith. Thrill us with his promise to come and take us to our eternal home to live with you forever.

Open our eyes to see and believe the wonders of the Savior's love.

As we live with Christ and trust in him, move us to turn away from sin day after day with the strength your Holy Spirit provides. When we fall, forgive us and renew us to love and serve you and all people.

Empower us and guide us to walk with Christ by faith.

Protect us from the distractions that come at this time of the year. Even in gift-giving and celebrating, keep our hearts focused on Christ and his forgiving love.

Give us joy at his coming at Christmas, his coming in the gospel, and his coming again.

Move us to share with others the most important gift of this season, the truth about Jesus. Even in busy times lead us to pray for those whose joy is diminished because of sickness, pain, or loss. Give us opportunities to provide help to those in need.
May others see the love of Christ in our words and actions.

Special prayers and intercession

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Loving Lord, work in us during this Advent season so that our joy may be genuine and may rest in the promises of the King who comes to save.

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Special Prayers This Week

- † For Tom Blaes acquaintance, Gloria Mahlman, who has been moved to hospice care.
- † For Shannon McFarlin-Wise’s friends, the Milligan family who are going through spiritual difficulties.
- † For our 1st grade teacher, Mrs. Michelle Korth, who received a call to teach at Trinity in Marshfield.
- †
- †
- †
- †

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

WELS 175th Anniversary

Hymn

312 Comfort, Comfort All My People

Stand

Prayer

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.

Amen.

Be seated

Hymn

310 Arise, O Christian People (sts. 3,4)



Take Home Questions

Malachi 3:1-7b

1. Malachi compares the Messiah and his work to a refiner's fire and a launderer's bleach in verse 2. In what ways do these pictures explain what Jesus' ministry and the kingdom of God, which that ministry would establish, was all about?
2. Verse 5 lists some specific sins that were common throughout Israel in Malachi's time. In what ways does this verse prick your own conscience? If not these sins, how else does God's Word expose sin in your life?

Philippians 1:3-11

3. After God fills our hearts with repentance, in what ways does the gospel affect the lives of Christians?
4. Sometimes we separate the heart and the mind. We view the mind as "knowing" things and the heart as "feeling" things. In what ways does Paul show that knowledge and feelings, specifically love, are joined together?

Luke 3:1-6

5. For what reasons might Luke have recorded this catalog of rulers in verses 1 and 2? In what ways does this provide context and contrast with what follows?
6. In what ways does the "road-making" work of John the Baptist prophesied by Isaiah take place in our hearts today?

News & Announcements



This Sunday's Bible Study Hour:

1 Peter 2:21-25

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

Assist with Scheduling Photo Sessions

Volunteers are needed to help book photo sessions for our church directory. This might involve scheduling appointments before or after worship and/or calling members to help them book a timeslot over the phone. This help is needed over the next several weeks until early February, so if you can take even one shift it would be appreciated. To volunteer, see the sign-up sheet on the Ministry Table or contact Judy Stensberg in the office (715-421-3634).

Join Us for Supper

Dec. 11 | 4:45-6:00 pm

This Wednesday's fellowship meal will be served by the Stephen Ministers. They plan to have a baked potato and salad bar. The meal is served from 4:45 to 6:00 pm, between the midweek services. Your donation of cookies or bars is appreciated.

Are You In?

We are doing a new church directory and want to include everyone in our congregation. It will be a historical record of who were members when we celebrated our 125th anniversary. Professional photographers will be here Feb. 6-8 & 10-12. There is no cost to you, and you will receive a free 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 for participating. To book your photo session, use the QR code, visit <https://book.usesession.com/s/MotFamuJJ->, use the link on our website, or call the church office.



Christmas Concert at NLHS

Some students from St. Paul's will be part of the Christmas Concert at Northland Lutheran High School (NLHS) next Sunday, Dec. 15 at 3:00 pm. Both grade school and high school bands will perform, along with the NLHS choirs. The grade school band is made up of students from Lutheran schools throughout central Wisconsin.

Scrip Deadline Approaching

Dec. 15

Next Sunday, Dec. 15 is the last day to order physical scrip cards and receive them before Christmas. You will still be able to order online to print ecards to give as gifts.

Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School for (3K-5th grade)
	10:30 AM	Worship
Monday	4:30 PM	Choir Practice in the Balcony
	6:30 PM	Sisters on a Mission
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 Welcome Center
Wednesday	8:30 PM	Principal to Parent Bible Study
	8:55 PM	School Chapel Service
	4:00 PM	Midweek Advent Service
	4:45 PM	Fellowship Meal
	6:30 PM	Catechism Class in the Bible Study Room
	6:30 PM	Midweek Advent Service
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	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	3:00 PM	Christmas Concert at Northland Lutheran High School

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 194

Next Sunday

Theme: A Real Christmas Results In Great Joy

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-17; Philippians 4:4-7;

Luke 3:7-18

Upcoming Events

Dec. 21 School Christmas Service at 4:00 pm

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 pm

Dec. 25 Christmas Day Service at 9:30 am

Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Service at 6:30 pm

CHRISTMAS AT THE SEMINARY



Sun, Dec. 8 at 3:00 pm

Watch and listen at
vimeo.com/wslslive.



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