



**The Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 25, 2026**

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Grant Park, IL

Order of Service: Service of Word and Prayer (bulletin)

Theme: Identity Revealed: Jesus is the Light

The prophet Isaiah vividly described humanity as “people walking in darkness.” Then he foretold that a light would shine on them. Enveloped by sin, suffering, and death, we find our minds and hearts clouded. But Jesus is revealed as the promised light. He shines his light by preaching repentance and the good news of the kingdom. Our Savior is the Light of the world, and we reflect his light onto everyone around us.

Prayer upon entering church: Lord, we are born in the darkness of sin. You have called us out of the darkness and into the wonderful light of your salvation. Help us live as children of the light and shine forth the light of your love in our sin darkened world. Amen.

Opening hymn: O Trinity, Most Blessed Light (CW 792)

Stand

I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!
Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

Confession

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 + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Show us your unfailing love, Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

The glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Almighty God, grant to your Church the Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes from above. Let nothing hinder your Word from being freely proclaimed to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that we may serve you in steadfast faith and confess your name as long as we live; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

Readings: Isaiah 8:19-9:4 – The prophet foretold that people walking in darkness would see a great light.

When they tell you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists, who whisper and mutter," shouldn't a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If people do not speak according to this word, there will be no dawn for them. They will pass through the land, distressed and starving, but when this takes place and they are starving, they will be frustrated, and they will curse their king and their God. They will turn their faces upward, and then they will look down to the ground, but I tell you, they will see only distress, darkness, and the gloom that brings anguish. They will be banished into thick darkness.

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for the land that was in anguish. In former times, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will cause it to be glorious, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. The people walking

in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy. They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time, like the celebration when people divide the plunder. For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them. You have broken the bar on their shoulders and the rod of their oppressor, as you did in the day of Midian.

1 John 2:3-11 – God’s children walk in the light of Christ by living in love for God and for one another.

This is how we know that we have known him: if we keep his commands. The one who says, “I know him,” but does not keep his commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. If anyone keeps God’s word, the love of God is truly made complete in him. This is how we know that we are in him: The one who says he remains in him should walk as Jesus walked.

Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one that you have had since the beginning. The old command is the message you heard. At the same time, the command I am writing is new—it is true in Jesus and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is still in the darkness. The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and nothing causes him to stumble. The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Hymn of the Day: O Christ, Our True and Only Light (CW 904)

Matthew 4:12-23 – Jesus preached the light of the gospel to a world in the darkness of unbelief.

When Jesus heard that John was put in prison, he withdrew into Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. He did this to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and on those dwelling in the region and the shadow of death a light has dawned. From that time, Jesus began to preach: “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near.”

As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his

brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Sermon: The Light Shines in the Darkness (Matthew 4:12-23)

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

Offering: We give our gifts to the Lord and sing "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" (CW 713 vs. 1) in response to our offerings.

Stand

Prayer

Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy;

in your faithfulness and righteousness, come to my relief.

Spare us, Lord, from the lies of the devil and the attacks of our conscience. Comfort and save us in your patient compassion.

Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Guide us, Lord, to the wisdom of your Word and the power of your promises. Take away our

confusion and doubt.

Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Hear us, Lord, when we come to you in prayer. Make us confident to take you at your word and to follow you in faith.

Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Empower us, Lord, to walk in your ways and live in your truth. Fill us with your love, that we may love you and one another.

Have mercy on us, Jesus.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you sent your Son to proclaim your kingdom and teach with authority. Anoint us with the power of your Spirit that we too may bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Time of Christmas

Almighty God, you gave your only Son to take on our humanity and to dwell among us. Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children in Baptism, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

Blessing

The almighty and merciful Lord—the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless us and keep us.

Amen.

Closing hymn: Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness (CW 517)

Announcements

Welcome in Jesus' name to any and all guests and visitors here with us today. It is a joy to be able to worship with you. Help us to remember your visit by signing our guest book. Ask an usher if you need help finding the book. If you would like more information about our church please speak with pastor after church. If you need a hearing device, please speak to a greeter. Please come again!

Weekly Preview next week we'll celebrate The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany. Our readings will be from Zephaniah 2:3, 3:11-13, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and Matthew 5:1-12. Our sermon will be based on Psalm 1 with the theme, "Blessed by Being Rooted in the Lord."

Hospitalized/Homebound members/people to keep in your prayers: Janice Hooton and Elmer Guritz.

Treats have a signup in the narthex.

Updated Directory have been completed. Please take one with you.

Bible Study will look at Matthew 5:1-12 next week.

Voters will meet today after church.

Forward in Christ is available.

WELS Connection will be viewed after service.

Winter Chili Feed we will host a winter chili feed on Sunday, February 22. Social Hour starts at 4pm with dinner served at five. There is a signup located in the narthex.

Ash Wednesday is coming. Our first Lenten service will be held on Wednesday, February 18. The service time will be 6:30pm.

This week at St. Paul

Today: Worship 9am

Voter Meeting after church

Sunday: Worship with communion 9am

Bible Class after worship

Sunday School after worship

Organist: Thank you to Doreen Romadka

Last Week's Attendance: Worship 51

Bible Study 13

Sunday School 6

St. Paul Evangelical (Gospel Centered) Lutheran Church

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

9954 N16000 E Rd. Grant Park, IL 60940

Pastor Paul Micheel, Pastor

Phone: 815-465-6906 (church)

Email: pastor@stpaulgrantpark.net

Web Site: <http://www.stpaulgrantpark.net>