

January 9th Worship – Baptism of Our Lord Sunday
Introduction to the Day

Today's festival rejoices in God's blessings. We recall and celebrate our adoption as God's children, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promised company of almighty God when we "pass through the waters . . . the rivers . . . fire." On this day the heavens open again for this assembly, and we receive the gift of God's Beloved, Jesus, in bread and wine.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who creates us,
redeems us,
and calls us by name.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we have sinned against you
and your beloved children.**

**We have turned our faces away from your glory
when it did not appear as we expected.**

We have rejected your word

when it made us confront ourselves.

**We have failed to show hospitality
to those you called us to welcome.**

**Accept our repentance for the things we have
done and the things we have left undone.
For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
Forgive us and lead us, that we may bathe
in the glory of your Son born among us,
and reflect your love for all creation.**

Amen.

Rejoice in this good news:

In † Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

You are descendants of the Most High,
adopted into the household of Christ,
and inheritors of eternal life.

Live as freed and forgiven children of God.

Amen.

Gathering Song "Christ, Be Our Light"

#715 vs. 1,2,3,5

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lesson – Isaiah 43:1-7

¹But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you,

I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.

⁵Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you;

⁶I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
and to the south, "Do not withhold;

bring my sons from far away

and my daughters from the end of the earth—

⁷everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

Children's Message

Gospel – John 1:1-18

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Just a week ago our Gospel text had us reflecting on what it means that with the flipping of the calendar each year, we tell ourselves that we are going to flip something about ourselves to make ourselves, or the world, a better place. And, rarely, is a resolution made to the contrary.

But, we get lost in the value we place in those resolutions we make. Because, what happens when we break them? After all, most resolutions are broken in the first couple of weeks after being made. So, then what?

Life goes on.

This week we are reminded where our true value comes from. In baptism we are marked with that immovable mark that says we belong to God, and it is in that belonging that we find our worth.

In our baptism service we open by acknowledging that "born of a fallen humanity, and reborn children of God." We literally acknowledge that mistakes are going to be made, and tomorrow is a new day in Christ.

And we carry with us, daily, that reminder in the cross on our foreheads.

But, what does it really mean?

Baptism is about relationships. It is one of the things that we share with Christ, God made flesh, who also heals the sick, raises the dead, and makes the blind see. Those things seem out of reach for us mere mortals, but baptism, we share that. In our baptism we too hear, though the skies may not open up and the Spirit may not descend like a dove, that we are God's beloved, and in us God is well pleased.

Them Coulee Boys, one of my favorite bands, has a line in one of my favorite songs.

"I won't be defined by who I am when I am weak." That is baptism.

We get bogged down in our earthly selves and we often forget that promise.

We slip up, life gets to be too much, and we begin to define ourselves by what we do in those moments of weakness.

But God still says, "you are my beloved, with you I am well pleased."

We often overthink where that reminder might come from. Waiting for the skies to open up and the Spirit to descend like a dove is understandable, but it isn't happening.

A few years and two children ago I was having one of those mornings that was going to set the tone for my whole day. And it wasn't going to be a good one. In the flurry of getting out of the day I'd gotten worked up, and our oldest stopped me, grabbed me by the ears, looked me dead in the eye and gave me a stern reminder.

"Dad, I love you."

Our middle child is our hugger. If the Midwest goodbye were done in only hug form, it would be him. Everybody gets four hugs when we leave. We will be halfway down the driveway in the morning on the way to the bus, and he'll remember that someone in the house didn't get their share of hugs.

Even on the very worst of days, where it is a fight to get the simplest things done to get out of the house, halfway down that driveway, he remembers the constants. He needs to give us his hugs and tell us he loves us.

Sometimes the reminders that God loves us unconditionally are the exact opposite of the skies opening up and the Spirit descending like a dove.

It comes in the form of a hug and a reminder from a child. But it isn't just that. It may be simpler or perhaps more complex. It may be someone buying your coffee when you're having a bad day, or someone you've been needing forgiveness from offering it up to you.

We don't know. But the reminders of God's love for us are all around us. Because baptism is a relationship. It is a relationship with Christ, and it is a relationship with one another.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Song of the Day

"Baptized and Set Free"

#453

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

By the Holy Spirit, you gather your church and send it out in mission to share the good news of Jesus. Inspire your faithful people to be fervent in prayer and service, that all people know they are precious in God's sight. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You reveal your love and power through water and the Spirit. Guard rivers, seas, and all bodies of water from destruction and pollution. Secure access to clean water for all, and protect the land from drought and flood. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Establish among the nations the blessings of peace. Raise up leaders who will protect vulnerable people in their care. Strengthen advocates who risk reputation or retaliation for the sake of mercy and justice. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You protect us through the fires and troubled waters of this life. Assure us that we will not be cut off from you by illness or despair, anxiety or pain, confusion or weakness. Comfort all who are in need (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, David Gunderson, Cassie Skinner, Keith Franson*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We are joined in baptism to Christ and to one another. Bless those who are newly baptized and those who are preparing for baptism. Help us to be faithful in fellowship, worship, evangelism, service, and justice-seeking.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You created each of your saints for your glory. We give thanks for those you have called by name into your eternal embrace (*especially*). Comfort us in grief and release us from fear. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Blessed are you, O God,
Sovereign of the universe.
You offer us new beginnings
and guide us on our journey.
Lead us to your table,
nourish us with this heavenly food,
and prepare us to carry your love
to a hungry world,
in the name of Christ our light.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, We give you thanks, gracious God, for we have feasted on the abundance of your house. Send us to bring good news and to proclaim your favor to all, strengthened with the richness of your grace in your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Communion Prayer

Sending Song

“We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus”

#451

Blessing

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness,
who rejoices over you,
and who calls you by name,
✠ bless your going out and your coming in,
today and forever.

Amen.

Go with Christ into a weary world. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements

If you purchased a poinsettia for the sanctuary, feel free to stop by the church Monday-Thursday to pick it up.

Offering Envelopes

Your offering envelopes are now available to be picked up at the Main entrance outside the fellowship hall.

Altar Flowers

If you would like to have flowers on the altar, please sign up on the chart outside the office (or call the church office). The cost is \$22.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Feb. 6 following worship. More information will be coming