

Baptism of Our Lord
January 8, 2023

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

Greeting

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who makes all things new,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One, source of our renewal,
**we confess that we are wrapped up in sin,
and cannot free ourselves.
We have not practiced your righteousness.
Our hearts have turned away from you.**

**For the sake of the world you so love,
forgive us,
that we may be reconciled to one another
for the glory of your holy name.**

Amen.

Thus says our God:

“The former things have come to pass
and new things I now declare.”

God's mercy makes us new.

We are forgiven in the name of † Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus”

#451

Prayer of the Day

O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations,

⁷to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols.

⁹See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Children's Message

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

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

Just a week ago we heard the naming of Jesus. We were reminded of the importance and power of our own names, and the reminder of God's presence in our lives in Jesus' name, Emmanuel – God With Us.

Today, we are reminded of a name, again, that is given to us, and it is a name that we share in an experience that we share with Jesus himself. God's beloved.

We find ourselves at the banks of the Jordan River where John is offering a baptism of repentance, when Jesus comes to him to be baptized.

Our gathering song for today perfectly captures the life of those who are baptized. It is foundational to our lives of faith that we proclaim that in our baptism,

"We are baptized in Christ Jesus, we are baptized in his death; that as Christ is raised victorious, we might live a brand new life." These are words of promise that we hear as we gather to remember those who have died. We begin our funeral services as that reminder of the promise we all receive in Baptism. And it is that promise that, "if we have been united in a dreadful death like his, we will all be reunited for he lives." That is what funerals are about! The celebration of a life lived and earth, and the promise of life eternal.

And it is more.

"In the water and the witness, in the breaking of the bread, in the waiting arms of Jesus who is risen from the dead, God has made a new beginning from the ashes of our past; in the losing and the winning we hold fast."

Perhaps the most often asked question of/by a person of faith is "can that be forgiven?" We so often do or see things that make us wonder about that very question. We are reminded that from the ashes of our past (Ash Wednesday is in the not too distant future) that God makes a new beginning.

This very well may be the most difficult part of a life of faith for us to comprehend. Because it talks about worth. We are quick to question others worth as well as our own. Forgetting that our true worth is found in our baptism and God declaring us beloved.

In baptism we are given a light, and as we are given that flickering flame we are reminded, “Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son, glory to the Holy Spirit, ever three and ever one; as it was in the beginning, glory now resounds again in a song that has no ending. AMEN”

My favorite moments in baptisms, aside from the response of the child being splashed with water, and the other children gathered around the font splashing the water as we pray over it, is when the candle is presented. If there are older siblings, or if the child being baptized is older, I like to give them the candle. In that moment, there is a look. It is a look of wonder. Amazed. Curiosity. Sometimes fear. But rarely is there not a feeling of comfort.

And they hear the words. “Let your light so shine before others that they would see your good works and give glory to God in heaven.” It is that reminder that all that we do is to give glory to God. No matter what. All of the good we do is God acting through us, and it is us living out our baptismal calling.

Now, Jesus baptism and the narrative around it in Matthew’s Gospel is one of my favorite Jesus moments because it is when we truly see a human Jesus. We believe Jesus to be fully human, fully God, and no we don’t worry about how that math works out. It’s one of faith’s unexplainable foundations, and we profess it to be true.

Jesus comes to John in the Jordan to be baptized. Though John would say it shouldn’t happen, Jesus insists in order to fulfill all righteousness. As he comes up out of the water the heavens open up and the Spirit descends upon him like a dove and alighting on him. And there is a voice. “This is my son, my child, my beloved. With whom I am well pleased.”

We hear this promise to. This is a bond that we share with Christ himself. He, too, identifying with the sinners that he has come to redeem, is baptized. And God takes delight. Just as God takes delight in our baptism.

Years ago I was tasked with teaching Luther Park Counselors how to teach this story to campers. Well.

From his baptism, the Spirit drives Jesus out into the wilderness where he remains for 40 days with no food or drink, at which time he is tempted by Satan. For us and for Jesus baptism is not a moment or experience that keeps us from the difficulty of life. Rather, it gives us a companion. Emmanuel. God with Us. Raise your hand if you’ve been baptized and have still faced temptation or difficulty in life!

You don’t think counselors teaching these stories to middle school campers have a connection point there? Remember 7th grade? We are reminded, again, that God makes a new beginning from the ashes of our past.

From there Jesus returns to Galilee to begin his ministry. And, in doing so he realizes that he isn’t going to be able to do it alone. That is the beauty, too, of our baptismal liturgy. We are intentional of making sure that the congregation that surrounds the child makes a promise to make sure that this child, this person being baptized, does not go about this life of faith on their own.

We make promises as a gathered people of faith to surround the newly baptized in their life of faith. To continue to care for them, provide a safe place for them, and ensure that they know the love of Christ when they are here at church and in the world.

People of God, baptism is a promise that we share with Christ. It is a moment where he appeared fully human to receive that same baptism that we receive. And we are reminded that just as we share that baptism, we are also united to him in death and resurrection. In our confession we are reminded that as captives to sin, we cannot free ourselves. In our baptism we are reminded that freedom from sin comes from Christ alone.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Calling God, you speak with power to your church. Open our hearts and minds to the new things you are declaring. Strengthen bishops, pastors, deacons, lay leaders, and teachers of the faith. Equip the baptized for your reconciling and redeeming work. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renewing God, you provide the waters of the earth and in Jesus' baptism you reveal the waters of life. Cleanse and protect oceans, rivers, and watersheds (*local water sources may be named*). Bring relief to parched lands and to communities without access to safe water. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Righteous God, you never weary of establishing justice. Increase cooperation and constructive dialogue between nations. Guide local, national, and international authorities to govern with equity, vision, and integrity. We pray for those in military service, for peacemakers, and for our enemies. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Abiding God, your mercy is steadfast. Give sanctuary to people who flee from oppression, war, poverty, and famine. Sustain health care workers, caregivers, first responders, counselors, and all who help and heal. Comfort those who are grieving or experiencing crisis (*especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Cassie, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Blessing God, in Christ you gather the beloved community. Kindle the gifts of your Spirit in your people. Accompany the newly baptized, those recently ordained, and any beginning a new ministry. Inspire synodical leaders and congregational councils to serve with imagination and wisdom. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Promising God, your faithfulness endures throughout all generations. We give thanks for those who have died in Christ, trusting that we will be united with them and all the saints in Christ's resurrection life. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.
Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Liberating God,

you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.
Receive these offerings in thanksgiving
for all your works of merciful power,
and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.
You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
Amen.

Words of Institution

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

Communion

Prayer

Holy One,
we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.
Amen.

Blessing

The God who faithfully brings forth justice
and breaks the oppressor's rod
✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.
Amen.

Sending Song

“Go, My Children, with my Blessing”

#543 vs. 1,3

Dismissal

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.
Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!
And all of Good Shepherd said,
AMEN!

Year-to-Date Snapshot

Month of December

Total Revenue **\$35,673**

Total Expenses **\$25,785**

December Difference
+\$9,888

2022

Total Revenue **\$301,768**

Total Expenses **\$288,645**

Year-to-Date Difference
+\$13,123

The visitation and funeral for Delores Sloop will be Wednesday, Jan. 11 beginning at 1 p.m. There will be a lunch following the burial at Lakeview Cemetery.

Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Jan. 29 at 10 a.m.

If you purchased a poinsettia for our Christmas worship, be sure to come and pick it up.