

First Presbyterian Church and Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

January 9, 2022
Baptism of Our Lord



Prelude

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Minister: We gather together today in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Leader: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God;

People: **The holy habitation of the Most High.**

Leader: The Lord pours forth rivers

People: **from bare mountains, and fountains in valleys' depths.**

Leader: God opens rocks, and water gushes out.

People: **On dry thirsty land God springs forth streams in the desert.**

Leader: Let us worship God.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

FPC: To God Be the Glory

ORLC: When Jesus Came to Jordan

*PRAYER OF THE DAY (please join in prayer)

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.

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Minister: Even as we enter into the presence of God, we exclaim with Isaiah: "Woe is me, I am a person of unclean ways, dwelling among a tainted people." If we claim we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Trusting in the steadfast love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord, let us pray,

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

People: **Sovereign God, in baptism You called us to turn from sin and to turn to Jesus Christ; but we stray from His ways and do not heed Your call.**

In baptism, You joined us to Christ in His death that we might be raised with Christ in new life; but we cherish old ways and fail to embrace the risen life of righteousness, justice, and love.

In baptism, You united us with all the baptized who confess Your name, but we foster division in the church. We refuse to live as one people, and so fail to witness to Your reconciling love before the world.

(1)

In baptism You call us to ministry in all realms of life, but we refuse the struggle to know Your will; we do not nurture the ways of peace; we allow enmity to grow among us, setting neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse the earth You entrust to our care and live in discord with all You have made.

In baptism, You sent us to serve with compassion all for whom Christ died, but we ignore the suffering of the oppressed and the plight of the poor. We take bread from the hungry and stop our ears to cries for justice.

In baptism, You gave us the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us but we rely on ourselves and refuse to trust Your direction. We spurn Your eternal wisdom, preferring, instead, the luring ways of the world. Remember the promises You made to us in baptism, forgive our sinful ways, and heal our brokenness. Set us free from all that enslaves us, and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ, that we may be Your faithful servants, showing forth Your healing love to the world, to the glory of Your holy name. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us. Amen.

***Silent and Individual Prayers of Confession**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Minister: Hear the good news: Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ lives in power for us, Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is of the New Creation. The old life is finished, gone. Behold, new life has begun. Beloved, believe the good news: In Jesus Christ+, we are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God! Amen!

***GLORIA PATRI**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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. *A brief silence.*

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.

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.

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

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. We pray for those who are sick in body, spirit, and mind. We pray for the dying. We lift up those we ask special blessings upon, naming them in our hearts, our minds, and with our voices at this time...(please name your prayer concerns).

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.

You created each of Your saints for Your glory. We give thanks for those You have called by name into Your eternal embrace. Comfort us in grief and release us from fear.

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.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Minister: I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us to pray... (2)

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen**

HEARING OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Leader: Creator Spirit, who hovered over the waters at creation's birth, who descended in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism, who was poured out under the signs of fire and wind at Pentecost: Come to us, open our hearts and minds, so that we may hear the Word of life and be renewed by Your power, for You live and reign with God and Christ now and forevermore.

All: Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Isaiah 43:1-7 *When you pass through the waters, do not fear, for I am with you*
Psalm 29 *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. (Ps. 29:3)*
Acts 8:14-17 *Prayer and laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit*

GOSPEL

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

The reading opens with questions about the identity of the Messiah. John the Baptist insists that he is not the Messiah; instead, he points ahead to One who is coming. And whether the voice of God was heard by all or only by Jesus, God settles the matter: Jesus is God's beloved Son.

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."

Minister: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on this Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. Amen.

Aristotle once wrote: *The more you know, the more you realize you don't know.* There are many other variations of this saying.

The more I looked at our gospel reading for today and compared it with some of the other gospels, the more I realized it was like opening a can of worms!

First, let me say that I really like the gospel of Luke. I know I've mentioned numerous times throughout the

years that I favor Luke's version of Jesus' birth. I love how he tells the story of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem and her giving birth and laying baby Jesus in a manger *because there was no room for them in the inn*. I love hearing about the shepherds and the angels. I just wish Luke included the wise men!

In today's gospel from Luke, we hear about the Baptism of Our Lord.

First, to compare, Matthew's gospel goes from the genealogy of Jesus to the angel appearing to Joseph to the birth of Jesus to the visit of the wise men to the proclamation of John the Baptist to the Baptism of Jesus. Matthew alludes to the fact that John baptized Jesus. Matthew wrote: *"Then 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."* (Matthew 3:13-15) So, John baptized Jesus.

Mark's gospel doesn't include the story of Jesus' birth. It goes from the Proclamation of John the Baptist right to the Baptism of Jesus. Verse nine of the first chapter says, *"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan."* So, it's pretty clear that John baptized Jesus!

Luke's gospel adds so many more details! Luke tells the story of the angel's announcement to Zechariah that he and Elizabeth, aged as they were, would have a son and they would name him John. Luke includes the story of the angel Gabriel visiting Mary and announcing that she would bear a son, Jesus. Luke shares the beautiful image of Mary and Elizabeth's visit, and then the birth of John the Baptist. We hear Zechariah's prophecy. We hear all of this even before we hear the story of Jesus' birth. Again, my favorite version! So much background leading up to the big event!

And Luke doesn't stop there! He includes Jesus' circumcision and presentation in the temple. He also includes the story of Jesus being a little rascal, one might say!

Luke is the only gospel that includes the story of Jesus as a young boy, about twelve years old. He and his family went to the festival of the Passover. When it was over, His parents headed toward home. They got about a day's journey away before realizing Jesus wasn't with them! Of course, they panicked as most parents would!

Picking up at Luke 2:44-52, *"Assuming that He was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for Him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸When His parents saw Him they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for You in great anxiety.' ⁴⁹He said to them, 'Why were you searching for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?' ⁵⁰But they did not understand what He said to them. ⁵¹Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor."*

I'd say He was a pretty lucky little fella!

And then we get to our gospel reading for today from Luke 3, Luke's version of Jesus' baptism. Did you notice anything different from Matthew and Mark's version (though I went over them rather quickly)? Luke doesn't indicate that John baptized Jesus. Luke doesn't say *who* baptized Jesus.

Luke says, *"Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened..."* (Luke 3:21)

Of all the details up to this point that Luke has included in his writings, he didn't think it was important to say *who* baptized Jesus?

We *assume* – on the surface - it was John because Luke, like Matthew and Mark, wrote variations that John said, “*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.*” (Luke 3:16) Matthew and Mark then tell of John baptizing Jesus.

However, Luke says in chapter 3:19-20, *right before* the Baptism of Jesus (which are, incidentally, two of the verses in-between our gospel verses for today): “*But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by (John) him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added to them all by shutting up John in prison.*” So, Luke is telling us that John was in prison when Jesus was baptized! And so, if John was in prison, then who baptized Jesus?

Ah, yes. *The more you know, the more you realize you don't know.*

Think that's interesting? But wait – there's more!

In baptism, we receive forgiveness of sin. Depending on whether we are baptized as a baby, a young person, or an adult, we or another on our behalf professes to reject sin, profess our faith in Christ Jesus, and confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize. Water is sprinkled on our heads or we are fully immersed in water. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! We are surrounded by our loved ones who will help guide our faith journey. What a joyful time for all!

But...why, then, was Jesus baptized? Was He *not* without sin? Was it because when He was twelve years old He pulled a fast one and left His parents after the festival of the Passover, going back to the temple, leaving them frantic wondering what happened to Him? No! Not at all!

Could Jesus *really* be as sinful as we are? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

The Rev. Dr. David Lose, whose writings I often quote because they are very interesting and informative, wrote: “*Yes, Baptism is about forgiveness. But it's also about relationship, about being named and claimed as children of God.*”

In our baptismal service, we profess: “*Obeying the word of our Lord Jesus, and confident of His promises, we baptize those whom God has called. In baptism, God claims us and seals us to show that we belong to God. God frees us from sin and death, uniting us with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection.*”

And our service concludes with the baptized being “*received into the one holy catholic and apostolic church through Baptism. By the power of the Holy Spirit, (they) have become a member of the household of God, to share with us in the ministry of Christ and the priesthood of all believers. God has made (them) a member of His household, to share with us in the priesthood of Christ.*”

Throughout history, God claims believers – as God claims us – as God's own.

We hear this in the Book of Genesis, and that *new beginning* that we heard about last week. God created the heavens and the earth, water and land and sky, every animal on the earth, birds of the air, creatures in the sea, and humans. And after every-*thing* God created, God saw that it was good. God claimed us as His creation. And called His creation - *good*.

In Psalm 100, we offer this Psalm of Thanksgiving:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

² *Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into His presence with singing.*

³ *Know that the Lord is God.
It is He that made us, and we are His;
we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

⁴ *Enter His gates with thanksgiving,
and His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him, bless His name.*

⁵ *For the Lord is good;
His steadfast love endures forever,
and His faithfulness to all generations.*

We hear of God naming and claiming Israel as they neared the end of their Babylonian exile. Hear these words that are a part of our First Reading for today from Isaiah 43,

¹ *But 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.” (Isaiah 43:1)*

God is bringing God’s people – God’s children - home to the promised land. “*Do not fear,*” God says, “*for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine.*”

Time and time again, scripture declares God loves us and cares for us. God will always be with us and never leave us. We are claimed as God’s children, baptized, “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit.*”

After Jesus’ baptism, a voice came from heaven, “*You are My Son, the Beloved; with You, I am well pleased.*” (Luke 3:22b)

God named and claimed Jesus at His baptism just as God names and claims us at our baptism. We are God’s beloved children. Thanks be to God! **Amen.**

Source:

<http://www.davidlose.net/2019/01/the-baptism-of-our-lord-c-forgiveness-and-so-much-more/>

BLESSING

Minister: And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.** (Philippians 4:7)

***HYMN OF REFLECTION**

FPC: Come, Holy Spirit, Dove Divine
ORLC: Thy Holy Wings

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

***The Offertory**

Leader: In thanksgiving for all God has done for us, let us present the offering of ourselves unto the Lord.

THE DOXOLOGY

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER (please join in prayer)

People: O Lord, we give You thanks with all we are for all You have done for us. In Your divinity, You have come to dwell with us in the muddy waters of humanity and comingled Your glory with our sin so that the ribbon of corrupting time is becoming a sparkling River of Life flowing through our days. Take all we are, Lord, and use it for Your purpose. Bless the gifts we give this day that the church might stand as shining witnesses to Your glory, planted by Your living water to bring healing to all peoples. Use us as you will to the praise of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Minister: Go forth into the world to live as those baptized into Christ’s mission. And may the eternal light of God keep you rock-solidly immersed in the river of life in the peace and power of the Holy Spirit now and forevermore.

People: Amen.

HYMN OF DEDICATION

**FPC: The Church’s One Foundation
ORLC: Jesus Shall Reign**

DISMISSAL

Minister: Go in peace. Share the Good News!

People: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Sources for January 9, 2022

- www.presbyterianmission.org
- https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/order_of_worship_brochure_dec_2008.pdf
- Gloria Patri (Public-domain)
- Doxology/Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow (Public-domain)
- <https://sundaysandseasons.com>
- Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SB147608.
- <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/baptism-lord-sunday-service/>

Hymns for January 9, 2022

FPC:

- To God Be the Glory (Public-domain) 31-R
- Come, Holy Spirit, Dove Divine (Public-domain) 299-R
- The Church’s One Foundation (Public-domain) 331-R

ORLC:

- When Jesus Came to Jordan (Public-domain) WOV #647
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- Thy Holy Wings (Public-domain) WOV #741
- © 2022 CCLI, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
- Jesus Shall Reign (Public-domain) LBW #530