



Baptism of Our Lord

January 9, 2022



Introduction

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.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

You may want to have a small bowl of water available to remind you of your baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,
For in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you saved Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.
At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.
Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn ELW # 456 / WOV # 693

Baptized in Water

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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.

First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

Near the end of Israel's exile in Babylon, God promises to bring the people home. They need no longer be afraid, because the one who formed, created, and called them by name now redeems them from all their enemies. God declares them precious and honored, and God loves them.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 29

¹Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders; the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

⁴**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

⁶**the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷The voice of the LORD bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.
And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹O LORD, give strength to your people; give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

Second Reading: Acts 8:14-17

Peter and John are sent to support the new Christians in Samaria, a group that was recently baptized after hearing the good news of Christ through the preaching of Philip. Here the Samaritans receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the laying on of hands.

Read the complete text [here](#).

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.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

Holy and Mighty Lord, you sent your Son to live among us and when he was baptized by John, you spoke your blessing upon him to get him started! Allow us to hear your blessings on us when we need encouragement and strength. Lead us by your Spirit so we know we do not walk alone! May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Remember back to a time when you needed a word of encouragement and got it - who spoke those words to you? What did they say that made you confident to keep going? Delmer Chilton shares a story from Fred Craddock's book, **Craddock Stories**. Fred Craddock is a darn good preacher and professor of preaching and New Testament at Emory University's Candler School of Theology and was invited to preach at Ebenezer Baptist Church sometime in the 1980's. The following is the story told by Rev. Craddock:

“Joe Roberts, the pastor, had invited me . . . and the service had moved to the point where I was to stand and speak. I'd moved to the pulpit and I had my New Testament (turned to Mark 8) . . . and was ready to read, when Joe Roberts, who was seated up there along with several other persons, began to sing. Just as I was going to say my first word, he started singing. “I feel much better now that I've laid my burden down,” and then he sang some more. Then the associates started singing, and the musicians went to their instruments, the piano and the organ and the drums and the electric guitar, and the people started singing. I'm standing up there with Mark 8, waiting. Then, I suddenly realized, I'm the one up front, I'm the leader of this, so I started clapping my hands and singing. Then everybody stood up and started clapping their hands and swinging and singing, and it was just marvelous. Then at a certain point the pastor, Joe Roberts, put his hand out, it got quiet, they sat down and I started preaching. I could've preached all day. Afterwards I said to Joe, “Well, that kind of shocked me a little bit. You didn't tell me you were going to do that.” He said, “Well, I didn't plan it.” “Then why did you do it?” And he said, “Well, when you stood up there, one of my associates leaned over to me and said, ‘That boy's going to need some help.’” (p.128)

I immediately thought, before I read further in Delmer's sermon - well, no kidding! Don't we all need a little help. That's where I stopped reading someone else's work and

starting praying my own. In my ordination service, I remember what I was asked to say in response to the petitions asked of me about life as a pastor and preacher of the Gospel: "I will, and I ask God to help me." In some services it says, "I ask God to help and guide me."

Well yes, thank you - I can use all the help and guidance I can get, especially from God. We don't know what Jesus was thinking. He was likely a little anxious about what lay before him. He was praying after he and the others had been baptized and Luke tells us that God might have agreed with Pastor Roberts' associate and took that moment to send the Spirit to offer some blessing and then he says, the Hebrew equivalent of "You are my Boy, my Beloved; I am quite happy with you! The persons of the Trinity working together to save the world."

Before the same Spirit guides him into the wilderness, we get a glimpse of his family tree - All 76 generations - right up to God! There ya have it Jesus! You are rooted firmly in the line of the patriarchs, prophets, and kings! You have good genes so go lead my people! I like to think of this genealogical reference as a reading of the great cloud of witnesses who support him and upon whose shoulders he is carried throughout his ministry.

Blessings are powerful things. Names are equally powerful and through our names we are blessed with heritage, family honor and direction. Jesus' name in Hebrew was *Yeshua*, which meant deliverer, rescuer, savior! Do you know what your name means? My given name, Patricia means noble, aristocratic. Growing up with two older brothers and a younger sister, I needed the confidence of knowing I was of noble stock to keep me standing tall. They clearly wanted to tell different story. When I was a month old, on my mother's 26th Birthday, I was baptized and another name was added to my identity - Child of God! Every time I think of that name, I know I have received a blessing like no other.

Just as God blessed Jesus with a visual and an auditory blessing, God blesses us with water and the word and pronounces us part of the family of God, the beloved community, the Body of Christ. Being part of Christ's body we are marked with the sign of the cross on our foreheads and reminded that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. We are blessed as our sins are drowned and we are raised up with Jesus to live eternally. The sign of the cross reminds us that we are met at the place of pain, sorrow, despair, and death by the one who experienced all of that for us. Even when life hands us its worst, God is there to give us the best.

In the world we live in now, one fraught with conflict, anger, pain, death and fear, we hear a different message. We hear and start to believe the message of judgment and ridicule, powerlessness and unworthiness. Those words and names hang on us like old, wrinkly name tags. They are not useful but worn out. God invites us to the table; a table that grows longer and longer to fit every single one of us. We each have a seat with our

name on it. We are named and claimed as God's own. The old nametags and robes are pulled off and thrown away.

In Jesus' Baptism, we are re-clothed from on high with the robes of Christ's righteousness. We are grafted to the vine and we are welcomed into the family of God; the family that has room for everyone, every color, gender and sexual self-identification, cultural background and ethnic identity. We are beloved and God loves us and is happy with us! Amen and Amen!

Hymn of the Day ELW # 305/WOV # 647

When Jesus Came to Jordan

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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. 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 those we name now. 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.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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. 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.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.

Closing Hymn ELW # 543/WOV # 721 ***Go My Children, with My Blessing***
Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Rev. Patti Axel,
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