



## Baptism of Our Lord

January 10, 2021



### Introduction

*Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in the image of God's vision of justice and peace.*

### 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.**

**Gathering Hymn ELW # 310 / LBW # 90**      *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise*  
*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Prayer of the Day

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

*Out of chaos, God brings order. Out of the formless void, God brings light. This familiar story was good news for the Israelites, who experienced much chaos in their history. It remains good news for us. God created and continues to create new life.*

*Read the text [here](#).*

## Psalmody: Psalm 29

<sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,

ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

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

<sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;  
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

<sup>4</sup>**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;  
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

<sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;  
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

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

<sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD bursts forth in lightning flashes.

<sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;  
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

<sup>9</sup>The 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!"

<sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;  
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

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

## **Second Reading: Acts 19:1-7**

*In Ephesus, Paul encounters people who had received John's baptism of repentance but had never heard of the Holy Spirit or of baptism in the name of Jesus. After Paul baptizes them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit.*

*Read the text [here](#).*

## **Gospel: Mark 1:4-11**

*Mark's gospel reports the story of Jesus' baptism with some irony: the one on whom the Spirit descends is himself the one who will baptize others with the Holy Spirit.*

*Read the text [here](#).*

## **Reflection on the Text**

"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." What wonderful words these are to hear. Whether you are Jesus, or you are someone else who has just been baptized – the fact that God has named and claimed you just has to feel pretty good.

This, I think, also answers the question about WHY Jesus was baptized. It certainly was not because he needed to repent of his sins; it was not because he needed the forgiveness offered by John; it was so that Jesus, and we, could hear him be named as God's Son, the Beloved. Jesus was baptized so that we could hear the affirmation of who and whose Jesus is. It is a foretaste of our own baptism, where we are named and claimed as children of God.

If you were to look through the New Testament, you would discover that only two Gospels mention the birth of Jesus, while all four Gospels and two other letters mention the baptism of Jesus, and there are many other mentions of baptism as well. It seems to have been an important event to the early Christians, to the writers of the New Testament, and to the early church.

Baptism is important to us, but I am not always sure we understand its meaning. It is not fire insurance – our one-way ticket out of hell. It is not something that "we do" to prove our faith. It is not a way of showing that we have made a decision to follow Jesus. Baptism is where we recognize God's love for us and are claimed by God as God's own.

Our baptism is not something that we do – it is something that God does. It is where we are called beloved, anointed with the Holy Spirit, and named Child of God. It is where we are assured of who and whose we are. It is where we become a part of the body of Christ, a place where we are assured of acceptance, of love, and of belonging.

None of this happens because we deserve it, and it is not because others are so nice, but because God loves us and assures us a place in the kingdom as God's children.

This is why the Baptism of our Lord is such an important festival. It is a vivid reminder of our own baptism, and of the importance of that act of love and grace shown us by God.

The heavens are torn apart, the boundary between heaven and earth are forever opened, and God's love is showered upon us. This is why we invite others to come and join us – not so we can “straighten them out,” but so that they can join us as children of God, showered in love and grace and mercy, even though we most certainly do not deserve it. This is what Baptism is about – undeserved, unreserved love; grace upon grace; and God's mercy. Through our Baptism, we are invited to the table where we receive God's mercy and forgiveness. Through our Baptism, we become brothers and sisters with Christ.

Baptism is not about us, or about what we do. Baptism is all about God and his love for us, God's children, and what God has done, is doing, and promises yet to do – for us. As Brian Stoffregen wrote in his column on this text:

*We have the assurance through baptism of being children of God and being filled with the Holy Spirit – even when it seems as though everything and everyone else is giving contrary messages, e.g., “You're a nobody.” Our baptisms are not what we have done, but what God has done to us.*

Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 582 / LBW # 523 *Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling***

*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**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the church throughout the world and its leaders, that guided by the Holy Spirit they proclaim the forgiveness of sins, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For wilderness and water, wind and wild beasts, and all living things on earth, that God's goodness is revealed through creation and faithful stewards care for all God has made, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the nations of the world and their leaders, especially our nation during this time of turmoil, for laborers busy both day and night, and for peacemakers amid strife, that God inspire all people to use their strength wisely, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the sick and those who provide medical care, for the imprisoned and those who show them mercy, for the lonely and those who provide companionship, for all who suffer especially those we name now, that God shower compassion, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the congregation gathered here, for students returning to school, for those seeking renewal in their daily work, that all the beloved of God experience grace and peace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their labors, that their witness may inspire us in our baptismal vocations, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, 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 # 650 / LBW 359      *In Christ There Is No East or West***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe