

# The Baptism of our Lord

## The First Sunday after Epiphany

### January 7, 2024

The theme for the Epiphany season is recognizing Jesus as God's Son, the Messiah, our Savior.  
This was first made known publicly at His baptism.

#### Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

Lutheran Service Book 400, Lutheran Worship 86, The Lutheran Hymnal 128



1 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,  
2 Cold on His cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing;  
3 Shall we not yield Him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,  
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,



Dawn on our dark - ness and lend us thine aid;  
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;  
Fra - grance of E - dom and of - f'rings di - vine,  
Vain - ly with gifts would His fa - vor se - cure.



Star of the East, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,  
An - gels a - dore Him in slum - ber re - clin - ing,  
Gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,  
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion;



Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.  
Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.  
Myrrh from the for - est and gold from the mine?  
Dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.

- 5 Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

**L** In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

**L** Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

**C** Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

**L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

**C** But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

**L** Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

**C** God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen. (*Luke 18:13*)

**L** Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

### Introit Psalm 2:7–11, 12c; antiphon Isaiah 42:1a

**L** Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

**C** I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

**L** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.

**C** You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

**L** Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

**C** Serve the Lord with fear,  
and rejoice with trembling,

**L** for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessèd are all who take refuge in him.

**C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**L** Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

### Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

## Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
- C** Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

## Genesis 1:1–5

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

## Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the LORD, all nations!
- C** Extol him, all peoples!
- L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,
- C** and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
- L** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
- C** bring an offering, and come into his courts!

## Psalm 29

- L** <sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- C** <sup>2</sup>Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.
- L** <sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.
- C** <sup>4</sup>The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.
- L** <sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
- C** <sup>6</sup>He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- L** <sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.

- C** <sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**
- L** <sup>9</sup>The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”
- C** <sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.**
- L** <sup>11</sup>May the LORD give strength to his people!
- C** **May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

## Romans 6:1–11

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup>For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.**

## Mark 1:4–11

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>4</sup>John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

- L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

## The Apostles' Creed

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

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

## Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Lutheran Service Book 394, Lutheran Worship 88, The Lutheran Hymnal 134



1 Songs of thank - ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to Thee we raise,  
2 Man - i - fest at Jor-dan's stream, Proph-et, Priest, and King su-preme;  
3 Man - i - fest in mak-ing whole Pal - sied limbs and faint - ing soul;  
4 Sun and moon shall dark-ened be, Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;  
5 Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord, Pres - ent in Thy ho - ly Word—



Man - i - fest-ed by the star To the sa - ges from a - far,  
And at Ca - na wed - ding guest In Thy God-head man - i - fest;  
Man - i - fest in val - iant fight, Quell-ing all the dev - il's might;  
Christ will then like light - ning shine, All will see His glo-rious sign;  
Grace to im - i - tate Thee now And be pure, as pure art Thou;



Branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem In Thy birth at Beth - le - hem:  
Man - i - fest in pow'r di - vine, Chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine;  
Man - i - fest in gra-cious will, Ev - er bring-ing good from ill;  
All will then the trum - pet hear, All will see the Judge ap - pear;  
That we might be-come like Thee At Thy great e - piph - a - ny



An - thems be to Thee ad-dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
An - thems be to Thee ad-dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
An - thems be to Thee ad-dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
Thou by all wilt be con-fessed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
And may praise Thee, ev - er blest, God in man made man - i - fest.

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## Devotional thoughts:

John appeared! Today, we know more about John the Baptist than the people who first went to be baptized by him. Luke tells us that his parents were Zechariah, a priest serving in the temple, and Elizabeth. Elizabeth, as a descendant of Aaron, was also raised in a priestly family. His birth was announced by the angel Gabriel who gave him the name John.

John appeared! He appeared in the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And the people came! They came from far and near. The Jordan River is about 25 miles east of Jerusalem a few miles past Jericho. The journey is not easy. They must travel through a dry and desolate country but the people came! They came because they craved what John was offering, a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. They craved forgiveness.

This reminds me of a significant event early in my ministry. There was a young couple who, under unusual circumstances, came to me to officiate for their wedding. That is a story for another day. They were not members of our congregation. In fact, they lived about 50 miles away in the remote forests of Northwestern Ontario. So I wasn't surprised when I did not see them again for a number of months.

One Sunday morning, this same couple appeared in church. I couldn't miss them. They sat in the front row! Of course, our church was so small that I wouldn't have missed them if they had been sitting in the back row. One thing was different about them. God had granted them a baby!

Following the service, as was my custom, I greeted the people at the back of the church. But this young couple remained near their seats in the front of the church. When everyone left, I walked up to greet them.

I was surprised when the baby's father turned to me. I saw tears streaming down his cheeks!

I asked, "What is wrong? Is there something I can do to help?" He looked at me with his red eyes and softly said, "This is the first time I have ever heard of forgiveness." These were not tears of sadness. They were tears of joy!

For those of us raised in our church, forgiveness is something we often take for granted. It is offered every Sunday in church. It is new every morning. Living in faith means we are drenched with forgiveness all day, every day! But it was something new for this young couple. It was something that the people of Judea and Jerusalem craved. To receive forgiveness, they were motivated to take an arduous journey to the Jordan River to be baptized by John!

One day, among the throngs coming to John for baptism, was Jesus! Luke tells us that Elizabeth and Jesus' mother, Mary were related. John's entire ministry was directed toward this day. He came to prepare the way for Jesus and His ministry. It is only through Jesus that forgiveness of sins became a reality!

Many people ask, "If Jesus is sinless, why must He be baptized?" That is not too difficult to answer. In Jesus' case, John's baptism was more than a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. When John, himself, has doubts about baptizing Jesus, Jesus explains that John should baptize Him because it is, "fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The second reason Jesus is baptized is to reveal Him to be the Son of God! God had told John, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (John 3:33). John was sent to prepare the way for the coming savior but until Jesus was baptized, John did not know who the savior would be. Following Jesus' baptism, John says, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 3:34).

And so, when Jesus is baptized, a most dramatic thing happens! Mark records it this way. Jesus was “baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:9b-11).

We have just celebrated Jesus’ birth. We have learned of visits by shepherds and wise men. We witnessed Jesus increase in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Now we are ready to walk with Him from the Jordan to Calvary. There He again will be recognized as the Son of God. But this time it will be by the centurion standing at the foot of the cross. This was his exclamation when he witnessed the Lamb of God who was being offered as a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world.

You and I are privileged to receive this forgiveness won by Jesus on the cross. We receive it in baptism. We receive it in the Lord’s Supper. We receive it when spoken to us by fellow believers. But every time we receive it, we receive it by faith. And as we receive forgiveness, we receive life and salvation! For where there is forgiveness of this there is life and salvation. This very Son of God was given to us so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Thanks be to God!

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

## Prayers

**L** Heavenly Father, You revealed Jesus to be Your beloved Son in the wondrous Epiphany in the Jordan. So also You have revealed Your name and blessing to us in Holy Baptism, declaring us Your beloved heirs. Grant that as Your baptized children, we may daily die to sin and rise to newness of life, living with the joy of our salvation.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, bless all places where Your people teach and learn. Guide teachers and students, that together we would marvel at Your creation and appreciate the depth of Your wisdom.

**C** Amen.

**L** Lord God, grant that all those who are baptized into Christ would receive the same boldness of John the Baptist to lead faithful and pure lives in this world, being ever mindful of our promised heavenly inheritance.

**C** Amen.

**L** Gracious Lord, receive our prayers for those who suffer from loneliness. Comfort them with the sure and certain knowledge that You will never forsake them. Give them family and friends within the household of faith with whom they can find loving companionship.

**C** Amen.

**L** O God of peace, during this time of war in the ancient land of Jesus’ birth and in Ukraine, we pray that You would grant a swift end to the conflict and lasting peace, that right and justice would prevail, and that You would grant Your mighty hand of protection to the innocent and helpless.

**C** Amen.

**L** Holy God, mighty Lord, You have given power to the nations and to those who govern for the good of their people. Bless our president, Congress, governor, and all our leaders, that justice may prevail and Your people would be free to live at peace with all. Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police, and firefighters.

**C** Amen.

**L** Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty Father, as Your Holy Spirit hovered over the face of the deep, You uttered Your Word and the world was created. In the waters of Holy Baptism, You have spoken our names and through Your word, You declared us to be righteous by connecting us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. You have drawn us to Jesus, the light of the world, and granted us salvation. Let His light now shine through us, that others may learn of our Savior and receive with us the gift of eternal life.

**C** Amen.

**C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**C** 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.

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**L** The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**C** Amen.



## Baptized into Your Name Most Holy

Lutheran Service Book 590, Lutheran Worship 224, The Lutheran Hymnal 298



1 Bap-tized in - to Your name most ho - ly, O Fa - ther, Son, and  
2 My lov - ing Fa - ther, here You take me To be hence-forth Your  
3 My faith - ful God, You fail me nev - er; Your prom - ise sure - ly  
4 All that I am and love most dear-ly— Re - ceive it all, O



Ho - ly Ghost, I claim a place, though weak and low - ly,  
child and heir. My faith - ful Sav - ior, here You make me  
will en - dure. O cast me not a - way for - ev - er  
Lord, from me. Let me con - fess my faith sin - cere - ly;



A - mong Your saints, Your cho - sen host. Bur - ied with Christ and  
The fruit of all Your sor - rows share. O Ho - ly Spir - it,  
If words and deeds be - come im - pure. Have mer - cy when I  
Help me Your faith - ful child to be! Let noth - ing that I



dead to sin, Your Spir - it now shall live with - in.  
com - fort me When threat'-ning clouds a - round I see.  
come de - filed; For - give, lift up, re - store Your child.  
am or own Serve an - y will but Yours a - lone.

## The Baptism of our Lord

From earliest times the birth of Jesus, Epiphany, and The Baptism of our Lord have been closely associated in the Church Year. By 385 Epiphany and The Baptism of our Lord was a major eight day celebration in Jerusalem.

The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River is a much loved subject of Christian art. It adorns stained glass windows, paintings and icons.



Although The Baptism of our Lord is often passed over in many non-liturgical churches, it affords us the opportunity direct our attention to Jesus' message and ministry. John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples all share a common message, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." From their time until now, baptism and repentance have been closely connected.

As we celebrate the beginning of Jesus' ministry at His baptism, let us see its fulfillment in the cross and resurrection. Jesus' Baptism is the ideal time for us to remember that in baptism we have been truly connected to Jesus' death and resurrection. May we daily return to baptism in repentance and live the new life we have received by the working of the Holy Spirit through baptism.

Pastor Quardokus

### Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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# Enhancing Your Worship

## Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27  
My eyes are awake through the night watches,  
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

## The Week of The Baptism of our Lord

### The First Sunday after Epiphany

### January 7 - 13, 2024

#### Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

#### Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

#### Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.  
**C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

#### Introit Psalm 2:7–11, 12c; antiphon Isaiah 42:1a

- L** Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights.  
**C** I will tell of the decree:  
The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."  
**L** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.  
**C** You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."  
**L** Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
**C** Serve the Lord with fear,  
and rejoice with trembling,  
**L** for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessèd are all who take refuge in him.  
**C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

- L** Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

## Kyrie

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Christ, | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |

Our introit for this week includes verses from Psalm 2. Psalm 2 has long been associated with the baptism of Jesus. At Jesus' baptism, God the Father declares, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." In Psalm 2:7, we hear God declare that the coming Messiah is His son: "The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'"

The antiphon for this week from Isaiah 42:1 also reminds us that Jesus' baptism is an indication that He was chosen by God to be the savior.

But Psalm 2 is particularly appropriate for this time in the history of our country. It seems to me that many in our country have become overly fixated on politics. The chaos at our Capitol three years ago continues to make headlines. But it was just one of many heated demonstrations by those on both extremes of the political spectrum that have gripped our nation in recent years. There seems to be hardly anyone in our country that hasn't chosen sides. Psalm 2 provides an important correction for a time like this.

Psalm 2 begins with these words, "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?" These words are a good reminder that we ought not to put our trust in politics and governments. All of their plotting is in vain. Our real trust must be in God alone. Every other thing is sinking sand.

Psalm 2:4 is one of my favorite verses in this psalm. It says, "He who sits in the heavens laughs." When people in authority plot against God and His plans, God simply sits in heaven and laughs.

We are so often caught up in the here and now that we forget to pause and consider the big picture. God is still in control. He has done everything necessary for our salvation. He will certainly take care of us in difficult times, no matter how the nations may rage and plot against us.

- L** Let us pray. O Lord Jesus, You are the only-begotten Son of God come into the world to be our savior, grant that we may never become so caught up in the affairs of the world that we forget this wonderful truth.
- C** Amen

## Tuesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Christ, | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |
| <b>L</b> O Lord,   | <b>C</b> Have Mercy on us. |

**L** Let us pray: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

On two separate occasions, Scripture records that God the Father publicly declared Jesus to be His Son. Once was at Jesus' baptism and the other was on the Mount of Transfiguration. A number of times the Bible clearly teaches us that Jesus is God's only-begotten Son. You may ask, "What is begotten?" Begotten is the opposite of adopted. We are adopted children of God. Jesus is begotten. He is the only-begotten Son but not the only son. God's family is immensely large with those who have been adopted into God's family by faith through Holy Baptism.

As children of God, we are heirs of the salvation won for us by our brother, Jesus. Read more about this in Ephesians 1:3-10:

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Let us pray: Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Wednesday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

## Psalm 29

**L** <sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

**C** <sup>2</sup>Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

**L** <sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.

- C** <sup>4</sup>**The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**
- L** <sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
- C** <sup>6</sup>**He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.**
- L** <sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.
- C** <sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**
- L** <sup>9</sup>The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare,  
and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- C** <sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.**
- L** <sup>11</sup>May the LORD give strength to his people!
- C** **May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

The hoopla of the holidays is past. We are entering the doldrums of winter. In southwest Michigan, one day pretty much seems like another. Being so close to Lake Michigan we experience what some have dubbed "permacloud."

Hidden behind all the drabness of winter, we have a God who is powerful and full of majesty. Sometimes we see His majesty in majestic mountain vistas or the beauty of rainbows. Sometimes we see His majesty in the amber waves of grain. Sometimes we see His majesty in tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and blizzards.

But more important than seeing God's majesty in the created world is hearing His voice in the Gospel. The Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus is more majestic than any grand vista or natural weather phenomenon. When we hear it every day, we may be tempted to think that it is drab and featureless. But it is quite the opposite. God's only-begotten Son has set aside His throne of glory to come and be one of us.

During the Epiphany season, we will catch a glimpse of His glory when He changes water into wine, or heals the sick, or makes the lame to walk, or the deaf to hear or the blind to see. We catch a glimpse of His glory when He calms the storm or feeds the five thousand. But we most clearly see His glory when it is hidden in the drabness of the cross and we hear Him say, "Father, forgive them."

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the steadiness of Your love for us. Let us never tire of it or begin to think that it is drab and unimportant. Grant us peace that surpasses all understanding because we have witnessed the glory of our Savior giving Himself for us on the cross. Amen.

## Thursday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

## Genesis 1:1–5

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

There is so much happening in our lessons this week that I'm slightly embarrassed that it has taken until today to think about the grand doctrine of the Holy Trinity. How do we know that the true God is the Triune

God? We know this because He has revealed this fact to us in the Bible.

At Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, we see the Son of God being baptized. God, the Father's presence is made known through the voice coming from heaven declaring, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." We witness the Holy Spirit's presence in the form of a dove descending upon Jesus.

There are other places in Scripture that witness to the truth of understanding God as Three in One and One in Three. As we ponder Jesus' baptism, we cannot help but remember our own. We were baptized according to Jesus' direction in Matthew 28:19, where He commands, "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Old Testament Lesson this week from Genesis 1:1-5 is a witness to this fact. Here in the very second verse of the Bible we first meet the Holy Spirit. He was hovering over the face of the waters.

Today, He also comes to us through water. The Holy Spirit is granted through the waters of our baptism. And in our baptism, the Holy Spirit makes us beloved children of God.

Prayer: Almighty God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless and preserve us always in our baptismal grace. Amen.

## Friday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

## Romans 6:1–11

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup>For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The Bible is rich in baptismal theology. These verses from Romans form a central focus of any discussion of Christian baptism.

The natural man is tempted to think of free forgiveness as a license to sin. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Those of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death. This means that as new people in Christ, we are dead to sin and alive in Him.

Yes, out of weakness, we still succumb to the temptation to sin but that is not who we are. We are no longer creatures of sin and evil. We are a new creation. We are no longer slaves to sin. We are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer: O Lord, thank you for making us new people in Christ Jesus. Grant that Satan would never deceive us into sinning by whispering the promise of forgiveness in our ears. Amen.

## Saturday

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

**L** Praise the LORD, all nations!

**C** Extol him, all peoples!

**L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,

**C** and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

**L** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;

**C** bring an offering, and come into his courts!

## Verse of the Day: Mark 1:11b

**L** Alleluia, Alleluia, You are my beloved Son. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia, Alleluia, With you I am well pleased. Alleluia.

## Kyrie

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

**L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol Him, all peoples!

Here is another great epiphany for Epiphany. God is the God of all! Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the whole world! No one is left out. Galatians 3:28 declares, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

We live in a time of great division in the world. Everywhere you see people fighting for this or that distinction to be made between people. But in Christ, there is no distinction. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Jesus died for all. We are all one in Christ.

Prayer: Almighty God, grant that all nations and people would praise You. Let us not consider one group of people to be more loved by You than another. Let us all kneel before the cross of Jesus, confess our sins, and receive forgiveness, life, and salvation won for us there. Amen.

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