

The Baptism of our Lord, January 10, 2021, Order of Worship

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

Call to Worship, Psalm 29 *Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion (another name for Mount Hermon) like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh (home of the Hebrews at some point during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness). The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!" The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!* (7 times we read *the voice of the Lord*. Repetition draws our attention to what is significant in this passage.)

Confession and Forgiveness for the season of Epiphany

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, whose voice is upon the waters, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation. **Amen.** Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God. Holy God, **you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways** (Psalm 139:1a, 3b). **We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them** (Psalm 139:4); **receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.**

How vast is God's grace! Through the power and promise of Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are claimed as God's own beloved. Indeed, we are forgiven. In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn *Beautiful Savior* (public domain)

*Beautiful Savior, King of creation, Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee, light of my soul, my joy, my crown.*

*Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands, robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.*

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*Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight, bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer, than all the angels in the sky.*

*Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine!*

The Kyrie In peace, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. For all these things we pray: Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

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.**

A reading from Genesis, the 1st chapter (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 (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, p. 75).

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. [Where did the waters come from??] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. Word of God, word of life.

A reading from Acts, the 19th chapter (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 (does anything strike you as odd here?). After Paul baptizes these 12 people (probably all men), the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, p. 75). The words below are my own "version" of a passage that would require a great deal of explanation.

In his travels, Paul came to Ephesus, where he found a dozen disciples/believers/followers. He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They said, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "What kind of baptism did you have?"

They answered, "It was the baptism that John taught." Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance—of changed hearts and lives. (People came to John to be publicly baptized to show the world that they had repented and were committing to lead a new life.) He told people to believe in the one who would come after him, Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Do you remember the words in our Lutheran Baptismal service? "Child of God, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Our gospel writer Luke wrote the book of Acts. Evidently the liturgy—the structured words of the worship service—had not yet added the other members of the Trinity to baptism. This fact helps us remember that everything we read in the Bible—both the Hebrew and the Christian texts—is contextual, written in the words and for the situations of the people who first heard them.) When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ("Speaking in tongues," according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, was just one of the "spiritual gifts" bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Most Lutherans have no experience of this; scripture isn't completely clear on what it meant or how it was used. When someone spoke in a "tongue" or other language, an interpreter was needed to explain the meaning. "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them" [1 Cor 12:4). Lutherans tend to cling to the "fruits of the Spirit" which Paul describes in Galatians 5:22-23a: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.) There were about twelve men in all.

Word of God, word of life.

Alleluia Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!

The holy Gospel according to Mark, the 1st chapter (1:1-11), Sermon (page 6)

Hymn of the Day ***Let Me Be Yours Forever*** (public domain)
Sing to *The Church's One Foundation*

LBW 490

***Let me be yours forever, my gracious God and Lord;
May I forsake you never nor wander from your Word.
Preserve me from the mazes of error and distrust,
And I shall sing your praises forever with the just.***

***Lord Jesus, bounteous giver of light and life divine,
You did my soul deliver; to you I all resign.
You have in mercy bought me with blood and bitter pain;
Let me, since you have sought me, eternal life obtain.***

***O Holy Spirit, pouring sweet peace into my heart,
And all my soul restoring, let me in grace depart.
And while his name confessing whom I by faith have known,
Grant me your constant blessing and take me as your own.***

The Apostle's Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 (from *Sundays and Seasons*, 2020, p. 75)

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

Bless your church throughout the world and its leaders, that guided by the Holy spirit they may proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for wilderness and water, wind and wild beasts, and all living things on earth, that your goodness be revealed through creation and that faithful stewards care for all that you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the nations of the world and their leaders, for laborers busy both day and night, and for peacemakers amid strife, that you inspire all people to use their strength wisely. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing Lord, we pray for the sick and those who provide medical care. As the pandemic continues to rage, turn the hearts of all people to a willingness to work for protection of others and themselves. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of justice, we pray for the imprisoned and those who show them mercy; for the lonely and those who provide companionship; for all who suffer in any way. Shower your compassion on all who are in any kind of need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Keep watch over all who journey during this pandemic. Guard refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers. Protect all who flee conflict in their homelands or abuse in their homes. Tend to those who have no place to lay their heads. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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We give thanks for the faithful departed who now rest from their labors and pray that their witness may inspire us in our baptismal vocations. We remember today our brother Carl Penno (St. Stephen) and ask your comfort on all who grieve his death. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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, who taught us to pray, saying **Our Father . . .**

Closing Hymn ***God, Whose Almighty Word*** (public domain)

***God, whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard and took their flight:
Hear us, we humbly pray, and where the Gospel day sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light!***

***Lord, who once came to bring, on your redeeming wing, healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind, sight to the inly blind; oh, now to humankind
Let there be light!***

***Spirit of truth and love, life-giving holy dove, speed forth your flight;
Move on the water's face bearing the lamp of grace, and in earth's darkest place
Let there be light!***

***Holy and blessed three, glorious Trinity, wisdom, love, might!
Boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride, through the earth, far and wide,
Let there be light!***

Benediction: May God the creator strengthen you; may Jesus the beloved fill you; and may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, keep you in perfect peace. **Amen.**