



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

www.trinitylutheran.ca

January 7, 2024
Baptism of Our Lord

Announcements

January 14 is picture day for the congregation. If you visit our website or social media channels, you'll notice a lot of pictures of the building. It's time for the internet to see what we look like. So, following the service, we'll take a congregational picture for use online.

January 28 Service will be one to mark Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday. This is a day set aside for congregations that have been designated as RIC congregations and those working toward such a designation (something being discerned by Trinity's council) to affirm their commitment to being communities that intentionally invite and welcome members of the 2S *LGBTQIA+ community*.

Next Trinitarian the next issue of Trinity's newsletter is due out later this month. If you have news, recipes, pictures or even a bad pun, please send it to the church office trinitywlutheran@gmail.com. We'd be happy to share it.

Shrove Pancake Supper is scheduled for 5 - 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 13. Invite your friends and family to take part in this simple meal before we begin our Lenten journey toward the cross.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle, Dorothy, Katie, Margaret, Sharon, Vern.

Members: Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Evelyn

Friends & Family: Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Michelle, Randy, Roger, Rose

Introduction to the day

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

Suggested Hymns

WOV #788 Glory to God

ELW # 456 Baptized in the water

ELW # #459 Wade in the water

ELW # 455 Crashing waters of creation

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 Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created¹ the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God³ swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

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. R**

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. R

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 19:1-7

¹While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. ²He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." ⁴Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and

prophesied—⁷altogether there were about twelve of them.

Gospel: Mark 1: 4-11

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Sermon

Washed away

God's peace and grace be with you ...

I had been alone in the office for about 20 minutes when the door buzzer rang.

It was the second day of my first call and I was still unpacking boxes of books and getting things organized.

I opened the church door. There, I was greeted, by a young woman.

"Are you the minister?" she asked.

"As of yesterday," I replied.

"I want to talk to you about baptizing my son," she said.

I ushered her into the office and we spent a little time discussing why she wanted her son baptized ... she wasn't a member of the congregation or even lived in the area ... and what would be involved in the baptism.

It seems that she, her husband and son were staying with her in-laws in a nearby town. They were relocating from the Middle East to Alaska and were in the middle of a brief stopover. She had been to Catholic schools, but had a bad experience and never participated in church life

She had approached other denominations in the town where her in-laws lived and they all declined to baptize the child.

The mother wanted to know about our flavour of Lutheranism and what we held that rite of baptism meant to us and to her son.

Satisfied with my answers, she asked if I could baptize her son before they left for their new home.

I could hear the voice of one of my seminary profs in my ear as she made her request, "Who are you to get between someone and God?" he had said during a discussion on communion.

"I don't see a problem," I told her.

We set the event for a couple of days later.

It was a nice start to my call.

Jesus' baptism. We mark this event every year on the first Sunday of Epiphany, which is today. Epiphany means "manifestation." The season sheds light on Jesus' identity. It reveals the shape of his ministry.

This morning, we hear Mark's version of Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River.

We spent a lot of time with John at the river during the Advent season ... a time when we are called into a period of

preparation. So, some of this story should seem pretty familiar.

John and his followers are on the edge of the known and the unknown ... standing on the shore of a river that separates the Promised Land from the wilderness. It is a place of hope for the people of Israel.

There, John proclaims repentance and the forgiveness of sin ... it's a message that resonates with the people. They come from across the region to hear his message ... to confess their sins ... and to be forgiven as their sins are washed away.

John ... in his pronouncement that someone greater than him will come ... points to something that lies ahead for the world. The figure will bring justice ... mercy ... mutual respect ... and eternal life into a world where the opposite holds true.

This is Jesus' first appearance in Mark's gospel ... his baptism is the beginning of the good news.

Unlike the other gospel writers, Mark doesn't spend a lot of time explaining the baptism ... Jesus doesn't confess his sins. Jesus shows up in the crowd and is baptized along with the others who have gathered.

Scholar Emerson Powery wrote about Jesus' baptism by John in his book on the New Testament.

In the book, Powery wrote:

"Jesus' baptism was an act of 'solidarity with the rest of the community' in the spirit of John's transforming mission."

Baptism as a sign of solidarity, which means that baptism is both communal and personal.

Baptism joins us to Christ and binds us to one another and because it does baptism transforms ... it changes the person and it changes the community.

When Jesus is baptized, the Spirit breaks into the world and the whole world is changed by the event.

In the baptismal moment, Jesus became a sign for the people ... that God's ongoing promise was still in place ... that God had not forgotten or given up on Creation ... that light still shined in creation.

Before I get to the end of this morning's homily, let me finish the story that began this lesson.

The mother, her mother-in-law, son and two other people arrived at the sanctuary at the scheduled time.

I performed the rite and as I poured water over the baby's head, the mother looked up at me and asked:

"Can I be baptized too?"

The statement, "Who are you to get between someone and God?" flashed through my mind again.

I nodded and she was baptized, as well. Tears welled up in her eyes as I made the sign of the cross on her forehead.

She had felt the pull to come to the font and join a community of people she had never met ... and who she may never see ... but one that called her into belonging into a family of a different sort

The Spirit works as the Spirit works.

For some parents, baptism is just something you do ... whether out of a sense of obligation or to satisfy family ... the child is baptized and not seen again with the walls of the sanctuary.

For this mother, it meant something deeper and more profound.

It was deeply personal ... it was a moment when she experienced a profound sense of love she had never experienced before and was overwhelmed by it.

This morning, as he was being baptized, Jesus looked up and saw the curtains of heaven torn open ... a dove flew down to

him ... he felt the Spirit's touch ... and heard his Father's voice "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

In his baptism, Jesus is endowed with authority from heaven and imbued with the Spirit to unseat the powers of the world through his ministry of healing and teaching.

Baptism is the beginning ... it is the foundation upon which all that follows stands.

At Christmas, we were presented with the peaceful and loving scene of an infant Jesus in a manger ... this morning's passage is when the world truly begins to change ... as one of my seminary profs liked to put it ... this is when the rubber hits the road.

Immediately after his baptism, Jesus is called into the wilderness ... an unfamiliar place ... where the landscape seemed foreign ... and where suffering and pain have a home. It is where he affirms his identity and his transformative call to the world.

This is where our baptism invites us, as well.

In our baptism, we were adopted as daughters and sons of God. We were transformed by the loving actions of the one who came to identify with us in his own baptism and death.

His righteousness became our righteousness.

Through our own baptism, we are not only called into a family of believers ... our faith family ... we join with Christ ... and through these bonds we are called to minister ... to challenge the status quo by allowing the Spirit to work through us to be agents of grace and reconciliation.

These wilderness places call us to journey into that unfamiliar ... uncomfortable territory. It is where our baptism can be fully realized and experienced.

It is the call of discipleship.

The Spirit carries us out into the wilderness of the world to make the unconditional love ... the grace ... we have received manifest through our words and actions.

The curtain has been torn open ... there's no going back.

The touch of water or the sight of tears at the baptismal font serves as a reminder of our own baptism ... a remembrance of the grace we have received ... a remembrance of our place within this community ... and of our call ... to reach out to others.

And a remembrance that we do not journey in the wilderness alone ... though baptism, we are together and that we are most certainly loved.

AMEN

Lord's Prayer

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.

Blessing

Almighty God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

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