

Sunday 8 January 2022

The Baptism of Christ



The baptism of Christ Grace United Methodist Church, Manassas, Vancouver

Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Father, let me dedicate (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Because God was merciful,

he saved us through the water of rebirth
and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

But through sin we have fallen away from our baptism.

Let us return to the Lord and renew our faith in his promises
by confessing our sins in penitence.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Baptism of Christ

Let us pray that we may be faithful to our baptism.

Silence

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the

prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. *Isaiah 42:1-9*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter said, 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' *Acts 10:34-43*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Kyrie Eleison ('Lord have mercy') ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))
Kyrie Eleison ([different version](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the River Jordan, to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptised,

just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

Matthew 3:13-end

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

How did we get from the baby Jesus in a manger, the whole nativity and Christmas to Jesus being baptised as a 30-ish year-old man in such a short time—a matter of, what, two weeks? In fact, when you think of it, we still had Jesus in the manger and the three wise men finding him on Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas.

We don't have much to read in the Holy Scriptures about Jesus between his birth and his being named and, now, this account of his baptism, except for the story of when he was about 12 years old, and he stayed behind at the Temple while his family journeyed on. This adds to the importance of the events of his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove. It is at that moment that Jesus begins his public ministry.

Like the others whom John is baptising, Jesus is immersed in the River Jordan. However, when he came back up, the Holy Spirit that he will later pass onto others, comes upon him in visible form. The appearance is that of a dove. And a voice from heaven declares Jesus, as the Son of God and that with him, the Spirit of God will remain. Remember when Jesus was leaving the Disciples here on Earth, he said to them, 'My Spirit I will give to you.' During the very brief span of Jesus' earthly ministry, the total activity of God's Holy Spirit was through Jesus. Anointed with the Holy Spirit, Jesus made obvious God's Divine Compassion in deeds of healing, and in setting free those who were victims of the power of evil.

Jesus' baptism is a life-changing event for all of us because we are then baptised with the baptism of Jesus Christ. We are claimed by God through our faith in Jesus Christ. We know to whom we belong. Our baptism can remind us that no one determines our worth! We belong to God ... and in baptism he says to us 'You are my Beloved!' Our identity, as mysterious as it is, is in Jesus Christ, as we ourselves are sealed as Christ's own forever.

Last week we held our annual convent renewal service in *which we celebrate all that God has done for us and affirm that we give our lives and choices to Him*. Through our baptism, during that service last week and whenever we attend a baptism in the church, we get the chance to grow and develop our close personal relationship

with God, but it doesn't end there. Because of our baptism, we are called to reach out to others, just as Jesus did. In our baptism we are called beyond ourselves.

I remember hearing or reading somewhere that someone referred to baptism as 'the daily garment which we as Christians are to wear all the time.' That is the pattern of where our Christian life comes from, the continuous dynamics of our baptism. Being brought low or humbled or going down into the water, so to speak, washed by what happens in our lives, but then ... RAISED UP. Every day is a new experience of that cycle if we allow ourselves to realise it. And to recognise our sin, our brokenness, our need for repentance, but then, to remember that we are members of the Body of Christ, one in him who dwells in us. Therefore, we can feel revitalised, and we can be restored.

All of this, if we truly live it, allows us to thrive in the season of Epiphany, the time after Christmas when we celebrate the light of Christ, especially in our darkest hours: the reality of the baptism of Jesus and our baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. Renewing our baptismal covenant helps us remember that we are part of the whole family of Christ.

Baptism is also remarkable for another reason; it calls us to look beyond ourselves to the world God has made and loves. It is like a good marriage where each is committed to the other out of love, but we also accept responsibilities because of that love. Because we are baptised, our lives are different. Just as when we love someone, our lives are different because our focus is different.

Baptism is a huge symbol: it's the water of creation; we are born anew to life in the Spirit and all the bad 'stuff' is washed off. That original (or 'primal'), sin of pride, the sin of selfishness and ego is symbolically washed off. Baptism is the death of the old self. The old passes away and a new creation is born. What a staggering gift!

Remember when two of the disciples of Jesus, James and John, came to him asking for places of honour in His heavenly Kingdom? Jesus answered them by asking, 'Are you able to be baptised with the baptism I have been baptised with?' He meant that there is a calling in our baptisms. We have been given special gifts by God ... and we are called by God to use those gifts for the blessing of others. Our baptism is not just something to hold for ourselves. It sends us out into God's world. We are commissioned as God's people, marked as Christ's own forever. We are sent to serve our Lord. We are often called to serve the Lord right where we are, here and now—with the people we know, in the places where we live and work. That's usually where we can make the most difference. But, we need to realise that we each have our own special gifts to be used in the service of our Lord who gave us the gifts in the first place. We don't all have the same gifts. So, that is

all the more reason that we need to be mindful of our own gifts, what we do have to offer.

God has given each one of us special gifts that set us apart from others. Like snowflakes, no two of us are alike. There is only one of you. Each one of us is different and each one of us has something special to share with others. Not only has God gifted each one of us with something very special, and not only do we have a variety of gifts, but also, if these gifts are exercised with love and commitment, ALL of God's people are strengthened.

Too often we look upon the Christian life in terms of duty and obligation. How much better it is when we see our faith in Christ as a gift to be received with gratitude and expressed with joy. Then our attitude in approaching each day is one of anticipating what opportunities will open up for us to use the gifts God has given us. Just as Jesus became empowered for the ministry he was called to; may we realise that we too are empowered for our own ministry...to serve the Lord in whatever form that may take in our own lives.

OUR baptism reminds us that we belong to the Lord. Every time we cross ourselves or every time we wash, we proclaim that; we remind ourselves that we were sealed in baptism as Christ's own *forever*.

If these thoughts seem a little radical, or simply new, it might help to remember that the liturgy used in a service of baptism got there first. At the so-called vows, the priest asks the person being baptised (or their parents and godparents) a series of questions. The first three ask them to turn away from the past and the second set of three ask the candidate to put Jesus in the place left vacant by that repentance.

I'm going to read the questions one at a time and, if you want, respond with a silent 'Yes'. Here goes:

1. Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?
2. Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?
3. Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?
4. Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?
5. Do you submit to Christ as Lord?
6. Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

In summary, then:

God claims us.

We are His.

Jesus is the Lord of our lives and baptism is the sacramental way of expressing that truth. Thank you, Lord!

AMEN

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.
We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Jesus calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
Washed clean by the waters of baptism,
let us pray that we may live the life to which he has called us.
Lord Jesus, eternal Word,
proclaimed as the Christ by John the forerunner,
hear us as we pray for all who proclaim your word ...

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, baptising with the Spirit and with fire,
strengthen us to withstand all the trials of our faith ...
Lord of truth,

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, bringing forgiveness to all who repent,
teach your Church dependence on your grace ...
Lord of truth,

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, fulfilment of the promises of old,
give hope to all who suffer or are ignored ...

Lord of truth,

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, beloved Son of the Father,
anoint us with the gifts of your Holy Spirit ...

Lord of truth,

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, bringer of hope,
share with all the faithful the riches of eternal life ...

Lord of truth,

All hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
in you the Father makes us and all things new.

Transform the poverty of our nature

by the riches of your grace,

and in the renewal of our lives

make known your heavenly glory.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

We are the body of Christ.

In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace

and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Spirit of the living God (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
Spirit of the living God (different version)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Father's voice bears witness to the Son.

All God has revealed himself to us.

The Son bows his head beneath the waters of baptism.

All God has revealed himself to us.

The Spirit as a dove descends from heaven.

All God has revealed himself to us.

Submitting to John's baptism, Christ delivers us from bondage.

All God has revealed himself to us.

And the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now

and remain with you always.

All Amen.

The dismissal Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.' *John 1:32*

HYMN 4 Just as I am

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

We have come to Christ, the living water.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
You celebrated your new gift of baptism
in signs and wonders at the Jordan.
Your voice was heard from heaven
to awaken faith in the presence among us
of your Word made flesh.
Your Spirit was seen as a dove,
revealing Jesus as your servant,
and anointing him with the oil of gladness
to preach the good news to the poor.
Therefore, as we celebrate the union of earth and heaven,
we rejoice to echo the song of the angels in heaven
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.

Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

All **Almighty God,**
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.