**January 10, 2021 Baptism of Jesus**

**News and Announcements**

**Prelude**

**Lighting of Candle**

We light this candle to remind us that the love of Christ shines

upon us each and every day.

We worship the God revealed through   
Jesus the Christ, in spirit and in truth.

**Singing**VU 593 *Jesu, Jesu, Fill us with your Love*

**Call to Worship**

Water of Life, present at the creation of the universe.

Water of Life, present at our birth.

Water of Life, present at the baptism of Jesus.

Water of Life, present at our own baptisms.

We remember that at these times, not only was there water, but also the voice of God was experienced and felt speaking to us.

God, Water of Life, we come this morning to be filled with your living water and to listen for your voice. Amen.

Reading from Scripture:

Acts 19: 1-7

Now, it happened that while Apollos was away in Corinth, Paul made his way down through the mountains, came to Ephesus, and happened on some disciples there. The first thing he said was, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?”

“We’ve never even heard of that—a Holy Spirit? God within us?”

“How were you baptized, then?” asked Paul.

“In John’s baptism.”

“That explains it,” said Paul. “John preached a baptism of radical life-change so that people would be ready to receive the One coming after him, who turned out to be Jesus. If you’ve been baptized in John’s baptism, you’re ready now for the real thing, for Jesus.”

And they were. As soon as they heard of it, they were baptized in the name of the Master Jesus. Paul put his hands on their heads and the Holy Spirit entered them. From that moment on, they were praising God in tongues and talking about God’s actions. Altogether there were about twelve people there that day.

Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A4-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24217a)] in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A4-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24221b)] water; but he will baptize you with[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A4-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24221c)] the Holy Spirit.”

### The Baptism of Jesus

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And 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. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved;[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A4-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24224d)] with you I am well pleased.”

We respond:

In ages past, disciples, prophets, priests and historians wrote down their faith.

**This is a faithful witness of our ancestors.**

Word of God for us today.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon** Who is this who calls us?

**Singing:**VU 99 *Christ, When for Us you were Baptized*

Giving Our Offerings:

**MV #191 (sing twice through)**

Offering Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

we bring all we have—

**our faith, our doubts,**

our hopes, our dreams,

**our lives in all their untidiness,**

and we offer to you some of the gifts that you,

in your generosity, have shared with us.

**Bless these gifts, and bless us, we pray,**

**for the good of your love at work in the world. Amen.**

**Prayer of the People**

We stand on the banks of the river with you, companion Jesus. We look at the stream of people moving forward to accept the gift of baptism—and we wonder. Do they truly understand how completely their lives will be disrupted? Are they truly aware of the challenge of living a life of faith that changes them from the inside out? Do they truly welcome the call to never be the same again?

For that matter, O Christ, do we? Do I?

Yet, as we watch those who have received their baptism, this washing away of what was in order to invite in what *will be*, we notice the look of transformation that gushes forth in their smiles,

we become aware of the change in their posture and the light that warms their faces.

That’s the kind of wholeness for which we yearn. That’s the kind of new life we seek as we share the confessions of our hearts with you, relayed silently within our hearts:

(*a time of silent praye*r)

Ah, here we are, wrapped within your loving arms of compassion, O Spirit, anticipating your intimate touch through the waters of life—your cleansing, your renewing, and your equipping of us for life’s vagaries. We feel trickles of water over our face, down our backs, and into our eyes.

Each trickle maps a path of transformation.

Each trickle becomes a web of strength and of courage.

Each trickle disrupts life as we knew it to prepare us for the renewed life we will come to know.

As we blink away the trickles from our eyes,   
our vision becomes your vision.

We understand now.

You have taken us as we are, O God.

You have summoned out what we shall be.

In baptism, you have set your seal upon our hearts.

Living Christ, do we yet know how completely our lives will continue to change through our baptism?

Perhaps, but *we do* know that you are with us each step of the way—our companion and our guide, the one who taught us to pray, saying, “Our Father…”

**The Lord’s Prayer**

We gather these prayers, and we turn to you as our Mother who loves us and say the prayer Jesus taught us:

**Modern spoken**

**Singing:** AGCS 64*Simple Gifts*

**Commissioning**

The hope of Christ leads us into the world.  
 The hope of Christ illumines our own shadowed places.  
 The hope of Christ within us lets us love the world.  
 May this hope go before you and go within you.  
 And may we recognize Christ’s hope everywhere we go.

Today’s prayers were written or inspired by ***Fern Gibbard,******David Sparks, Deborah Ambridge Fisher, Gord Dunbar, Robin Wardlaw,***and are used with permission from *Gathering’s* Christmas Epiphany, 2020-2021 edition.