

Order of Worship for January 12, 2025 8:30 AM
Baptism of our Lord

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “To Jordan’s River Came Our Lord” - Hymn #405

Beginning

P: We begin

C: in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

P: We begin

C: with the sign of the cross.

P: We begin

C: as we began, with water, Word, and Spirit in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P: Let us begin

C: the world all over again with Word and Spirit, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P: Let us begin

C: God’s new creation adding the Word of life to the stuff of life.

P: Let us begin

C: By baptizing the world in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and with the sign of the cross.

Confession of Sins

P: Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

C: We do.

P: Do you reject the old, the dead, the life apart from God?

C: We do.

P: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit?

C: We do.

P: Will you be baptized into the Christian faith, into a life of service, into a life of giving?

C: We will! We have been! In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and with the sign of the cross.

Gift of Forgiveness

P: For if we become one with Him in dying as He did, in the same way we shall be one with Him by being raised to life as He was,

C: For we know this: the old being has been put to death with Christ on His cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin.

P: For when a person dies, he is set free from the power of sin.

C: If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.

P: For we know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again—death has no more power over Him.

C: The death He died was death to sin, once and for all; and the life He now lives is life to God.

P: In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God in union with Christ Jesus. In His name, your sins are forgiven.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 43:1–7

R: “But now thus says the LORD, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in My eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring My sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Romans 6:1-11

R: What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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.

For if we have been united with Christ in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. 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. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 3:15–22

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3rd chapter

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to

untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So with many other exhortations John preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Credal Statement: Sacrament of Baptism parts Third and Fourth, p. 325

Children’s Message

Sermon Hymn: “*Lord Take My Hand and Lead Me*” - **Hymn #722**

Sermon: “*Passing Through the Waters*” – **Isaiah 43:1-7**

Around this day over two thousand years ago, a momentous event occurred. A victorious Roman general had his army poised on the border between the frontier of Gaul and the borders of what we now know as Italy. If the general crossed the river, he would be committing treason, plunging his nation into a civil war. Yet if he didn’t, he would be forced to surrender his army and face the ruin of his career. And so, finally, Julius Caesar led his army across the Rubicon, marking the beginning of the end of the Roman republic, and the series of events that would lead to the Roman Empire.

Crossing the Rubicon has become an idiom that means passing the point of no return. It means a dividing line, a crisis point, a step that changes someone or something forever. Passing through those waters changed the world.

For the people of Israel, passing through the waters marked instances of great change, as well. God told Noah that He would flood the entire earth until the highest mountain was twenty feet below the surface of the water. God destroyed all because of the wickedness of man, but He made a covenant of promise to save Noah and his family. After Moses and all the people of Israel passed through the waters of the parted Red Sea, God delivered His people as the walls of water slammed shut, crushing and drowning the entire Egyptian army, marking a dividing line between slavery and freedom. Under Joshua, God led Israel into the Promised Land when He parted the Jordan River, marking a dividing line between wandering in the wilderness and taking possession of the land promised to be theirs.

Passing through water marks a dividing line. That’s why people were coming out to the Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptizer. They were coming to pass through the water, to mark a change in their lives, repenting, renewing, reframing, and reshaping what their lives would be. The crowds went out from Jerusalem to hear from John, to hear his message to change their lives, to turn them around, to repent. Their lives would be marked by a difference between when

they passed through the waters of repentance, before and after. John told them what that would look like. The tax collectors would stop cheating their clients, only collecting what they needed to. The soldiers would stop extorting those around them. Others would share their extra clothes and food with those who had none. Their lives would be very different after passing through those waters.

That's why Jesus launched His ministry in water at His Baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. His life would be different after passing through these waters. He would begin his public ministry, leaving Nazareth behind. The heavens would open, the Spirit would descend on him like a dove, and the Father's voice would declare, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Just as Israel had crossed the Jordan long ago under the hand of their helper and savior, Joshua, to enter the Promised Land, so Jesus enters the Jordan to prepare the way for you, pass through the waters for you, and give you the promised land of heaven.

But passing through waters isn't always an easy thing. Many in Northwest Iowa are still recovering from the flood waters there this summer. People there, like others who have dealt with flooding, will mark their lives into the time before the flood and the time afterwards. Passing through the waters changed things, not necessarily for the better.

News reports continue to cover the fires in California. And while fingers get pointed and blame gets shifted based on climate change and forest mismanagement, the people who are passing through the fires are having their lives changed forever.

For the people of Israel hearing Isaiah's words, they'd passed through water and fire and wilderness. They're lives had been changed, and not for the better. But Isaiah doesn't come with a word of judgement, reminding them of what they had done, how they'd turned their backs on God and God's commands.

Instead, God reminds the people of Israel that they are His chosen people. They have been called by name, they have been chosen, and no fire or water, no floods or storms or exile, will ever change that fact. Reminding them that they had been led through the waters of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, that he had been with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, God promised to be with them even now, even when they were exiled, far from where God had been. Just as God had been with Abraham as he was led to the promised land, just as God had been with Moses as he passed through the waters of the Nile and the Red Sea and the fire of the burning bush, just as God had been with Isaiah while he was preaching an unpopular message of repentance, God be with the exiles and lead them back home.

But while that promise was directed to the people of Israel, God's chosen people, it wasn't enough to leave it at that. As we read later in Isaiah, "it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6). God's people were chosen and led through fire and water, not to be holy for themselves, but to share that light and life and calling with the whole world.

We, too, are called by name and led by God through water and fire. In Baptism, God called you by name, led you through water from death to new life, and gave you the fire of the Holy Spirit.

While a splash of water, the flame of a candle, and a printed certificate may not look like much, it's in the little things that God works.

This is why Luther said, "The Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever" (Small Catechism, Baptism, Fourth Part). Passing through the waters changes us, and changes our lives.

And because you have been called by name, because you have been chosen by God to be his beloved child, you have promises that God will never let you go. God promises that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

When coming back from visiting my brother in Indiana or family in Illinois, crossing the Mississippi River marks a halfway point, a sign that we're back in Iowa and getting closer to home. It marks a division between being away and being at home.

In baptism you have passed through the waters from death to life. God promises to be with you, and never leave you or forsake you, no matter what happens. It means you always have a home where you are loved. What a wonderful promise.

Sharing Our Ministry:

Responsive prayer

P: Let us pray, giving thanks to the Lord for the gift of baptism which we all have received.

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of dying with Christ—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of victoriously rising with Christ--

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of new life in Christ—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of adoption by our heavenly Father—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of membership in Christ's Body, the Church—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in our midst—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

P: For these and all the gifts and graces given us in Holy Baptism—

C: We praise You, O Lord; we thank You!

Prayers

Lord's Prayer:

Prayer of Departure

P: Let us pray, asking God to help us remain faithful always to the new life into which we have been born in water and the Spirit.

Christ Jesus, our Rock and Salvation, baptism makes us one with You in Your Kingdom.

C: Build Your Kingdom within us.

P: Christ Jesus, You offered living water to the Samaritan woman.

C: Lead us to the Fountain of Life.

P: Christ Jesus, You restored life to the widow's son.

C: Raise us from our death of sin.

P: Christ Jesus, You gave sight to the man born blind.

C: Lord, give us sight that we may see!

P: Christ Jesus, You made the leper clean.

C: Lord, if You will, You can make us clean.

P: Christ Jesus, You are the Good Samaritan Who heals our wounds.

C: Take pity on us; heal the wounds which sin has made in us.

P: Christ Jesus, Lord and Master of all, You calmed the fury of the storm.

C: Lord, save us lest we perish.

P: Christ Jesus, the words of Your teaching filled the crowds with astonishment.

C: You have the words of eternal life.

P: Christ Jesus, by Your Word You drove the unclean spirits from Mary Magdalene.

C: Protect us from the evil spirits.

P: Christ Jesus, through Peter, You gave the crippled man the power to walk again.

C: Guide our faltering steps in the way of eternal life.

P: O Lord our God, You came to the rescue of Your chosen people in the desert. Fill us, we pray, with the strength and support of Your life so that, always secure in the comfort of Your presence, we may labor day by day for the building of Your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen! Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD. Let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

P: You are in our midst, O Lord; Your name we bear; do not forsake us!

C: Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD. Let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"All Who Believe and Are Baptized"* - Hymn #601

Postlude