

## Order of Worship for January 11, 2026

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

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

### The 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, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

P: Let us begin

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

### The 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, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and with the sign of the cross.**

### The 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 self 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: So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Your sins have been forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen. Thanks be to God!**

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 42:1-9

R: Behold 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 aloud or lift up His voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed He will not break, and a faintly burning wick He will not quench; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for His law. 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 on it and spirit to those who walk in it: “I am the Lord; I have called You in righteousness; I will take You by the hand and keep You; I will give You as a covenant for the people, a light for 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 carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

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 Him 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:** Matthew 3:13-17

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus

answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Children’s message (8:30 AM)**

**Sermon Hymn:** “*To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord*”- **Hymn #407 vs. 1-4**

**Sermon:** “*Fulfilling All Righteousness*” - **Matthew 3:13-17**

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. In Titus 3, as we might remember from the Catechism, we are told:

God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

The “washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit” is baptism. But Jesus was not lost in sin as we were. He did not need the gift of new life and faith. In fact, when Jesus comes to the Jordan River where John the Baptist is, the baptisms John has been doing is not a baptism for new life, but a baptism of repentance. It is being given to people who already have the faith of the Old Testament. The baptism moves people to repent, to turn around from evil ways. Jesus has no evil ways to turn from, no need for repentance. That is why John is shocked when Jesus comes and asks to be baptized. He replies to Jesus, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”

Jesus answers, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”

What does Jesus mean by this? How does this “fulfill all righteousness.”

We have been given a great gift from God by all the people throughout the centuries who have studied the Scriptures and helped us to understand them. Yes, there are many who twist the truth of Scriptures, but if we look as those who let Scripture speak for itself and do good scholarship, not to get an advanced degree or to sell books, then they can really help us. One of those people is Dr. Jeff Gibbs, a retired professor at our seminary in St. Louis who became quite an expert on Matthew’s Gospel. I went to school before his time, but I am blessed that Pastor Dave did and shared with me the three volumes of Gibbs’ commentary on Matthew. As we look at what Gibbs says about the story of Jesus’ baptism from Matthew 3, we see how great it is for us that Jesus was baptized.

Jesus tells John that they should “allow” this to happen, that is Jesus’ baptism by John. This is a concession; it shows Jesus in His humiliation, Jesus, who as God could determine

anything, is giving up control to allow Him to receive what is happening. And what is happening? The sinless Son of God is bearing the sins of the world. The innocent are in the process of being condemned and punished for your sins and mine.

Jesus says this baptism is to occur “at this time.” Jesus is affirming the importance— “at this time”—of John’s ministry. He is preparing for what He will do on the last day, but “at this time” is very key to that. But by having to say this, Jesus shows John’s misunderstanding of how Jesus is saving the world by His humiliation as sin-bearer. John doesn’t realize that what Jesus will have to do is suffer on the cross to bring that about.

Jesus says that it is fitting “for us” to go ahead with the baptism. This is in what is called the “dative,” which means this is not what they are determining to do, but what is the will of God the Father. “Us” shows that the Father has chosen both Jesus and John for this.

Jesus says being baptized by John is “fitting.” Fitting for what? For “all righteousness.” “Righteousness” can mean so much, but at the core of it is the One who determines what is righteous—God Almighty. And righteousness is not some vague concept; it is God in action as Psalm 71:19 tells us, “Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, You who have done great things.” God’s greatest deed is seen in His Son, Christ Jesus, who has come to fulfill God’s plan of saving us.

“Fulfill” is to participate in the divine plan. Matthew’s Gospel, written to Jews and to those very familiar with the Old Testament, puts special emphasis on how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God’s plan is seen to work through His people Israel. But now Jesus is taking on the role of Israel, to be God’s means to save the world.

All of this is enough to show us that Jesus is the one to fulfill all righteousness. Yet, God gives us more. The heavens open wide, the Holy Spirit comes on Jesus in the form of a dove, and the Father proclaims, “This My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

What we see in this is how thoroughly and carefully God worked our salvation in Christ Jesus. Almost 40 years ago many witnessed on live television the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger which killed all seven crew members. The crash was caused by the failure of the primary and secondary O-ring seals in a joint in the right space shuttle solid rocket booster due to lower temperatures than normal. It was a very minor detail, but it led to disaster. But God left nothing to chance. He made all that happened in Jesus to bring about our complete restoration to Him.

And note how He did it. As God almighty we might expect Him to use His power and might to accomplish that. It is the way we like things to get done. Our military likes to use overwhelming force, “shock and awe” to completely and quickly demoralize our enemies. We like to take a pill or get an injection to relieve our ills in minutes. We want the repairman to come quickly and get our heat going again in an hour. We want our coffee to be brewed in seconds. We want to spend a few minutes on a computer and make a complex task simple. In that kind of thinking we’d expect an almighty God to snap His fingers, and the problems go away.

But God did not choose to do it that way. He could by His might remove all the sin in us, but it would be by force. It would result in either our complete destruction or turning us into

obedient puppets or robots. We would obey God but never love Him. No, we could truly never receive His love.

Instead, God the Father sent His Son into this world to save us by humiliation and sacrifice. It is not what John expected. Later he wondered about Jesus when Jesus did not bring about the revolution that Jesus' followers were expecting would happen. John had talked about how Jesus would bring "a winnowing fork to thrash the people" and divide the good from the evil. They did not see that as the angel told both Mary and Joseph how to name God's Son. His name would be "Jesus." Why? Because he would save God's people "from their sins." That would happen by His sacrifice on the cross.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, but it happened in a way contrary to what people thought. God continues to do that in our lives today. So many things that happen seem to show that God has it all wrong or that He doesn't care. While the news is dominated by struggles in Ukraine and Gaza, many more people are killed by violence in African countries like Sudan, South Sudan, and Congo. Our technological answers to problems create new problems. We have the medical knowledge to provide so much, but how do we pay for it?

In the midst of that we look to Jesus' baptism, when He took on the public ministry of becoming the sacrifice for our sins. That leads us to the cross where we see Him fulfilling righteousness with the words, "It is finished." And we look into the open tomb and know indeed, in Jesus "It has been fulfilled."

**Creedal Statement:** Sacrament of Baptism –Third and Fourth parts (pg. 325 in the hymnal)

### **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

P: Lord in your mercy.

**C: Hear our prayer.**

## 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 Magdelene.

**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**