

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Aitkin, Minnesota**  
**January 8, 2023**  
**Baptism of Our Lord**  
**ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

## Introit

Behold my servant, whom | I uphold,\*  
my chosen, in whom my | soul delights.

I will tell of | the decree:\*

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have  
be- | gotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your |  
heritage,\*

and the ends of the earth your pos- | session.

You shall break them with a | rod of iron\*

and dash them in pieces like a potter's | vessel."

Now therefore, O | kings, be wise;\*

be warned, O rulers | of the earth.

Serve the | LORD with fear,\*

and rejoice with | trembling,

for his wrath is quickly | kindled.\*

Blessèd are all who take ref- | uge in him.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***

**and to the Holy | Spirit;**

**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***

**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Behold my servant, whom | I uphold,\*

my chosen, in whom my | soul delights.

## Collect of the Day

☞ Let us pray. Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus

Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading**

*Isaiah 42:1–9*

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.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Epistle

*Romans 6:1–11*

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.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Holy Gospel

*Matthew 3:13–17*

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 be to Thee, O Christ.**

## Apostles' Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**The third day He rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Sermon Text – Matthew 3:13-17**

**Theme – Major Milestone of the Ministry of Jesus**

As I look back over the 40 plus years that I have been a pastor, there are a few memorable milestones of ministry. It all began on June 27, 1982 when the pastors of the Detroit Lakes circuit laid their hands on me and I was ordained to be a pastor in the Lutheran Church. After that there were a few firsts: the first sermon, the first wedding, and the first funeral. Thankfully, the first funeral waited 6 months into my ministry. But, the first funeral opened the floodgates as it was followed by many more funerals in the next few months. After all those firsts came many more major milestones of ministry.

My task as a preacher, though, is not for me to talk about my ministry; my task as a preacher is to talk about Jesus' ministry. A couple of weeks ago, we celebrated one of the many milestones in His life – His birth in Bethlehem. Today, we remember another major milestone – His baptism in the Jordan River. That milestone marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It is His ordination, if you will.

It was about 30 years after Jesus birth that Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. Apparently, John knew who Jesus was. How he knew,

we don't know. Maybe his mother Elizabeth had told John how he had leaped in her womb when her cousin, Jesus' mother, Mary, came for a visit and that her cousin's son was the Messiah, the Promised One. It really doesn't matter how John knew that Jesus was the Messiah; what matters is that John knew.

We know that John knew because when Jesus came to be baptized by John, John tried to **“prevent”** him from being baptized, saying **“I need to be baptized by you”** (Matthew 3:14).

It is so confusing! John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin (Mark 1:4). So why was Jesus coming to be baptized? He was without sin! Jesus' reply was this: **“Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”** (Matthew 3:15).

Being righteous is something we want to be; it is something we should be; it is something we try to be. It is, however, something we cannot be. Sinful thoughts and desires show themselves in our sinful words and deeds. We may try to make excuses for them. We may try to justify them. Once we have them and do them and speak them, the damage is done. Our righteousness is gone.

Jesus, however, can be what we cannot be. He is the Righteous One (Isaiah 53:11; Acts 3:14) who in our Gospel Lesson for today and who through His Baptism is fulfilling all righteousness, yours, mine, the world's.

That's why Jesus is there with a bunch of sinners who were being baptized by John. He put Himself smack dab in the middle of all those sinners. Jesus is

identifying Himself with sinners, like you and me. It is as if Jesus is saying to John, “Treat me just like them. Treat me like a sinner.” That’s what Jesus came to be. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, St. Paul writes this about Jesus, **“He who knew no sin became sin, so that He might become the righteousness of God.”**

Jesus was born just like us. Jesus grows up just like us. Jesus was baptized just like us. He wants to be us so that we can be Him – children of God. Jesus not only lives our life; He dies our death. Why? He lived our life and died our death **“to fulfill all righteousness.”** He dies our death to pay the price for our sin. Of course, His crucifixion is another major milestone of His ministry and so is His resurrection.

He fulfilled all righteousness and because He did He can make us righteous. In our Epistle Lesson, St. Paul tells us that when we were baptized all that Jesus did became ours. In baptism, he says, we died with Christ, but we also rise with Christ so that we can live with Christ. Through Baptism our sins are forgiven. Jesus makes us righteous.

So as you reflect on the major milestones in your life, maybe there are things like a wedding that comes to mind, as it should. Maybe you think of the birth of a child, as you should. But don’t forget your baptism.

It is a single event that has a lasting effect. Your baptism gives you new life here and eternal life in heaven. Every morning, as you rise from sleep you can remember that you are baptized, that you are a child of God. And each evening, as you go to bed and reflect on the day gone by and all the things you had thought, said,

or did that did not reflect the fact that you are a child of God, you can remember that you a baptized. You are forgiven!

So, instead of making excuses for your sin, instead of trying to justify yourselves, let Jesus justify you.  
AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Church**

Heavenly Father, Your Son fulfilled all righteousness and submitted to Baptism with sinners in the Jordan. Well-pleased, You opened the heavens for us and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. As You have joined us to Christ's death and resurrection by Holy Baptism and given us Your Spirit, strengthen our hearts and open our ears to hear Your Holy Word and rejoice that You have made us Your beloved children in Him.

Lord God, as You have opened heaven to Your Church through Holy Baptism, give her faithful teachers to proclaim Your Son, Jesus Christ, and all that accords with godliness, that many would repent of their sins and join Him in His kingdom.

We give You thanks for the gift of family. Bless all parents that they would joyfully acknowledge Your gifts of spouse, children and home. Be near to the elderly, the widowed and the orphaned. Show forth Your grace to them, that they would not feel alone.

Lord God, Your Son, Jesus, is the Christ and the true King of this world. Grant great humility to the rulers of the nations that they would submit to the preaching of His Holy Word for the sake of their own souls and for the good of Your holy people.

O God who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, have compassion on Your creation. Deliver from danger all who are threatened by natural disaster, dangerous weather, pestilence, flood or famine. Provide all that is needed for this body and life.

Holy God, You sent Your Son as the Servant who would preserve the bruised reed and the faintly burning wick. Hear us on behalf of those in need of healing and deliverance [*including \_\_\_\_\_*]. Provide healing, restoration and justice according to Your good and gracious will, and grant that we would always rejoice in Your Son's everlasting faithfulness toward us.

Lord God, heavenly Father, You have called Your Church from every tribe and nation. Grant that Your people throughout the world would rejoice in the death and resurrection of Christ and live as those who have died and risen with Him in Holy Baptism; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

- C** **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.**

## Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be  
gracious unto you.  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give  
you peace.
- C** **Amen.**

## Acknowledgments

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