

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of Wausau, Wisconsin

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

January 9, 2022

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

A Time for New Beginnings

Lani Smith

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The voice of God resounds upon the water.

The Spirit of the Lord hovers over the stream.

The Son of God is named, "Beloved."

And all who worship shout out, "Glory!"

Ascribe to the Lord majesty and strength.

Let us worship God in holy splendor.

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan the heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and your voice affirmed your love in Jesus for the healing of the human race and all creation. By water and word, you lovingly invite us into this same life-giving mission. May your Spirit, moving like a stream of water flowing from its source, work in us this day to realize your vision of a world made new in Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

*HYMN

Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven

619

1 Praise, my soul, the God of heaven; glad of heart your carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God's praise?
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all your days!

2 Praise God for the grace and favor shown our forebears in distress;
God is still the same forever, slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Sing our Maker's faithfulness!

3 Like a loving parent caring, God knows well our feeble frame,
gladly all our burdens bearing, still to countless years the same.
Alleluia! Alleluia! All within me, praise God's name!

4 Angels, teach us adoration; you behold God face to face.
Sun and moon and all creation, dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace!

CALL TO CONFESSION

God loves us and calls us each by name. Knowing we are eternally forgiven and infinitely loved, let us boldly confess our sins before God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We are precious in your sight, yet we often forget that we are your beloved. We confess that our love is fickle and inconstant. We follow selfish goals and deny that our way of life harms others and hurts your world. We are sorry and we want to change. Create in us a clean heart, strengthen our resolve, reconcile us one to another, and bless us with your peace. Amen.

Please continue in silent reflection and prayer

RESPONSE

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

129, v. 3

**This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us
And lightens every load.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved, God forgives your sins; know that you are pardoned and be at peace to love the Lord and serve the world.

SUNG RESPONSE

Sing Glory to the Name of God

10, v. 1

**Sing glory to the name of God, whose holy splendor shines abroad.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Enthroned above the crashing waves, the God of grace and glory saves.
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Glorious God, when Jesus was baptized for your healing mission, the heavens opened in a flash of glory as vision and voice blazed upon the waters. May your Spirit so burn in us that we hear your word translated into deed and follow Jesus in paths of justice, right relationship, and peace.

Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, 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 Saviour.

I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you,

I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

Do not fear, 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 them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold;

bring my sons from far away 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.'

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

MESSAGE

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

*HYMN

Down Galilee's Slow Roadways

164

1 Down Galilee's slow roadways a stranger traveled on
from Nazareth to Jordan to be baptized by John.
He went down to the waters like soldier, scribe, and slave,
but there within the river the sign was birth and grave.

2 Arising from the river he saw the heavens torn;
it seemed the sky so open revealed the Spirit's form.
The holy dove descended amid a glorious voice:
"You are my own beloved, my child, my heart, my choice."

3 We too have found a roadway; it led us to this place.
We all have had to travel in search of hope and grace.
But now beside this water again a voice is heard.
"You are my own, my chosen, beloved of your Lord."

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Friends, this is the joyful feast of unity.
Christ has gathered his people around the earth
to commune at this table.

And so, come: you from the East and you from the West,
from the North and from the South.

Come. Come with your doubts, come with your hopes,
come with your inadequacies and with your strengths.
Come, for this is a table where all are invited and all are welcome.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May the God of glory be with you!

And also with you!

People of God, offer your hearts to God.

We give them to the One who comes to redeem us.

Sing songs of praise and joy, Children of God.

We lift our voices to the One who journeys with us through the waters of baptism, and who feeds us at the Table of hope.

With the water of baptism reminding us of your love for us, Voice of Heaven, we lift our praises to you. Before you breathed the Word which tamed chaos, you named us your children, heirs of all the goodness you desired for us. You sang to us in Eden's fields, inviting us to glorify you forever. Yet, we walked into the shadows of the world, leaving the songs behind us.

You persisted in your hopes for us, knowing that where no life is anticipated, no hope is expected, no future is seen, it is in those barren and desolate places that you gather your children up to carry us into your kingdom.

So, with angel choirs in every region, with shepherds who caroled a homeless family, with those who came home singing from exile, we lift our voices in joy and hope:

Holy, holy, holy, Awesome Voice of life and hope.

All creation resounds with your wondrous love.

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes to be baptized with water and the Spirit.

Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Bearer of grace and Singer of truth. When we lost our voice to sin, you sent your Word to teach us new songs of joy and praise. When our feet became muddy from playing in life's puddles, he stepped into the Jordan, so we might be cleansed of sin. When our ears were filled with the lies of the world, he spoke the truth of your everlasting hope for us. When we were about to die, he came running to us, defeating sin and death, marking us as your own with the kiss of the Holy Spirit.

As we remember Christ's baptism, as we recall his life and ministry, as we follow him through death into the resurrection of the new life, we proclaim that mystery we call faith:

Baptized, Christ was called your Beloved;

dying, Christ was your heart broken for us;

risen to new life, Christ is the Voice which shatters all our fears;

coming to gather us up, Christ will bring us home to you.

Holy Spirit, fill us with the bread of forgiveness and with the cup of hope. Flow through us like baptismal waters, so we might become a river of reconciliation. Grant us your peace, so we might carry this gift to the world. Set our hope on Christ, so we might build such hope in our neighbors and communities.

And when the river of time stops flowing, when we gather as one around your Table, we will join our voices as your children, singing to God, Child, and Spirit, God in Community, Holy in One.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

...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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS

Tear off the cellophane piece to receive the bread. Next, tear off the foil wrap to receive the juice.

SENDING FROM THE TABLE

Baptized, we will go to share God's love with others.

We will welcome those the world rejects as our family.

Baptized, we will become the grace of our Lord Jesus.

We will share the waters of life with everyone we meet.

Baptized, we will become the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We will be a community of justice, not judgment;

we will be a household of hope, not an exclusive club for just a few.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As people who have passed through the waters of baptism, let us make our grateful offering to God our Redeemer.

OFFERTORY

*SUNG RESPONSE

Jesus, Light of Joy

673, v. 3

With the saints we lift our voices, God of power, God of might.

All creation shines with glory, singing praises day and night:

Alleluia, alleluia, holy, holy, holy light.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, at his baptism, you acknowledged Jesus as your beloved Son, and through him you opened to us a way to become your children by grace. May these gifts we return to you be a sign of our dedication to live as your faithful daughters and sons, born in the waters of baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen**

SENDING OUT

*HYMN

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart

688, v. 1,3,4,5

1 Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
and make me love thee as I ought to love.

3 Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King;
all, all thine own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
I see thy cross; there teach my heart to cling.
O let me seek thee, and O let me find!

4 Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh.
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
to check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh.
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

5 Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame;
the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

** Please stand in body or spirit where indicated.
Text in **bold type** is to be spoken or sung in unison.*

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