

## Sunday, January 9, 2022 – Baptism of Our Lord

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### Introduction

Today's festival rejoices in God's blessings. We recall and celebrate our adoption as God's children, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promised company of almighty God when we "pass through the waters ... the rivers ... fire." On this day the heavens open again for this assembly, and we receive the gift of God's Beloved, Jesus, in bread and wine.

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

*Near the end of Israel's exile in Babylon, God promises to bring the people home. They need no longer be afraid, because the one who formed, created, and called them by name now redeems them from all their enemies. God declares them precious and honored, and God loves them.*

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

<sup>4</sup>Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honored, and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.

<sup>5</sup>Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;

<sup>6</sup>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—  
<sup>7</sup>everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."

## Psalm 29

<sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the | LORD, you gods,  
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry and strength.  
<sup>2</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due God's name;  
worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness.**  
<sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of | glory thunders;  
the LORD is upon the | mighty waters.  
<sup>4</sup>**The voice of the LORD is a pow- | erful voice;  
the voice of the LORD is a | voice of splendor.**  
<sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the | cedar trees;  
the LORD breaks the ce- | dars of Lebanon;  
<sup>6</sup>**the LORD makes Lebanon skip | like a calf,  
and Mount Hermon like a | young wild ox.**  
<sup>7</sup>The voice | of the LORD  
bursts forth in | lightning flashes.  
<sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD | shakes the wilderness;  
the LORD shakes the wilder- | ness of Kadesh.**  
<sup>9</sup>The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the | forests bare.  
And in the temple of the LORD all are | crying, "Glory!"  
<sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned a- | bove the flood;  
the LORD sits enthroned as king for- | evermore.**  
<sup>11</sup>O LORD, give strength | to your people;  
give them, O LORD, the bless- | ings of peace.

## **Second Reading: Acts 8:14-17**

*Peter and John are sent to support the new Christians in Samaria, a group that was recently baptized after hearing the good news of Christ through the preaching of Philip. Here the Samaritans receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the laying on of hands.*

<sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup>The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit <sup>16</sup>(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

## **Gospel Reading: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

*The reading opens with questions about the identity of the Messiah. John the Baptist insists that he is not the Messiah; instead he points ahead to one who is coming. And whether the voice of God was heard by all or only by Jesus, God settles the matter: Jesus is God's beloved Son.*

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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."

<sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, <sup>22</sup>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."

## Prayers of Intercession

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made, saying “God of grace,” and responding, “hear our prayer.”

*A brief silence.*

By the Holy Spirit, you gather your church and send it out in mission to share the good news of Jesus. Inspire your faithful people to be fervent in prayer and service, that all people know they are precious in God’s sight. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You reveal your love and power through water and the Spirit. Guard rivers, seas, and all bodies of water from destruction and pollution. Secure access to clean water for all, and protect the land from drought and flood. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Establish among the nations the blessings of peace. Raise up leaders who will protect vulnerable people in their care. Strengthen advocates who risk reputation or retaliation for the sake of mercy and justice. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You protect us through the fires and troubled waters of this life. Assure us that we will not be cut off from you by illness or despair, anxiety or pain, confusion or weakness. Comfort all who are in need (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We are joined in baptism to Christ and to one another. Bless those who are newly baptized and those who are preparing for baptism. Help us to be faithful in fellowship, worship, evangelism, service, and justice-seeking. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You created each of your saints for your glory. We give thanks for those you have called by name into your eternal embrace. Comfort us in grief and release us from fear. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

## ***A reflection for Baptism of Our Lord Sunday...***

### The Voice of God

Are you longing to hear God's voice? What would it be like to hear God call you by name? For many it seems that God spoke to people long ago and far away, but now in this time and place God's voice is much less clear and less audible. Perhaps we cannot hear the voice of God because our world is full of noise? Perhaps we are not open to the particular frequency in which God chooses to call us? Perhaps we continually tune out this heavenly summons with our daily rush, not taking the time to quiet ourselves, our minds, our inner voices. We can use this time after Epiphany to clear out a corner of our lives for quiet prayer, meditation, or centering. Maybe then we will be able to hear . . . to sense . . . to listen.

Listen! God's voice comes from heaven to call us by name, speak to the earth, shake the wilderness, and to anoint "the Beloved." Listen! God's people speak words of covenant, commitment, and community in the liturgy of baptism. Listen! God's word surrounds this day with power and majesty and "in the temple of the LORD all are crying, 'Glory!'" (Ps. 29:9). In this season of epiphanies, today's miraculous encounter with the living God immerses us in the sound of God's voice and bathes us in God's baptismal promise. All who are splashed by this water gasp, cry, exclaim, sigh, and sing. Let all who have breath, praise the Lord!

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