



EPIPHANY 1 - BAPTISM OF CHRIST

SUNDAY 10th JANUARY 2021

As we are unable to meet together in church, this service will give you an outline of a service you can do at home. If you have them, gather a few things that will help you create a sacred space – we suggest a cross, Bible and candle.



INTRODUCTION

I hope that you are all well, another service at home for you. This week Rev Robin Usher was due to take our service so he has very kindly offered to do the reflection based on the sermon he was about to give us. I thank him for that and it is great to get another view on the readings, Rev Peter Reiss our team rector has also offered, so that makes the job easier for me. So look out each week to see who has written the reflection.

Many thanks to those of you who have donated birdseed, I went down on Sunday to feed the birds and within 5 minutes we had a nuthatch, great tit, blue tit and a robin on the feeders.

We will let you know by email or by social media, any updates on church opening or developments.

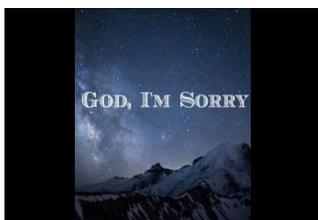
Jan B.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

CONFESSION

Let us say sorry to God for the things we have done wrongly or for the things we have not done.

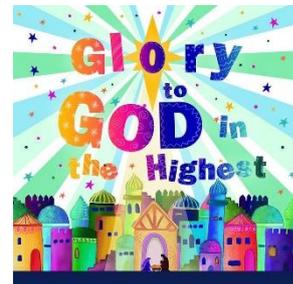


Almighty God our heavenly Father we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for

us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father, Lord God Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world; have mercy upon us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit. In the glory of God the Father. Amen.



THE COLLECT

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - GENESIS 1, 1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

NEW TESTAMENT READING - ACTS 19, 1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— altogether there were about twelve of them.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

THE GOSPEL - Mark 1, 4-11

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark – **Praise to you O Christ.**



John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ**

REFLECTION

***“In those days Jesus came up from Nazareth of Galilee
and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”*** Mark 1.9

And the question I always want to ask is: 'WHY?'

Why should Jesus want to be baptized - why would he need to be baptized?

Various reasons have been suggested as to why Jesus felt that he should be baptized. One is that he wanted to identify himself with the religious tradition of John the Baptist, as a basis for his own ministry - affirming his Jewish roots, but also recognising that things needed to be moved on from there and led by the Spirit.

There are indications in St Mark's account of Jesus' baptism that do seem to point towards the fulfilment of his ministry on the cross.

Firstly, Mark describes the heavens as being '*torn apart*' (Matthew and Luke simply use the word '*opened*' - as of a door or gate.) The only other use of the phrase '*torn apart*' in the Gospels occurs to describe what happened to the veil in the temple at the point of Jesus' death.

Secondly, Jesus' death is described by Mark (and Luke) as an 'expiring', a *'breathing out'*, reflecting the presence of the Spirit *'breathing in'* at his baptism.

And thirdly, the words of the centurion at his death: *'Truly this man was God's Son'* perhaps reflect the voice from heaven at his baptism: *'You are my Son'*.

So, in his account of the Baptism of Jesus, Mark does seem to be pointing ahead to his death — past, present and future all being drawn together into one event.

The same could be said of us, and of our own baptism.

Most of us are aware of our baptism as something that happened in the past — we may, or may not, remember it, but we may well have reminders of it: certificate, candle and photos.

Our awareness of our baptism may have grown over the intervening years. Not an awareness of the event itself, but of its meaning and significance: as being part of the fellowship of the Church, part of something that is bigger than our own personal past. This growth may perhaps involve a deeper understanding of the implications and responsibilities of baptism, fuelled by our own discipleship, a 'living up to' our baptismal covenant.

I'm guessing that for most people who are baptized, or whose children are baptized, they are not really fully 'tuned into' that realisation, despite the very best efforts of those who prepare them for baptism.

Very few come away from a baptism with an awareness of the vast, rich and varied religious heritage that they have just been, as it were, 'plugged into': 2,000 years of Christian tradition, 6,000 years of Jewish heritage, part of God's plan for the universe!

Most people will see baptism as a single isolated even, rather than the beginning of something, something pointing to the future, with a promise, with implications, commitments and responsibilities — a beginning with fulfilment and hope.

Certainly, Baptism does say something about our past - both individual and collective — but it is much more about promise and hope and expectation, about moving forward into a richer faith.

And our re-creation in baptism — our regeneration, as the 39 Articles of the CofE puts it — should perhaps reflect God's creation in the beginning. In the biblical story of creation God does not create in one fell swoop, but progressively: each 'day' in the biblical story reflecting a 'moving on', a development — light, land, vegetation, living creatures in increasing diversity, with humanity as the culmination of that progressive development.

Maybe our baptism should be a constant reminder that our creation/re-creation has not yet finished; that we are being drawn ever forward into the life of God himself,

into maturity and fulfilment as the created/re-created/regenerated/redeemed children of God.

As in the words of today's post-communion prayer:

*"...by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation..."*

God has not finished with us yet

Revd Robin Usher

THE CREED



I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*

We rejoice in your presence and your love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You have made us, you have redeemed us and you guide us. We remember in your presence all who are being prepared for baptism, all who are seeking to know the gifts of the

Spirit. We pray for our clergy and our team and for all being prepared for ordination and ministry.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who are struggling with work or studies at this time, for those newly engaged or married, for all who are testing their vocations and we pray for all who seek to make our world a better place.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for our homes and our loved ones, especially those we are unable to visit or give comfort to. We give thanks for our Godparents and our Godchildren and we ask your blessings upon them. We remember all who come from broken homes or who are suffering by being parted.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who have lost their way, who are troubled and distressed, that they may know your love and care. We remember also those who are ill at home or in hospital and all who are struggling because of the pandemic at this time.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We praise you for giving us life and life eternal. We remember especially today friends and loved ones who have enriched our lives but are now departed from this world. We commend all to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Merciful Father – **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

THE BLESSING

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill us with his grace to trust the promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.