

Worship on January 12, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song BOP 176 Songs of thankfulness and praise
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo
- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Isaiah 43:1-7
- Second reading: Psalm 29 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
- Sermon: **The baptism of the Lord**
- Hymn BOP 183 Christ, when for us you were baptized
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 685 How firm a foundation

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Beloved, God chooses us and calls us by name.

All: We belong to God. Alleluia!

One: Our lives have purpose because we belong to God.

All: We are called to be like Christ and follow him.

One: We will find joy, peace, and restoration through God's amazing grace.

All: Let us worship God who claims us and loves us! Praise be to God!

Praise song – BOP 176 Songs of thankfulness and praise

Prayer of Adoration

Creator of the sun and moon and stars, you stir in our midst to reveal your light. By the work of your Spirit, you lead us in new directions. Your beloved Son has called us to new life and by his grace, reconciles the divisions among us. Holy One, we praise you for the blessings you give us in our baptism into Christ, and through your love that surrounds us day by day. To you we give all praise, glory and honor, through Jesus Christ, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and always.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*

Merciful God, in baptism, you promise forgiveness and new life, but we confess that we prefer our old, familiar ways. We cling to destructive habits, we harbour grudges, and we are reluctant to welcome a stranger or forgive one another. Nostalgia for the past prevents us from exploring new possibilities. In your loving kindness, forgive us. Have mercy upon us and move among us so that we might pursue a new life in Christ together.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: *(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 Assurance

Do not be afraid, for Christ has redeemed you. Baptized in the deep waters of death, he has washed away your sins. Risen from death, Jesus Christ invites you to be washed in the cleansing tide of God's mercy. Your sins are forgiven; be at peace with God, with yourself, and with each other.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo

Prayer for children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Isaiah 43:1-7
- Second reading: Psalm 29 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: The baptism of the Lord

This is the first week after Epiphany. Epiphany is the day of celebrating the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. We remember the baptism of Jesus today because the Baptism of Jesus Christ is the second most important revelation of Jesus' identity after his birth.

In the scene of the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Triune God is involved. God the Father spoke, in **Luke 3:22, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.”** Publicly, Jesus was revealed as the Son of God. God the Son was presented to the world. And God the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove. Through this event of Jesus' baptism, the Scripture is teaching us the identity of Jesus, and his mission, as well as our calling as his disciples.

In this scene, we feel like God the Father and God the Holy Spirit came to support Jesus or to cheer for Jesus. “Yes, this is Jesus, the God the Son. We are here to show Jesus to you to let you know how much we love you, all the people of the earth. We want you to know how much we care for you. That's why Jesus is here today to show you God.”

As I told you few times already, Jesus' mission is to be with us and to save us.

On Christmas day, as Jesus was born, this was declared. **Matthew 1:23, "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel."**

The meaning of Emmanuel? God with us. This is the name of Jesus. Jesus reveals God's presence in us.

The word **Christ** comes from the Greek word **Christos**, which means "**anointed one**." In Hebrew, this is **Messiah**. In biblical times, anointing was a ritual act involving the pouring of oil over someone's head to signify their appointment to a special role or special office such as a king, prophet, or priest. So, when we refer to Jesus as "Christ," we are affirming that Jesus is the promised Messiah. It means that Jesus is God's anointed One who was sent to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. **Jesus is the ultimate King, the High Priest, and the Saviour.**

So, Christ is not the last name of Jesus, like Soong Huh. Christ is the title. The title Christ reveals Jesus' divine mission to save all people from sin and reconcile us with God.

Therefore, Jesus is the Lord over all creation, the King. Jesus is the Redeemer, the High Priest, reconciling the relationship between God and us. And Jesus is the Saviour who rescued us from the power of sin and darkness and death.

In John 1:29, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming and publicly declared this. **"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"** When you hear this, what's the image you have? Nowadays, we picture the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. But, remember, it hasn't happened yet. So, for the people who heard John the Baptist, the Lamb of God reminded them of the sacrificial animal. What's the role of the sacrificial animal? To be sacrificed. To die and shed blood to wash the sin of the worshipper.

This man, who was referred to the Lamb of God, came to John the Baptist to be baptized. Although John refused to baptize him, Jesus walked into the water to be baptized by John the Baptist. **What was the meaning of the baptism of John the Baptist?** When people get baptized, it is like the acknowledgment of their sinful nature. They got baptized as the symbol of repentance. But, this is Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity.

In Jesus' baptism, we see the fulfillment of his role as the Suffering Servant prophesized in Isaiah. **Isaiah 53:12, "Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself of death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."** The same verse in the **Contemporary English Version, "The Lord will reward him with honour and power for sacrificing his life. Others thought he was a sinner, but he suffered for our sins and asked God to forgive us."**

The walk of Jesus Christ into the water to be baptized is Jesus entering into our brokenness, standing alongside sinners, but not as one who needed forgiveness, but as one who came to bring it. This is Jesus' sacrifice for us. This is Jesus' coming down for us to be with us so that he can rescue us.

In this scene of the baptism of Jesus Christ, the presence of the Holy Spirit reminds us of the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. Just as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, the Holy Spirit is also given to each and every one of us. The Holy Spirit helps us to live out our calling as God's children.

Do you feel easy to live out our lives as God's children? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Generally, not too easy. It's because we did not die for our sins. We still have selfish desires. We

still have hatred. We still want to do whatever we want to do. We love God, but at the same time, we want to run away from God. To live by the Spirit, it requires surrender and trust. Who doesn't know that!? It is a matter of being open to the Spirit's guidance. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit challenges us to come out of our comfort zones. We feel the guidance or insight or we might be able to say convictions in our hearts.

Jesus walked into the water to be baptized by water when he didn't need it, but he did it for us. He humbled himself publicly. The Creator God was baptized by a mere human. Why? To show us his love for us. To give us life. To be with us. To rescue us. To show us the way to live the life in right way.

I pray that the Holy Spirit be upon you and help you open your hearts and give you the willingness to follow the path he went. Also, the Holy Spirit will empower you and strengthen you so that you may live your life to the fullest fulfilling God's purpose for you.

Jesus Christ is revealed at his baptism and shows us his true identity as the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, and his mission for us. And we are affirmed that the promise of the Holy Spirit will be with us all the time. Receive the promised Holy Spirit. And live with him.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 183 Christ, when for us you were baptized

Prayer for the people:

Jesus Christ, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. When Peter confessed this, you were pleased. On this Sunday, we thank you for your baptism from the John the Baptist. As we discussed, you didn't need it. But, you still came for it, humbly, in order to show us your love. Thank you. God the Holy Spirit, just like you descended upon Jesus, come into our hearts now. Awaken our spirits so that we may rise again for you and with you.

We are praying for the wildfire in the Los Angeles area. There are so many affected by the fires. Protect them and provide them with safe shelters. Strengthen the first responders who are fighting the fires. Protect them safely as they save the lives as well as the city. Be with the people who lost their homes or loved ones. Please be present with them with your healing power and encouragement and hope for life and hope for restoration. Guide the leaders and communities as they work closely together to save lives and serve the needy. Please, stop the fire, God.

Help us remember that you are faithful even though there are things we don't understand.

Last Thursday, church members and elders had a meeting to discuss our church's finances. In this challenging time, we want to call you for your help. You are the only hope we have. You are the only resource for us. You are the only sure foundation. Merciful God, with your abundant love and grace, provide us and guide our church to shine your light to our personal lives as well as to our communities. Give us discerning wisdom to know the purpose you have for us. And give us the courage to follow your plans for us. Give us faithfulness and diligence, so that we can walk step by step with you. You are our King and Lord, and we want to display your glory in our lives. Hold our hands and walk with us in every moment we are awake. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

In the baptism of Jesus, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit revealed his love for us. The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, sacrificed his life for us. He gave us all that we have. Let us express our gratitude and love for him with our gifts to God. It could be our money, our time, our attention, our kindness to others, a warm handshake or a smile. Our God sees us with love and mercy. Our gifts proclaim that we are beloved to God and God is beloved to us. Let us give God our love and worship at this time. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #79, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

Thank you for giving us life. Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, thank you for your love shown in your baptism. Bless what we bring to you today and fill our hearts and lives with your presence and your love and grace. Help us overflow, so we can bless the world you love. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 685 How firm a foundation

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Jesus Christ is our Saviour and Lord. Jesus is the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God. Remember the scene of Jesus' baptism. God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit reveal his love for us. God loves you no matter what. God loves you always.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.