

Our Service of Worship for January 9, 2022

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Westwood First Presbyterian Church

Cincinnati, OH



Welcome

Prelude: *“Of the Father's Love Begotten”*—arr. James Southbridge

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

Hymn No. 495: *“We Know That Christ Is Raised”*

Invitation to Confession (based on Romans 6:3-4)

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. In this knowledge, let us make our confession together—first in the Prayer of Confession, then in a moment of silent reflection.

Prayer of Confession

Creator of the Universe, we stand amazed at your power and glory. We are eager to worship you and offer our praise, but we are often reluctant to answer when we hear you calling our name. We sing our songs of tribute in the sanctuary, but shy away from the river, lest we be baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Forgive us when we forget your promise to be with us always, O God. Renew us with the power of your ever-present love, and strengthen us to proclaim your justice throughout the world.

A Moment for Silent Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the words of our creator, spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

“When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; Do not be afraid, for I am with you...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Friends, this is the Good News of the Gospel—in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Friends know too that you are beloved—precious in God’s sight. And so, may the peace of Christ be with you, now and forevermore!

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading: *Isaiah 43:1-7—The Restoration and Protection of Israel Promised*

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ 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.

⁵ “Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶ 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, ⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.’”

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 3:7-17—The Baptism of Jesus by John*

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”



¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Sermon: “*Now What?*”

Anthem: “*Down to the River to Pray*”—arr. Sheldon Curry
Chancel Choir Soloists

The Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn No. 316: “*Breathe On Me, Breath of God*”

Charge and Benediction

Postlude: “*Rigaudon*”—Campra

Leading Worship This Morning:

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi
Pastor

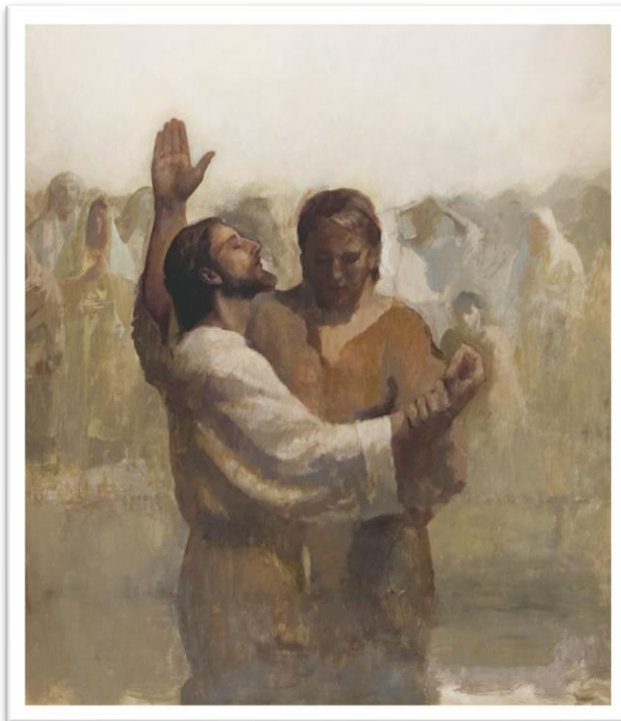
Heather MacPhail
Organist/Director of Music Ministries

Jason Dennison
Videographer/Director of Technology



Prayer Requests and Announcements

- ✚ January West-Fed Food Pantry needs: cereal, canned green beans & canned peas
- ✚ **Volunteers are needed to help to undecorate the church this Saturday, Jan. 8 at 10:00am.** If there are any questions, or to let her know you're coming, please contact Linda Gardner at 513-662-1976 (home) or at 513-259-4540 (cell).
- ✚ Prayers are requested for:
 - ♥ DJ Hines, Sandy Morris' brother, dealing with on-going health issues
 - ♥ Tom and Rita Davey, friends of Wendy Beckman.
 - ♥ Susie, a friend of the Kochheisers, undergoing chemotherapy.
 - ♥ Kathy Kiefer, who has been hospitalized with kidney issues.
 - ♥ Linda Kugele who continues to deal with breathing issues.
 - ♥ Betsy Forte, Chancie Brown's sister, dealing with personal issues.
 - ♥ The discernment team: Steve Beckman, Mary Ellen Betz, Jane Colarossi, Kent Kochheiser, Ann Regan, Phil Zorn, Bruce Smith, Jan Tepe, Bode Olakanmi.



***Baptism of Christ II* by J. Kirk Richards**

Moment for Meditation: Jesus' Baptism

The baptism of Jesus is reported in each of the three Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke. Clearly, it was an event of great significance for Jesus and for the early Christian community. The Evangelists Mark and Luke report the story from Jesus' perspective; the voice from heaven is addressed to Jesus. Compare this to Matthew's Gospel in which the voice from heaven speaks to everyone. In Luke, however, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus during his time of prayer after his baptism. Through his Gospel, Luke will show Jesus to be a person of prayer who withdraws regularly from the crowds and his disciples to pray to his Father.

The baptism of Jesus is considered a manifestation of God in Jesus, another “epiphany.” In Luke's Gospel, all three members of the Trinity are manifested here: God the Father in the voice, the Holy Spirit descending, and Jesus the Son. At the beginning of his Gospel, Luke is communicating to us important information about the identity of Jesus. In the verses that follow, Luke lists the genealogy of Jesus, tracing Jesus' ancestry back to the first person, Adam, who is also identified as the son of God. We, the children of Adam and Eve, are again made children of God through Baptism.

~ www.loyolapress.com



“Why did Jesus ask to be baptized? It was obviously part of his mission in coming to earth. Like previous priests of God—Moses, Nehemiah and Daniel—Jesus was confessing sin on behalf of the people. He was also endorsing John's ministry of baptism. In addition, Jesus was identifying with those who were repenting. He was also setting an example for his followers. He was foreshadowing his death, burial and resurrection. And lastly, Jesus was announcing the beginning of his ministry on earth.

“John had devoted his life to preparing for the arrival of Jesus. He had focused all of his energy toward this moment. He was set upon obedience. Yet the very first thing Jesus asked him to do, John resisted. He felt unqualified. Do you feel unqualified to fulfill your mission from God? John felt unworthy even to unfasten the shoes of Jesus, yet Jesus said John was the greatest of all prophets. Don't let your feelings of inadequacy hold you back from your God appointed mission.”

~ Mary Fairchild

