

Sunday Worship - January 12, 2025
Reaffirmation of Baptism



David Zelenka, 2005

Narrative Lectionary Year 3 - Gospel of Luke
Luke 3:1-22 - Jesus and John the Baptist

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

"Striving to live as Jesus lived -confronting injustice with love, compassion, service."

Welcome to Worship

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Remember your baptism!

All: A sign of God's love for us that never ends.

Leader: Remember your baptism!

All: A sign of our belonging in this community of God's people.

Leader: Remember your baptism!

All: A call from God to change our hearts and lives.

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*OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray:

You make us one family in your name,
and look on us with love
even when we haven't got things quite right.

Turn us, and re-turn us, O God,
until we are oriented toward your providing
grace.

Let your voice echo in our hearts this day,
calling out Beloved
and leading us to a new way of life.

Amen.

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*HYMN #475 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

*1. Come, thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unchanging love!*

*2. Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.*

*3. O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.*

*PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Leader: Trusting in God's grace, let us make our confession together:

You pour out your love, O God,

and invite us into a new way of life,

not simply resting on the faith of our forebears.

You call us to take care of one another here and now,

to ensure that everyone has enough and no one goes without,

to see each other as fellow beloved children in your family.

We confess that we have more than we need,

and we are not interested in giving it away.

We confess that we have plenty of interpretation and justification

so that we don't need to follow your instructions

when it comes to our possessions.

We confess that we have been caught by the ways of the world

and find it difficult to leave them behind to turn to your kingdom way.

Draw us out into the wilderness, God,

where we can learn your way free from the powers that seem to control things.

Lift our eyes to recognize your image in the faces around us,

and lift our hands to seek out our neighbors in need.

Guide us to live as good ancestors, looking forward and not only back,

giving of ourselves in response to your giving yourself,

choosing to share so that all may live with dignity and enough.

Refocus us on your love

and strengthen our love to truly reflect yours.

We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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Time of silent prayer

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Friends hear and believe this good news:

Friends, hear and believe this good news:

You are a child of God, Beloved, and whatever the voices of the world may say,

you belong first and foremost to Jesus Christ forever.

Trusting God's goodness, live in love, today and always.

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

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*RESPONSE HYMN #698 Take, O Take Me as I Am

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be; Set your seal upon my heart & live in me.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: In the beginning was the Word.

All: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Leader: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Luke 3:1-22 (Common English Bible) – Jesus and John the Baptist

Reader 1: In the fifteenth year of the rule of the emperor Tiberius—when Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea and Herod was ruler over Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler over Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruler over Abilene,² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—God’s word came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.³ John went throughout the region of the Jordan River, calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins.

Reader 2:⁴ This is just as it was written in the scroll of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

A voice crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way for the Lord;

make his paths straight.

⁵*Every valley will be filled,*

and every mountain and hill will be leveled.

The crooked will be made straight

and the rough places made smooth.

⁶*All humanity will see God’s salvation.”*

Reader 1:⁷ Then John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, “You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon?⁸ Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don’t even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham’s children from these stones.⁹ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire.”

Reader 2:¹⁰ The crowds asked him, “What then should we do?”¹¹ He answered, “Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same.”

¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized. They said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?”¹³ He replied, “Collect no more than you are authorized to collect.”

¹⁴ Soldiers asked, “What about us? What should we do?” He answered, “Don’t cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay.”

Reader 1: ¹⁵ The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. ¹⁶ John replied to them all, “I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I’m not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out.” ¹⁸ With many other words John appealed to them, proclaiming good news to the people.

Reader 2: ¹⁹ But Herod the ruler had been criticized harshly by John because of Herodias, Herod’s brother’s wife, and because of all the evil he had done. ²⁰ He added this to the list of his evil deeds: he locked John up in prison.

²¹ When everyone was being baptized, Jesus also was baptized. While he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit came down on him in bodily form like a dove.

ALL: And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN ##288 Spirit of the Living God (sing twice)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

WE OFFER OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

Leader: Just as the waters of the earth are abundant and full of life, so are the blessings God pours upon us daily. Whenever we give, whether with time, talents, or treasure, we give with the hope that they will enable others to feel immersed in God’s love. Let us pray

ALL: May we commit ourselves, Lord God, once again looking ahead to this week:

to find ways to serve, to find ways to give,

to find ways to use our abilities in bringing about change for justice and peace,

to find ways to use our whole selves in bringing about your Kingdom. Amen.

SERVICE OF REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

*PROFESSION OF FAITH

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

I do.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

With the whole church, let us confess our faith:

Do you believe in God the Father?

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

We 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L: We give you thanks, Loving God, for the gift of baptism, by which we are named and claimed as your beloved children and called to live in unity with one another. In all the seasons of our lives, you are present with us and call us as your own.

Therefore, in joyful obedience to Christ, we celebrate our fellowship in him in faith. Renew in us the covenant made in baptism, and strengthen us in our knowledge of ourselves as your beloved children. To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

(All who have been baptized are invited to come forward to the font to take a pebble, and be marked again by the waters of baptism. Those who have not been baptized are invited to come forward and receive a blessing as a child of God.)

UNISON PRAYER

O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received. We thank you that you have claimed us, that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling. Make us as water in a dry and thirsty world. Make us places of refreshment. Root us and establish us in love, that with all your people, we may rightly and justly serve you. Fill us with your Spirit that our lives may overflow in service and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*HYMN #188 Jesus Loves Me!

1. *Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.*

REFRAIN Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

2. *Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,
Taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me." REFRAIN*

*JANUARY BIRTHDAY BLESSING & BENEDICTION

Kristi Meyer	Gary Doermann	Jay Willems
Augusta Riechers	Camden Meyer	Julia Andrews
Elena Riechers	Stephanie West	Becky Ahrens

*POSTLUDE

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:

Pat Hogan & Stacey Griffin, Musicians
Jennifer Lengwin, Liturgist
Gerald Gerber, AV

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:

Lori Wunder, Pastor
Stephanie Turner, Office Manager
Nona Hutchinson, Treasurer
Jeff Bray, Custodian