



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

The Baptism of Our Lord

January 7, 2024 A.D.

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the Psalm and other parts of the service may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Introit

(From Isaiah 42 and Psalm)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights.

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessèd are all who take refuge in him.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today’s worship video, located on Bethany’s website (www.bethanycr.org) under the Sermons tab and then continue with the Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Scripture Lesson

(Mark 1:4 – 11)

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he

preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Sermon – ✠ *Remembering* ✠ *(A copy is included at the end of this service.)*

The Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven
and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of
God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.**



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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and
ever. Amen.**

Bethany's Prayer List

Entrusting into God's Care

- Persecuted Christians and refugees
- Peace in Europe and throughout the world
- Project 24 students, Yvonne and Lorine

Healing

- Kim Neuhaus - recovering after surgery
- Derek (son of Hackbards) - recovering after hospitalization
- Ruth (relative of Karl Hoech) - hospice care
- Martin (friend of Hedtkes) - health issues
- Lora Raymon - recovering after surgery
- Carolyn Johnson - recovering after surgery
- Cindy Broadwater - recovering after hospitalization
- Lee Heims - recovering after surgery
- Kelly Johnson - healing
- Philip Hackbardt - recovering after surgery
- Ron Prescott - recovering after surgery
- Ethel Doehrmann - immunotherapy treatment
- Doug Knutson - immunotherapy treatment
- Deb Heitland - health issues
- Abi Clark - health issues

Homebound

- Dorothy Freese - Keystone Place

Mourning, friends and family of

- Todd (friend of Rick Foreman) - died 12/23
- Del Block - died 12/21
- Lee Rathje - died 12/19
- Shirley Kellogg (mother of Lynn Kellogg) - died 12/17

Serving Our Country

- Ben (son of Kroemers) - IA National Guard
- Devin (friend of Kroemers) - IA Army National Guard
- Mitchell & Benjamin (relatives of Schoens & Smiths) - US Navy
- Harrison (son of Siecks) - US Army, stationed in TX
- Jordan (grandson of Kim Neuhaus) - IA National Guard

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Together we pray... **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



✠ *Remembering* ✠

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As all of us are aware right now, Christmas and the Christmas season is over. As so many of the decorations are, or are in the process of being, put away for another year. But as we do that, there is a danger. A danger that as we put all of the wreaths, lights, and ornaments away in storage for next year, that we will put the purpose of Christmas away as well. Jesus has come, but why?

In real time, some 30 years pass between Christmas and the events that happen in our Scripture reading. These days, we've shortened it up to just a couple of weeks. But perhaps it's a good thing that we've hit the skip button to the Jordan River so that we don't lose the focus of what we have just celebrated during Christmas.

At the birth of Christ, the angels proclaimed that God has sent the world a gift - “*Peace on earth, good will toward men*”. But this proclamation can too easily become just some sort of general well-wishing during the winter months. So we ask, “Where is the focus? On whom does God’s favor rest?” These answers are found in our reading for today, where God is well pleased not with people in general, but with Jesus.

Scripture tells us that all sorts of people came to John for his baptism of repentance. There were sincere people as well as a few critics that came to the banks of the Jordan. We know from the other Gospel writers that the Pharisees and Sadducees questioned the need of John’s ministry. Instead of focusing on repentance, they turned their attention and found comfort in their ancestors. They were descendants of Abraham and therefore God’s chosen people to be saved.

The situation today is similar to what we find with John in the Jordan River. Like then, people are waiting for God. In John’s times it was for the first coming of the Messiah, which he was preparing the people for. Today, we await the Second Coming of the Christ, and the preparation is the same. When John was getting the people ready for Jesus, he told them to repent – turn from their sin. Not to trust in themselves or their ancestors, but acknowledge their sinfulness before God and trust in His mercy. As we wait to meet Christ again, whether it be through the portal of death or His glorious return, our preparation to stand in His presence is the same as it was back then. Repent. Confess your sins before God and trust in His mercy for forgiveness.

And when the time was right for Jesus to begin His work, He came to the Jordan River. And where He stood spoke volumes: not with the brood of vipers, or the self-righteous, but with the sinners who came to John. And Jesus did not just want to stand there with them, He came to be baptized with them. For the Baptist this must have seemed a little ridiculous. But Jesus knows He needs to be baptized, not for His sake, but for ours. For Jesus’ baptism is no ordinary washing with water, but it was done to fulfill all righteousness.

In and of Himself Jesus had no need of being baptized. But Jesus knows what Christmas is all about. He knows the reason why His Heavenly Father sent Him to be born of the virgin. He came to save sinners. And now He’ll stand with them in the waters of the Jordan. He left the comforts of Heaven to become the chief of sinners, shouldering the punishment of the entire world! This is how God would give His righteousness. Jesus became the embodiment of humanity, and then, even having lived a perfect and sinless life, he still headed toward the end where that sin-plagued humanity leads. This is the start of the road that would end three years from now on the cross. So Jesus tells John to “let it be” because Jesus has come to stand with sinners in the waters of the Jordan and the waters of our baptism so that we might be saved.

And what comes next is the “Amen of Amens” to what Jesus has done. The Pharisees and the Sadducees would say that Jesus had blown it. Mixing with the riff raff of the mob. Even today, many find it impossible to believe or insulting that God would become a man and dwell among us. But man’s approval doesn’t count here, for Someone else has given their approval. Jesus is baptized, comes out of the water, and immediately the boundary between heaven and earth disappears and God the Father stands with Jesus, who is His Son and says that He is well pleased.

God stands with Jesus, stands with the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah. We can understand if those on the riverbank were a little stunned or confused. After all, people were expecting all sorts of things from the Messiah, some of them quite extraordinary. But Jesus looked like the ordinary - He was baptized and standing in the Jordan he was dripping wet just like everyone else would have been. BUT THAT’S THE POINT. To those there that day and to the early hearers and readers of the Gospel story, the Baptism of the “ordinary” Jesus leaps out and shouts God’s approval. The voice of God from heaven says, “Son”.

It seems that it can't get any better than that, but it does. This Son, has stood among the sinners and put Himself in their company, and the voice of God says that He is "well pleased". Jesus standing with sinners in the waters of baptism is wonderful, but when God comes and stand with Jesus in his baptism, suddenly what takes place over at that baptismal font takes on a whole new light. It is there that all of us who have been baptized can take heart and find peace and hope.

For we know that no matter what we endure in this life. No matter what struggles we might face inside or outside of us. No matter what sins we confess, or we think of when we say, "*we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed*" – no matter any of these things - if we are united with Christ in Baptism, we are His children and He is well pleased with us. This is the sure and certain hope that all Christians who have been baptized have. For we have evidence, the sure sign is our baptism, where we can feel that water, and hear God's Word. What a comfort it is to know that even when we struggle – when we suffer we belong to God as His children.

The rest of the world may forget about Christmas these days. But Christians always know why He came. We know how to prepare ourselves to meet Him again through our repentance. And we know that we belong to Him as sons and daughters with whom He is well pleased. And we know that these good and gracious things are worth remembering. Amen.

