

**First Sunday after the Epiphany January 10, 2016**  
**The Baptism of Our Lord**

**LUTHERAN**

**LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY**

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January 7, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship service on Wednesdays, 5:30pm, at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-8\\_6rMiX1EQ4/Tie2co6PgDI/AAAAAAACQ4/IWu0Ko6kIMc/s1600/Spirit-descending-on-Jesus.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-8_6rMiX1EQ4/Tie2co6PgDI/AAAAAAACQ4/IWu0Ko6kIMc/s1600/Spirit-descending-on-Jesus.jpg)

**Hymn of the Day**

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 406/407\*    The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not  
Listed**

**“To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord”**

***The Only Son from Heaven, LSB 402, if you are using this Sunday as the First after the Epiphany***

\*Elvet Banks is a modern [hymn tune](#), in the somewhat unusual [meter](#) of 87.87.87.87.7, set in the [Lutheran Service Book](#) (LSB) of 2006 for the hymns: *To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord*, recommended for use in [Epiphany](#)<sup>[1]</sup> and set as an alternative to the sixteenth century [chorale](#) tune *Christ unser Herr* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elvet\\_Banks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elvet_Banks)

"A third area where *ELH* \*is strong is in its hymn translations. One such instance worthy of note is Luther's baptismal hymn, "To Jordan Came Our Lord." Where *LBW* and *LW* have used the Elizabeth Quitmeyer translation of this hymn, *ELH* has opted for its own translation. The result is that the catechetical nuances of this hymn are much clearer. In the second stanza for example, the Quitmeyer translation pales in comparison:

<i>Lutheran Worship</i>	<i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary</i>
Our Lord here with his Word endows Pure water, freely flowing. God's Holy Spirit here avows Our kinship while bestowing The baptism of his blessing.	That water at the font be used Is surely His good pleasure, Not water only, but the Word And Spirit without measure - He is the true Baptizer.

Likewise, the reference to the command and promise of baptism is clearly enunciated in the *ELH* translation, whereas these catechetical citations are not spelled out as well in the translation of Quitmeyer. Such clear teaching and singing about Holy Baptism as in the *ELH* composite translation gives new life to this hymn and makes the effort to learn it worthwhile."

\*"In the Winter 1997 publication of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's (LC-MS) Commission on Worship, it was reported that the LC-MS is beginning to consider work on another hymnal. At a time when many congregations regularly use a liturgy photocopied in the service folder so that our members are unfamiliar with the hymnal, one might wonder at the wisdom of producing a new hymnal at all. Furthermore, in cost-conscious congregations, the expense of purchasing new hymnals could prove prohibitive. For these reasons alone, it is with great courage that a tiny synod in the United States, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), smaller than our own Lutheran Church - Canada (LC-C), should venture to publish the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (ELH)*. As one might expect, the Norwegian heritage of the synod is strongly represented in the liturgy and selection of hymns. Nevertheless, what is even more noteworthy is the outstanding contribution this hymnal makes in the worship and devotional life of North American Lutheranism." <http://www.blc.edu/comm/gargy/gargy1/saar.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3VTuJ3uq8o> See the Jordan as you hear the hymn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkV7Wc7Ck0g> A Bach version of the tune

**[English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#)**

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by  
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*Almost back on track with the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) In case you missed the arrival of the Wise Men, January 6 was the Epiphany of Our Lord Day. The Gospel is from Matthew 2:1-12. Check to see if the other Gospels include them.*



**Isaiah 43:1-7** (next week: *Isaiah 62:1-5*)

43 But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
**I have called you by name, you are mine.**  
<sup>2</sup> 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.  
<sup>3</sup> For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.  
<sup>4</sup> Because you are precious in my eyes,  
and honored, and I love you,  
I give men in return for you,  
peoples in exchange for your life.  
<sup>5</sup> Fear not, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you.  
<sup>6</sup> I will say to the north, Give up,  
and to the south, Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the end of the earth,  
<sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.”

## Psalm 29 (*Psalm 128*)

### Ascribe to the LORD Glory

#### A Psalm of David.

29 Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,<sup>[a]</sup>  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *The voice of the LORD* is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the LORD, over many waters.

<sup>4</sup> *The voice of the LORD* is powerful;  
*the voice of the LORD* is full of majesty.

<sup>5</sup> *The voice of the LORD* breaks the cedars;  
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,  
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

<sup>7</sup> *The voice of the LORD* flashes forth flames of fire.

<sup>8</sup> *The voice of the LORD* shakes the wilderness;  
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

<sup>9</sup> *The voice of the LORD* makes the deer give birth<sup>[c]</sup>  
and strips the forests bare,  
and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

<sup>10</sup> The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;  
the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

<sup>11</sup> May the LORD give strength to his people!  
May the LORD bless<sup>[d]</sup> his people with peace!

- a. [Psalm 29:1](#) Hebrew *sons of God, or sons of might*
- b. [Psalm 29:2](#) *Or in holy attire*
- c. [Psalm 29:9](#) Revocalization yields *makes the oaks to shake*

"From one perspective, it may seem that the poet who composed Psalm 29 was an ancient version of what we might today call a storm-chaser.

After all, the heart of Psalm 29 (vv. 3-9) is an enthusiastic and extended report of a powerful thunderstorm that apparently formed over the Mediterranean Sea (v. 3) and that proceeded to crash onto the coast of Palestine and to make its way inland. The storm damage is in view in vv. 5 and 9. It was result of high winds (vv. 6, 8) that were accompanied by sharp lightning (v. 7) and the constant rumble of thunder, which is what is meant by "the voice of the LORD."

#### Lord of the Storm

Of course, the fact that the constant thunder is communicated by the seven-fold repetition of the phrase, “the voice of the LORD,” is an unmistakable clue that we are not really dealing with a weather report. This is theology, not meteorology. For the psalmist, the storm is a symbol not of the power of nature, but rather of the power and sovereignty of Israel’s God. Seven, the number of completeness, is significant. Israel’s God is completely powerful and ultimately sovereign. There can be no competing claims.

### **Competing Claims**

But we know that, in fact, there were competing claims in ancient Palestine. In particular, the Canaanite god Baal was acclaimed to be the cloud-rider, the lord of the storm, the one who brought the rain that made the crops grow. And we know too that the people of God were tempted to give Baal the credit for the land’s productivity (see Hosea 2:8-13). Given this situation, it is clear that Psalm 29 has a polemical edge. The true lord of the storm -- the real power in and behind the universe -- is the LORD, not Baal....

### **The Cosmic Sovereign and Comprehensive Well-Being**

Given the invitations to praise in vv. 1-2, it is clear from the outset that the poetic description of the thunderstorm in vv. 3-9 is meant to offer evidence of God’s sovereignty. And the evidence is convincing!...

### **Celebrating God’s Claim Today**

What do we do with this ancient poem and its theo-poetic description of an event -- a thunderstorm -- that we almost certainly think about in exclusively meteorological terms? Let the poetry speak on its own symbolic level! True, we are not tempted to worship Baal as were the ancient Israelites. But there are all sort of other things to which we often attribute our blessedness and well-being -- technological progress, the stock market, a capitalist economy, our own ingenuity and hard work. What difference might it make to recognize and celebrate God as the ultimate sovereign and origin of life and all that sustains it?” [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2453](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2453)

[J. Clinton McCann](#) is the Evangelical Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Visit another commentary at [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=322](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=322) for an entirely different approach to the context of the Canaanite/Baal reference. “For example, it is generally a matter of consensus among scholars that this Psalm was originally a Canaanite text celebrating Ba'al or a similar storm god.”

## **Romans 6:1-11, (RCL) Acts 8:14-17\* (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)**

### **Dead to Sin, Alive to God**

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self<sup>[a]</sup> was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so

that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free<sup>[b]</sup> from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- a. [Romans 6:6](#) Greek *man*
- b. [Romans 6:7](#) Greek *has been justified*

“The letter to Romans is a Pauline manual for Christians who wrestle with the human condition being vulnerable to the pressures of this world.

By appealing to Abraham and positing him as a model of ways through which God justifies human beings, Paul continues to move the discussion from Abraham to all human beings and helps them to see their condition of being separated from God because of sin.

Thus, Romans 6:1b-11 is about the purpose, function, and goal of the sacrament of baptism, in relation to all human beings who are held under the grip of sin and the reign of death. Through baptism, humanity can make the transition from sin into grace via the sacrament of baptism, which Paul eloquently describes in Romans 5:6-16, Romans 6, and Philippians 3:10-16...”

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He is the author of *Abraham Our Father: Paul and Ancestors in Postcolonial Africa* (Fortress Press, 2013), and *Abraham as a Spiritual Ancestor: A Postcolonial Zimbabwean Reading of Romans 4* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), as well as numerous articles.

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2052](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2052)

### ***\*Acts 8:14-17***

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

“Have you ever wondered why the Samaritans did not receive the Spirit when they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus in [Acts 8:16](#)? The Spirit did not come—even though they believed Philip’s preaching (8:12-13)—until Peter and John came to see the Samaritans....”

For a start on the answer to this question about the RCL reading visit the article at <https://bible.org/article/conversion-samaritans-acts-814-17-and-unified-progress-gospel-book-acts>

**“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3rd Chapter”**

**“Glory to You, O Lord”**

### Luke 3:15-22, (RCL) Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (John 2:1-11)

<sup>15</sup> As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

<sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; <sup>[a]</sup> with you I am well pleased.” <sup>[b]</sup>

- a. [Luke 3:22](#) Or my Son, my (or the) Beloved
- b. [Luke 3:22](#) Some manuscripts beloved Son; today I have begotten you

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord”    “Praise to You, O Christ”**

#### What Happened to John?

Since it is Year C, the year of the Gospel of Luke, we hear Luke's version of Jesus' baptism. It is always a helpful exercise to dust off one's Gospel Parallels when it comes to a story that appears in all four Gospels. A comparison of the versions of Jesus' baptism yields several differences in Luke's account. Moreover, the baptism of Jesus in Luke points to a major theme for the Gospel, but also for Epiphany -- what happens when what is revealed is not what people actually want and *even reject*?

Noticeable about Luke's account of Jesus' baptism is that John is nowhere to be found. Reading the verses that the lectionary omits, 3:18-20 (RCL), is essential because they tell us what happened to John. He's in prison. What might this detail overlooked by the lectionary reveal to us about Jesus' baptism in the Gospel of Luke? First, since John is shut up in prison, he is not present at the baptism of Jesus nor does he baptize Jesus. Well, then. Who does?

Second, the reason John is put in prison foreshadows Jesus' rejection in Nazareth. John has told Herod the truth about his life. Herod doesn't like the truth and gets rid of the evidence. How do we do the same? Third, while John had a major role in the first chapters of the Gospel, including the story of his mother and father, his birth, his relationship to Jesus, now that Jesus will be baptized, it's just Jesus, and there will be no confusing the two.

John is not the Messiah and the first clue in distinguishing between Jesus and John is oddly baptism. Jesus' baptism will be different and Jesus will baptize differently. We will know they are not the same by how they go about baptizing people. John's baptism is just with water. But Jesus? Well, that's with the Holy Spirit and with fire (think Acts 2).

Of course, this anticipates the scope of Luke's vision reaching back to Adam and then forward, far beyond the confines of Luke 24:53 into the book of Acts. As a result, the Spirit takes center stage here, and reminds us of the unique function of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. Reading the Gospel of Luke through the lens of the Spirit's role generates the following, yet only a sampling, of the Spirit's presence:

- Conception (1:35)
- Magnificat (1:46-47)
- Zechariah (1:67)
- Leads Jesus into wilderness (4:1)
- Empowers Jesus' ministry (4:14)
- Jesus rejoices in the Spirit (10:21)
- Conferred through prayer (11:13; compare Mt 7:11)
- Jesus commits his spirit to God (23:46)
- Luke ends his Gospel with Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit (24:47-49)
- Pentecost (Acts 2)

The second person address to Jesus by the voice from heaven is the same as in Mark but in Luke it seems to have a different meaning. Whereas in Mark, such secrecy plays into the general cover-up about Jesus' identity, in Luke, that Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit appear to be the only ones present at the baptism foreshadows a similar moment at the crucifixion, a "last word" found only in Luke (23:46). There is promise in the presence of the Spirit here and at the end of Jesus' life that will be true for all believers.

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1557](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1557) **Karoline Lewis**  
Associate Professor of Preaching and the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching  
**Luther Seminary Saint Paul, Minn.**

Rick and Ted are still unable to appear – now they have a "Forbidden Access" listing (*Agnus Day appears with the permission of [www.angusday.org](http://www.angusday.org)*) *Prayer Pups may be a replacement, meanwhile:*



[http://www.the-cartoonist.com/gospel2/graphics/017\\_baptism\\_600\\_ic.gif](http://www.the-cartoonist.com/gospel2/graphics/017_baptism_600_ic.gif)