

Baptism of our Lord January 12, 2020

First Sunday after the Epiphany (See page 12)

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.

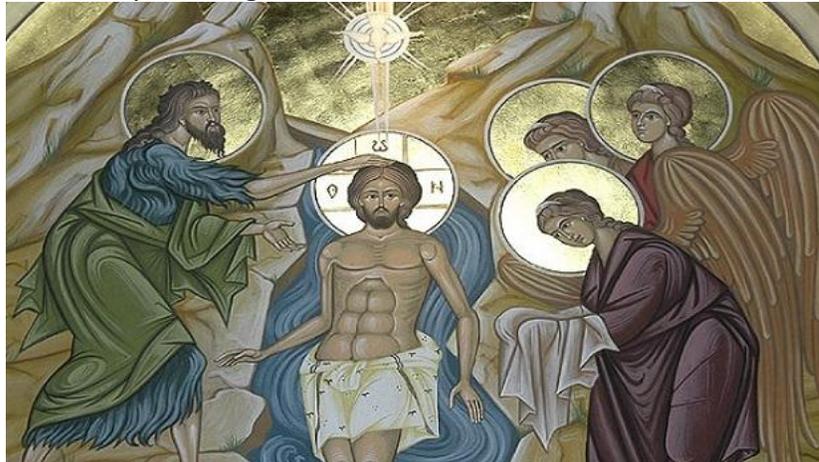
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

Available on line at:

- ✦ www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- ✦ Through www.Facebook.com at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
- ✦ All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 12:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



Visit <https://jesusicon.com/Baptism-icon-jesus-Epiphany-Theophany/> for details of icon.

Hymn of the Day

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

“To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord”

Written by Martin Luther in 1541. "The original title is "A hymn on our Holy Baptism, wherein is briefly embraced What it is? Who instituted it? What is its use?" It is a Catechetical hymn setting forth the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism, and is based on St. Matt. iii. 13-17, and St. Mark xvi...-Excerpts from John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)"

- https://hymnary.org/text/to_jordan_came_our_lord_the_christ
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_LjqrQ88Cg Song Lyrics with
Orchestral backing music. [Rod Smith](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d15T0Kv-j-Y> By Carl F. Schalk, "A
Reformation Christmas: Organ Preludes on Sixteenth-Century Hymns"

*(Alternate Tune, LSB 407: Elvet Banks) This link will allow you to hear a MIDI version of the tune, "Elvet Banks" <http://servicemusic.org.uk/hymntune/index.php>
See <https://bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/BibleStudies/47280/DownloadText> for details.*

Alternate for use as First Sunday after the Epiphany (same as last week)
Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 410 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 133
"Within the Father's house"

Text by: James R Woodford 1863 Tune: Franconia from: Harmonischer Liederschatz, Frankfurt 1738 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tzgn03coZSo> Andrew Remillard

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001
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O.T.– "I am the LORD; I have called you... will take you by the hand and keep you....I will give... "

Psalm – "The voice of the LORD, is over the waters...powerful...full of majesty."

Epistle – "What shall **we** say... **we** have been united... **we**... certainly... **we** believe"

Gospel – "Jesus ...John, John ...Jesus... and behold, a voice from heaven said,"

Isaiah 42:1-9; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (Next week: Isaiah 49:1-7; RCL, the same reading)

"Christians are sometimes prone to hurdle the Old Testament's original context in order to sprint to the finish line that is the Jesus to whom it points. We always want, after all, to preach and teach Christ and him crucified.

So preachers and teachers sometimes treat texts like Isaiah 42 as little more than an opening act for the star of the show, Matthew 3's baptized Jesus ...

Yet it's hard to fully hear what the Old Testament says to us about Jesus if we don't first hear what it says to its original audience. Perhaps, then, its preachers and teachers might make a new year's resolution to spend more time listening to what the Spirit said through the Old Testament to its first hearers.

Isaiah 42 is a good place to start on the second Sunday of the new year. Of course, it, as do most texts, has several contexts, even for its original audience. While scholars wrestle with its exact composition date, they generally agree that it's broadly set in the context of Israel's Babylonian exile that has nearly completely devastated her political, social, economic and religious life.

While most westerners who preach, teach and hear Isaiah 42 can hardly relate to that context of defeat, loss and upheaval, most can relate to the questions it raises. How could Yahweh let all of this happen? Has Yahweh abandoned God's adopted sons and daughters? Is God still God?..."

- https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-1a/?type=old_testament_lectionary
Doug Bratt is the pastor of Silver Spring (Md.) Christian Reformed Church.

The LORD's Chosen Servant

42 Behold my servant, whom **I** uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.
² He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
 or make it heard in the street;
³ a bruised reed he will not break,
 and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.
⁴ He will not grow faint or be discouraged^[a]
 till he has established justice in the earth;
 and the coastlands wait for his law.

⁵ Thus says God, the LORD,
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,
 who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people on it
 and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ “**I** am the LORD; **I** have called you^[b] in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people,
 a light for the nations,
⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
 to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
 from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ **I** am the LORD; that is my name;
 my glory I give to no other,

nor my praise to carved idols.
⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass,
 and new things **I** now declare;
 before they spring forth
 I tell you of them.”

Sing to the LORD a New Song Verses 10-17

Israel's Failure to Hear and See Verses 18-35

- a. [Isaiah 42:4](#) Or *bruised*
- b. [Isaiah 42:6](#) The Hebrew for *you* is singular; four times in this verse

God's spirit, God's servant, God's delight.

These concepts are the connective tissue between today's Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 42 and the assigned Gospel lesson from Matthew 3. The passages echo one another.

In Isaiah 42, the divine speaker announces the presence of a servant who is chosen by God and a source of delight for God. God will place God's spirit upon this servant so that the servant is able to bring forth justice to the nations, to be a light, to open blind eyes and bring out prisoners. In Matthew 3, when Jesus is baptized, God's spirit likewise descends upon him and God delights in him. The relationship here is not between God and God's servant, but between God and God's beloved son: "This is my son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased" (NRSV).

Both of these passages provide an opportunity to talk about the role of these individuals as God's earthly representatives, as God's chosen ones, as workers of justice in the world. What is their mission and role? Why are they divinely chosen? Why do they need the spirit of God? And is this a role for individuals and/or communities?

And how might we, as God's people today, fashion our actions and demeanors into ones fitting for us as servants of God, ones in whom God delights? Are we God's servants, establishing justice on earth as it is in heaven?

How do we take up the mission of the servant and live out our baptismal vows?..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3132 Tyler Mayfield
 A.B. Rhodes Professor of Old Testament, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Psalm 29; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 40:1-11; RCL, the same reading)

"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 (verses 3-9) is an enthusiastic and extended report of a powerful thunderstorm that apparently formed over the Mediterranean Sea (verse 3) and that proceeded to crash onto the coast of Palestine and to make its way inland. The storm damage is in view in verses 5 and 9. It was result of high winds (verses 6, 8) that were accompanied by

sharp lightning (verse 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...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2453 [J. Clinton McCann](#)
Evangelical Professor of Biblical Interpretation, Eden Seminary, Saint Louis, MO

Ascribe to the LORD Glory A Psalm of David.

- 29** Ascribe to the **LORD**, O heavenly beings,^[a]
ascribe to the **LORD** glory and strength.
- ² Ascribe to the **LORD** the glory due his name;
worship the **LORD** in the splendor of holiness.^[b]
- ³ The voice of the **LORD** is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the **LORD**, over many waters.
- ⁴ The voice of the **LORD** is powerful;
the voice of the **LORD** is full of majesty.
- ⁵ The voice of the **LORD** breaks the cedars;
the **LORD** breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
- ⁶ He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- ⁷ The voice of the **LORD** flashes forth flames of fire.
- ⁸ The voice of the **LORD** shakes the wilderness;
the **LORD** shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- ⁹ The voice of the **LORD** makes the deer give birth^[c]
and strips the forests bare,
and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”
- ¹⁰ The **LORD** sits enthroned over the flood;
the **LORD** sits enthroned as king forever.
- ¹¹ May the **LORD** give strength to his people!
May the **LORD** bless^[d] 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*
- d. [Psalm 29:11](#) Or *The LORD will give... The LORD will bless*

Bravo, God, Bravo! (Psalm 29:1-2)

A storm scene from Psalm 29:

The Message translation catches the spirit of the psalm. It imagines all the heavenly creatures cheering as God thunders across the waters:

Bravo, God, Bravo!

Gods and all angels shout, "Encore!"

Step by step the chorus of cheers becomes more intense; in the NRSV translation:

"Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendor. (vv. 1-2)

The psalm follows the typical pattern of a hymn of praise: calls to praise in the imperative mood (Psalm 29:1-2) introduce a section giving reasons for praising the Lord (vv.3-11; see Psalm 113 for an example of the structure of the hymn of praise).

The "heavenly beings" called to praise are those supernatural creatures who surround the Lord's throne; we might call them "angels." The Bible assumes the presence of these creatures...

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;

Praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels ...

"Glory" (Hebrew, *kabod*) is an important word in Psalm 29 (1, 2, 9). The basic sense of the word is "heaviness, abundance." A cloud may be described as "thick" (*kabod*) with rain (Exodus 19:16) or one may speak of a "heavy (*kabod*) hail" (Exodus 9:24). The word may be used to designate a magnificent kind of luxury, like the splendor (*kabod*) of the great banquet given by King Ahasuerus (Esther 1:4; read 1:5-9 and 5:11). Toward the end of the psalm all living creatures are directed to shout "Glory!" (*kabod*, Psalm 29:9).

The Storm (Psalm 29:3-9)

The call to praise in the imperative mood is now followed by reasons for praise in Psalm 29:3-9. In this case the reasons for praise have to do with the might of the LORD as revealed in a storm. The description enables one to imagine the storm developing in the west, coming across the Mediterranean, then striking land in the territory of Lebanon, including Mt. Hermon (Sirion), and finally moving on toward Jerusalem.

The sound of the storm must have been awesome (Psalm 29:4) and is described as the "voice of the LORD," fearsome in its effects (vv. 5-9). There is more thunder, then a sharp crack, followed by a thud as a cedar branch hits the ground (v. 5). The word "voice" (Hebrew *qol*) occurs seven times, perhaps suggesting totality.

The storm makes landfall. The mighty cedars of Lebanon (still the symbol on today's Lebanese flag) are snapped like so many match sticks (Psalm 29:5). The land shakes and quakes

(v. 6). Lightning strikes, and the forests catch fire (v. 7a). Those in the temple shout a word of praise, “Glory!” (v. 9).

Psalm 29 ends with a picture of the calm *after* the storm. The forests are burned over, recalling television shots of the devastation of forests in Colorado or California. But finally, everything seems to be back in order. The LORD is in control, enthroned as King in heaven blessing the people with shalom (vv. 10-11)...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2296
[James Limburg](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Romans 6:1-11; RCL, Acts 10:34-43 (1 Corinthians 1:1-9; RCL, the same reading)

This reading appears in the RCL on the Sunday in Pentecost for Proper 7. Reading from Romans will appear 24 times in the Lutheran Lectionary for Year A.

“The continuous reading of Paul’s letter to the Romans for sixteen Sundays, (later in Year A during Pentecost) which the ecumenical lectionary (RCL) prescribes, offers the preacher and the congregation an occasion for exploring a spiritual and theological classic. “This epistle,” wrote Martin Luther, “is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel.” Luther advised persons to learn it by heart and declared:

In this epistle we thus find most abundantly the things that a Christian ought to know, namely, what is law, gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, righteousness, Christ, God, good works, love, hope, and the cross; and also how we are to conduct ourselves toward everyone, be he righteous or sinner, strong or weak, friend or foe—and even toward our own selves....It appears that [Paul] wanted in this one epistle to sum up briefly the whole Christian and evangelical doctrine...”

- http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/13-2_Literature/13-2_Hultgren.pdf
ARLAND J. HULTGREN Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

“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 posing him as a model of ways through which God justifies human beings,(Chapter 4), 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.

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2052 [Israel Kamudzandu](#) Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God Verses 1-14

6 What shall **we** say then? Are **we** to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ **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.

⁵ 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. ⁶ **We** know that our old self^[a] 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. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free^[b] from sin. ⁸ Now if **we** have died with Christ, **we** believe that **we** will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Slaves to Righteousness Verses 15-23

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

“There are times when knowing a few facts can have great impact on our decisions and our actions. Most of us have “gone off half-cocked,” only to discover later that we acted without some very pertinent information. In our text, Paul is pointing out to his Roman readers some very important facts they must know,¹⁴⁰ which will serve as the basis for their lifestyle.

The verses in our lesson (6:1-14), and their context of chapters 5-8, deal with one of the most important aspects of the Christian life—the subject of sanctification.¹⁴¹ Perhaps no other epistle in the New Testament is more thorough on the subject of sanctification than Paul is here.¹⁴² An accurate understanding and implementation of these verses is vital. Paul’s own words in our passage indicate that it is not difficult for the Christian to take a biblical truth to a most unbiblical extreme in practice. The doctrine of the spiritual life is not just controversial; it is a doctrine which is often not biblically based. We must make it a matter of diligent in-depth personal study, meditation, and prayer.

I strongly urge you to devote yourself to an intense personal study of Paul’s words here in Romans, as well as in other biblical texts. I also encourage you to read and study chapters 5-8 as a whole and discourage you from the study of any text in isolation. Let us look to the Lord to speak to us in our study, through the ministry of the Word and His Spirit. Let us be eager to learn what He will teach us about the spiritual life...”

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/end-reign-death-romans-61-14> Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, "a pastor/teacher and elder at Community Bible Chapel in Richardson, Texas,"

Matthew 3:13-17; RCL, the same reading (John 1:29-42a; RCL, John 1:29-42)

"As if on cue, Jesus sets foot on the stage immediately after John's contrast of his baptism and the superior baptism which is to come.

Matthew makes it amply clear that this superior figure of judgment and power is none other than Jesus by linking John's prophecy and Jesus' public debut.

The last thing we hear about Jesus prior to this encounter with John is the move of Jesus' family to Nazareth after the death of Herod (2:23). After leaping over much of Jesus' childhood and early adulthood, Matthew introduces John the Baptist nearly exclusively to point forward to Jesus' narrative reappearance. That is, John's narrative function is solely to "prepare the way of the Lord" (3:3)..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=839
[Eric Barreto](#) Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.

"The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3rd Chapter"

John the Baptist Prepares the Way Verses 1-12

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, 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 thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*** Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,^[c] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, ***This is my beloved Son,^[d] with whom I am well pleased.***

- a. [Matthew 3:16](#) Some manuscripts omit *to him*
- b. [Matthew 3:17](#) Or *my Son, my (or the) Beloved*

Cross references:

1. [Matthew 3:13](#) : For ver. 13-17, see [Mark 1:9-11](#); [Luke 3:21, 22](#); [[John 1:32-34](#)]
2. [Matthew 3:16](#) : [John 1:32, 33](#); [[Luke 4:18, 21](#); [Acts 10:38](#)]
3. [Matthew 3:17](#) : [ch. 17:5](#); [2 Pet. 1:17](#); [[Ps. 2:7](#); [Isa. 42:1](#); [Eph. 1:6](#); [Col. 1:13](#); [1 John 5:9](#)]

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

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:29-34

All four gospels have the same story. But the Gospel of John does not have Jesus' actual baptism. Look at the four texts carefully: John does not have Jesus' baptized and dunked into the water.

There are specific parallels in the stories: Spirit, dove, heavens opened, voice, beloved Son, well pleased.

The primary meaning is clear: the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus and Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by none other than God. Jesus Christ is designated the Son of God by God. There is no “wobble room” as to the true identity of Jesus.

The following Bible passage is a blending/harmonization of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John:

-In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The first three gospels tell us about Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. The Gospel of John does not. In John's gospel, Jesus is the sinless one

-John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 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. (only Matthew) Note Matthew's uniqueness: Jesus was baptized in order to “fulfill all righteousness;” in other words, to be a righteous person. Matthew persistently interprets the actions of Jesus as “fulfilling” Scripture. Since there was no baptism in the Old Testament, we cannot determine which Old Testament Scripture that Matthew used as a reference.

-And while he was praying, (only Luke). Note Luke's uniqueness: He inserts “praying” and the Spirit becomes the “Holy Spirit.”

-Just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. The Spirit came down from heaven, directly from God.

-And the Spirit remained on him. (only John) Note John's uniqueness: The Spirit remained and John was an eyewitness. Twice the Spirit “remained” on Jesus. John seems to be emphasizing that the Spirit remained on Jesus throughout his whole lifetime and did not leave him...

-And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; Jesus is clearly called the Son of God by God the Father. This is clearly stated in all four gospels. We will hear the same voice of God make a similar declaration at the event of the Transfiguration e.g. “This is my beloved Son, my chosen, with whom I am well pleased.” (Mark 2:7 and parallels. #161, p. 153.) There are several events in Jesus' life where Jesus was/is clearly declared to be the Son of God e.g. the virgin birth, baptism, transfiguration, and resurrection. In John's gospel, the voice is not the voice of God from heaven but the voice of John the Apostle who declares that Jesus is the Son of God.

-With you I am well pleased. God is well pleased with Jesus. One of the most important realities of life is to know that God is well pleased not only with Jesus, but with us as well. God delights in Jesus and also delights in us. God delights in our God given uniqueness, even though we are sinful by nature. To know that God is pleased with us transforms our lives...

-I have seen and have born witness that this is the Son of God. (only John) In other words, John himself was an “eye witness” and gives us an eyewitness account. The other gospel authors never claim this for themselves. John, in I John 1:1-4, says the same thing, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. The life was made manifest and we saw it and testify to it...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you...we are writing this that our joy may be complete.” In other words, it is clear that John, the Apostle, was an eyewitness of the life of Christ. The Apostle John reports these words rather than the voice of God...”

- http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_baptism_of_jesus.htm Pastor Edward F. Markquart
Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines, Washington 98198



- *Agnus Day appears with the permission of* <https://www.agnusday.org/>

“Sermon

by the Rev. Dr. Delmer L. Chilton

In a book called *Craddock Stories*, noted preacher and Professor of Preaching and New Testament Fred Craddock remembers preaching at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s church, sometime in the 1980s. He says,

“Joe Roberts, the pastor, had invited me . . . and the service had moved to the point where I was to stand and speak. I’d moved to the pulpit and I had my New Testament (turned to Mark 8) . . . and was ready to read, when Joe Roberts, who was seated up there along with several other persons, began to sing. Just as I was going to say my first word, he started singing. “I feel much better now that I’ve laid my burden down,” and then he sang some more. Then the associates started singing, and the musicians went to their instruments, the piano and the organ and the drums and the electric guitar, and the people started singing. I’m standing up there with Mark 8, waiting.

“Then, I suddenly realized, I’m the one up front, I’m the leader of this, so I started clapping my hands and singing. Then everybody stood up and started clapping their hands and swinging and singing, and it was just marvelous. Then at a certain point the pastor, Joe Roberts, put his hand out, it got quiet, they sat down and I started preaching. I could’ve preached all day. Afterwards I said to Joe, “Well, that kind of shocked me a little bit. You didn’t tell me you were going to do that.” He said, “Well, I didn’t plan it.” “Then why did you do it?” And he said, “Well, when you stood up there, one of my associates leaned over to me and said, ‘That boy’s going to need some help.’” (p. 128)

“That boy’s going to need some help.” I can just see The Father and The Spirit peering down from heaven onto the John the Baptist Revival Center and Riverfront Tabernacle down by the Jordan. Here comes Jesus, determined to get started on his mission and full of vim, vigor and bright ideas. And The Spirit turns to The Father and says, “That boy’s going to need some help.”

And The Father thinks about it a few minutes, looks out over the horizon and into the future and sees there trials and tribulations, sadness and sorrow, great adulation mixed with abject failure and frequent rejection. And The Father nods sadly and says to The Spirit, “I believe you’re right. That boy is going to some help.” And then a slow smile spread across the Father’s face and he said, “And guess what Spirit; you’re it.”

And so it was that just as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens split open and the Spirit of God came down in the form of a dove and alit on Jesus’ shoulder, and a mighty voice boomed from above, “This is my Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” And after that, the heavens closed and the bird flew off and only a few heard a faint voice whisper, “There; that oughta do it.”...

- <https://lectionarylab.com/2014/01/03/year-a-the-baptism-of-the-lord-january-12-2014/> “Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Delmer L. Chilton”

First Sunday after the Epiphany Epiphany is always January 6 and depending on the year usually appears between Sundays. The last times it occurred on a Sunday were in 2013 and 2019. The next times will be in 2030, 2036, 2041 and 2043.

“WHAT DOES THE CHURCH COMMEMORATE DURING EPIPHANY?”

The Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord originally commemorated three incidents that manifested the mission and divinity of Christ: the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11), and the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11). Nowadays, most liturgical churches emphasize the visit of the Magi on January 6th and celebrate Christ’s baptism on the first Sunday after the 6th.

WHY IS EPIPHANY SUCH A SPECIAL DAY AND SEASON?

Epiphany is one of the most important festivals of the liturgical year because it shows the church how God comes to His people. We are so full of sin and deserving of divine punishment that we cannot hope to approach God. Knowing that we cannot come to Him, God took the initiative and came to us by becoming one of us. **The most holy and almighty God condescended to take on human flesh in order to reveal His salvation to the world. This is the mystery of the Epiphany of our Lord ...”**

- <https://churchmousec.wordpress.com/2014/01/04/why-the-epiphany-is-so-important-a-lutheran-perspective/>

*How are you doing with **The Matthew Challenge**, a handwritten copy of the book of Matthew by the Last Sunday of the Church Year (Christ the King Sunday), November 22, 2020. You are now in Chapter ????*