



Baptism of Jesus - Sunday January 12th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

As we gather this day
we remember your promises
in the pouring of water.
(pour water from a height into a bowl or baptism font)

For water that is life,
for water that quenches our thirst,
for water that directs us to the Spirit.

We are blessed
as water is poured
and you call us to life in you.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded lands and waters. We pay respect to Elders past and present. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing - Lord your almighty word TiS 447

OR: You are holy you are whole TiS 753
OR: God sends us his Spirit TiS 412

Prayer



God of water,
God of life and death,
God of power and calmness,
we thank you for bringing us together.
**Speak to us, that we might hear you clearly
and act on your calling of us.**

Guiding God,
We have failed to follow you and live out our baptism as we ought.
We have not always reached out to our neighbours with the selfless love you showed us.
We have caused harm to others and creation by our actions.

Forgive us our sins and remind us of your calling and symbol on us in our baptism.
God make us holy and whole in the knowledge that our sins are forgiven. Amen.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Acts 8:14-17 &
Luke 3: 15-17,21-22

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga

I remember a story of a visiting preacher who was a little lost as he tried to find a church one Sunday morning. While driving distracted trying to find his way, he was abused by another motorist in language and gesture. After a while, the visitor found the church, parked and arrived at the front door to be greeted by the man who had just abused him. How's that for a first impression!

First impressions stick. They set up expectations of character or purpose. In each of the gospels, Jesus is introduced to us by John the Baptist. In Luke's gospel, we are primed with expectations of Jesus the Messiah.

John needs to set the scene boldly because his business of calling for repentance and baptising have made people wonder about him. The voice



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of one crying out in the wilderness. "Are you the one?", they ask.

He sets the record straight. "I'm not even worthy to untie the thongs of the sandals of the one who is coming. I deal with water, he deals with nothing less than the Holy Spirit!". It's a very dramatic introduction to Jesus. We discover his mission is to be the bearer of good news, to bring about liberation and life in God's name.

In case we were sleeping as all this happens, there is more. Jesus enters the muddy waters of the Jordan, submitting himself to the love and work of John, is baptised and as he emerges and prays, heaven is opened. We move from the earthy and embodied things of immersion – water, sandals and the humanity of Jesus, to an immersion of things divine. We hear of the Holy Spirit arriving like a dove. If that's not enough, the heavens thunder with approval. A voice is heard: 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Talk about dramatic. That's an introduction to remember.

What we have here is clearly Messianic in scale. 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' Human and divine meet in this blessing. Whatever John has said or done before this seems to fade into the background. The moment has come. All is in place. The thirty or so years of Jesus' apprenticeship in life has formed and prepared him for this. The time has come to step into his calling for the sake of the world. In him and through him the love of God for all of humanity rises to a crescendo. And Luke with the help of John is intent we do not miss it.

I am struck by the voice from above. Surely this is original blessing. What has Jesus done to deserve this? He was born and laid in a manger thanks to the faithfulness of Mary and Joseph. He was sheltered as a refugee thanks to their action on the advice of visitors from the east. He learnt a trade from his dad and worked the tools and wood for the sake of his family and their future. No doubt he was familiar with everyday things

like wood shavings, oil, calluses and how to cut a tight dovetail joint. Thirty years of pretty much ordinary life. And in this moment a blessing from the heavens. I suspect blessing is what propels all of us who feel ordinary. Is that what sends us on the journey to bear good news, liberation and life in God's name?

It's clear that Jesus is unlike us. Without a doubt Luke is proclaiming through John and heaven's voice that in all his humanity, Jesus joins in divine purpose. Not just a joining but a full embrace of God made flesh to dwell among us.

This is the epiphany, the light-bulb moment, the revelation: God holds nothing back – to find us where we are, and to bring us into the light. No matter how ordinary we might feel, God is on the journey with us. No matter the pain and the joy, God is with us.

That sounds like an act of original blessing to me. God became flesh to be with us, until all that seems ordinary finds the blessing of life in God's name.

Singing - On Jordan's bank TiS 270

OR: Like the murmur of the dove's song TiS 419

OR: At the dawning of salvation TiS 392

Offering

As your water blesses us
and your Spirit moves us,
God fully known in Jesus,
bless these gifts and we who offer them.
May your blessing propel us
in the work of the Spirit
for the sake of the world. Amen.

Notices

Next Sunday (January 19) many churches will celebrate Aboriginal Sunday.

See <https://tinyurl.com/3v6da4hs> for more.



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Prayers for World & Community

Creator,
water pourer,
hear our prayer for the world
that we may find ourselves with you
in the swirling dust of people's lives,
living in the light, sharing love and justice.

For conflict in the world...

Hear us as we pray
for those who live daily
with fear and conflict,
worry and violence.
May we be peace bearers
like doves flying from above.

Hear us as we pray
for our friends and family,
for those seeking peace
and those living with anxiety.
Hear us as we pray for those around us
and through whom we live life.

Water pourer,
hear our prayers for the world
that we may find ourselves,
with you...

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Singing - Loving Spirit TiS 417

OR: Father in heaven TiS 465

OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer TiS 569

Blessing

As you go
may you know the Spirit of God is with you
in the movement of the wind.
May you know the love of God
in the flowing of water from a tap or a river.
May God's blessing be with us all,
this day and each day and
may you be a blessing to others
in all you are and do.

Reflection: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
Leongatha, Korumburra, Loch-Poowong
Kookaburra Ministry Team

Liturgy: Rev. Fee Morrison
Chairperson, Presbytery of Gippsland

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga

