

**A "VIRTUAL" SERVICE TO UNITE US IN SPIRIT
FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 16, 2022
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
(and a daily prayer)**

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*Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison WI*



The Community Gathers

Lighting of the Candles

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome

Announcements, Joys and Concerns

♪Prelude

Gathering Prayer

Pastor: *God's spirit gathers us as one—all different,*
All: **yet all seeking love and kindness and peace.**

Pastor: *We come together to feel God's presence more deeply. We feel blessed by this communion of spirit*
All: **with God and with each other.**

Pastor: *God offers us joy and gladness and spiritual abundance. In faith, and with a sense of abiding blessing,*

All: we bask in God's radiant delight!

♪Opening Hymn: No. 459 *Come, O Fount of Every Blessing* (verses 1, 3)

Come O fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace, streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unfailing love.

O to grace how great a debtor, daily I am drawn anew. Let that grace now like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to you. Prone to wander, I can feel it, wander from the love I've known. Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your very own.

The Community Shares God's Word

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Sermon *How did Jesus' baptism change John?*

The Community Responds to God's Word

♪Hymn of Response No. 168 *O Radiant Christ, Incarnate Word*

O radiant Christ incarnate word, eternal love revealed in time. Come make your home within our hearts, that we may dwell in light sublime.

Our bartered busy lives burn dim, too tired to care too numb to fee. Come shine upon our shadowed world, your radiance bathes with power to heal.

Your glory shone at Jordan's stream, the font where we were born anew. Attune your church to know you near, illumine all we say and do.

O light of nations fill the earth, our faith and hope and love renew. Come lead the peoples to your peace, as stars once led the way to you.

Remembering Our Baptism

Remembering Our Baptism: Introduction

Pastor: Our God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good. Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and embraces all of us. Jesus embraces those who are poor, oppressed, marginalized and all others who come seeking. We follow Jesus with our Baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being. We join Jesus in love and service. Let us renew our baptismal promises.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Pastor: Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your Baptism?

All: I do.

Pastor: Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

All: I do.

Pastor: Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

All: I do

Pastor: Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

All: I do.

Pastor: Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

All: I do.

*Pastor: In renewing your baptismal vows,
remember your Baptism as a mark of acceptance
and welcome into the care of Christ's church
where you may continue your Christian faith and life...O God, bless these waters with
your Spirit, that we may refreshed and renewed in faith.*

[you will be instructed to bless yourself with the water you have]

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received. We thank you that you claim us, bless us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to

live a life worthy of our calling. In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world. Establish us to be places of refreshment. Root us and nurture us in love, that with all your people, that we may rightly and justly serve you. Fill us with your fullness that our lives may overflow in service and love.

All: **Amen.**

Sung Prayer Response No. 283 *Spirit of the Living God*

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.

Prayers of the People

Pastor: *Let us pray...as Jesus taught us to pray to you, saying:*

All: **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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Offering

Thank you for your electronic offerings, or for mailing in your offerings for the ministry and mission of this congregation. Through your generosity, we are doing God's work in the world.

Thank you for your pledges of support for 2022, helping us plan for our ministry and mission to come. Pledges are still being accepted in the offering plate, in the office, or by email.

Thank you for all you are doing to help keep all in the community safe, including getting vaccinated and boosted (if safe for you), wearing of face masks, physically distancing, and hand washing.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Pastor: *Ever gracious God, we thank you for your many blessings. You have granted us life. You have poured out abiding love for us and all creation. Your spirit has sustained us and encouraged us and helped us. It seems inadequate just to say "thanks," but we do so not just with words but with our hearts and our souls and with*

our actions, sharing out of our material and spiritual abundance
All: so that all may know of you, O God, and your love. Amen.

The Community Goes Forth

♪ Sending Hymn No. 327 *Jesus Loves Me*
(verse 1 by Anna B. Warner (1860); verses 2-4 by John Gage (2016; used with permission, shared by Lisa Hart (Associate Conference Minister, WI Conference UCC))

**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.

**Jesus loves you just like me, though we live quite differently.
Different lives, but the same love comes to all from God above. (Refrain)**

**Jesus loves them, as they are – neighbors, strangers, near and far,
other cultures, faiths, and views – loves them all and doesn't choose. (Refrain)**

**Jesus loves us, you and me, us and them, all equally.
Big or little, weak or strong, in God's family all belong. (Refrain)**

Blessing and Sending Prayer

Pastor: *Love to you, from God our Creator. Peace to you, from the one who shows us all that we can be. Grace to you, from the Spirit who blesses you, now and always.*

All: Our worship has ended, our service begins, as we take God's light out into the world with us!

♪ Postlude

Pastor: Rev. Leslie Schenk

Accompanist: Wilder Deitz

Ministers: All the people of Plymouth Congregational UCC

Thoughts to ponder for the week:

“So I followed that preacher man down to the river

And now I'm changed

And now I'm stronger

There must've been something in the water”

–Carrie Underwood

“In baptism, we die. In baptism, we are invited to renounce and resist the evils of the world, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to respect the dignity of every human being. In baptism, we give our bodies and all that we do to God’s struggle for justice and peace for all people.” — Kelly Ryan

“This baptism that Jesus called us to is fundamentally a call for allegiance. It is fundamentally a decisive commitment of our lives to God, who is of supreme sovereignty and majestic might.” — Samuel Chuin Ming Oo

Prayer for the Week: (from Reinhold Niebuhr)

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.