

# Morning Prayer

**The First Sunday After the  
Epiphany: The Baptism of Our  
Lord Jesus Christ**

Sunday, January 10, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: **782611**

## Prelude

## Announcements

## Opening Sentence

*The Presider says*

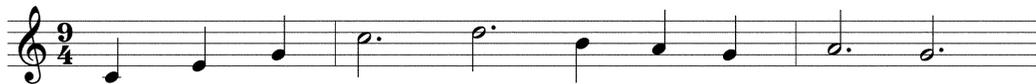
Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

*Isaiah 60:3*

## Entrance Hymn

Tune: *Bunessan*

*Baptized in water*



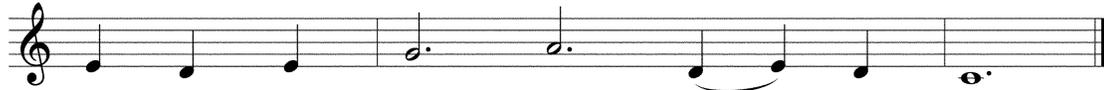
1. Bap - tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it,  
2. Bap - tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it,  
3. Bap - tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it,



Cleansed by the blood of Christ our King:  
Dead in the tomb with Christ our King:  
Marked with the sign of Christ our King:



Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust - ing his prom - ise,  
 One with his ris - ing, Freed and for - giv - en,  
 Born of one Fa - ther, We are his chil - dren,



Faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.  
 Thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.  
 Joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

## Confession of Sin

*The Presider says*

Let us confess our sins to God.

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**God of all mercy,  
 we confess that we have sinned against you,  
 opposing your will in our lives.  
 We have denied your goodness in each other,  
 in ourselves, and in the world you have created.  
 We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
 the evil we have done,  
 and the evil done on our behalf.  
 Forgive, restore, and strengthen us  
 through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
 that we may abide in your love  
 and serve only your will. Amen.**

*A Priest says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Presider* O God, let our mouth proclaim your praise.

*People* **And your glory all the day long.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.**

*Presider* Christ has shown forth his glory:

*People* **O come let us worship.**

### **Venite: Psalm 95**

Come, let us sing to the Lord; \*

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving \*  
and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.**

For you are a great God, \*

you are great above all gods.

**In your hand are the caverns of the earth, \*  
and the heights of the hills are yours also.**

The sea is yours, for you made it, \*

and your hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, \*  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

For you are our God,

and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand. \*

**Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!**

### **Psalm 29**

<sup>1</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, \*

ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>2</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his Name; \*  
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

<sup>3</sup>The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;

the God of glory thunders; \*

the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

<sup>4</sup>**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice; \*  
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

<sup>5</sup>The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; \*

the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

<sup>6</sup>**He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, \*  
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

<sup>7</sup>The voice of the LORD splits the flames of fire;

the voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; \*

the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

<sup>8</sup>**The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe \*  
and strips the forests bare.**

<sup>9</sup>And in the temple of the LORD \*  
all are crying, "Glory!"

<sup>10</sup>**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; \*  
the LORD sits enthroned as King forevermore.**

<sup>11</sup>The LORD shall give strength to his people; \*  
**the LORD shall give his people the blessing of peace.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

*Presider* Christ has shown forth his glory:  
*People* **O come let us worship.**

## **The Lessons**

### **First Reading**

Genesis 1:1-5

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Canticle G: A Song of Ezekiel**

*Ezekiel 36:24-28*

I will take you from among all nations; \*  
and gather you from all lands to bring you home.

**I will sprinkle clean water upon you; \*  
and purify you from false gods and uncleanness.**

A new heart I will give you \*  
and a new spirit put within you.

**I will take the stone heart from your chest \*  
and give you a heart of flesh.**

I will help you walk in my laws \*  
and cherish my commandments and do them.

**You shall be my people, \*  
and I will be your God.**

**Second Reading**

Acts 19:1-7

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—altogether there were about twelve of them.

Reader            The Word of the Lord.  
People            **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**

Tune: *Wareham*

*When Christ’s appearing was made known*

When Christ's ap-pear-ing was made known, King He-rod  
With-in the Jor-dan's sa-cred flood the heaven-ly  
All glo-ry, Je-sus, be to thee for this thy

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written on the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff, with syllables aligned under the corresponding notes.

trem- bled for his throne; but he who of- fers  
 Lamb in meek- ness stood, that he, to whom no  
 glad e- pi- pha- ny: whom with the Fa- ther

Heaven-ly birth sought not the king- doms of this earth.  
 sin was known, might cleanse God's peo- ple from their own.  
 we a- dore, and Ho- ly Spi- rit ev- er- more.

**Third Reading**

Mark 1:4-11

A reading from Mark

<sup>4</sup> John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. <sup>5</sup> Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He announced, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



<sup>9</sup> About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. <sup>10</sup> While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on

him. <sup>11</sup> And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

*Reader*           The Word of the Lord.

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

### **Renewal of Baptismal Vows**

*Officiant*       Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and  
renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

*People*           **I do.**

*Officiant*       Do you believe in God the Father?

*People*           **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and  
earth.**

*Officiant*       Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

*People*           **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

*Officiant*       Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

*People*           **I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

*Officiant*       Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the  
breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

*People*           **I will, with God's help.**

*Officiant*       Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin,  
repent and return to the Lord?

*People*      **I will, with God's help.**

*Officiant*    Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

*People*      **I will, with God's help.**

*Officiant*    Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

*People*      **I will, with God's help.**

*Officiant*    Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

*People*      **I will, with God's help.**

*The Officiant concludes the Renewal of Vows as follows*

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord.    **Amen.**

## **The Prayers**

*Presider*    The Lord be with you.

*People*      **And also with you.**

*Presider*    Let us pray.

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

V. Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;  
**R. Govern and uphold them, now and always.**  
V. Day by day we bless you;  
**R. We praise your Name for ever.**  
V. Lord, keep us from all sin today;  
**R. Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.**  
V. Lord, show us your love and mercy;  
**R. For we put our trust in you.**  
V. In you, Lord, is our hope;  
**R. And we shall never hope in vain.**

*Collect of the Day*

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Two Collects for the Baptism of the Lord*

Open the heavens, Holy Spirit, for us to see Jesus interceding for us; may we be strengthened to share his baptism, strengthened to share his chp, and ready to serve him forever **Amen.**

Holy Spirit, as you drove Jesus into the wilderness when John baptized him and the heavens opened, drive us to wrestle and reflect, so that we may fulfil our baptism, and live your life of victory. **Amen.**

**Intercessions and thanksgivings**

*Presider* As we recalled the waters of baptism today, gather us to your heart. Increase our commitment to the vows we have made to follow you.

*Intercessor* We pray for our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Julio, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig. We pray for all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, those in formation; and our brothers and sisters worshipping at All Saints, Brooklyn, St Paul's, Lansing; and St Matthew's, Jalongo, in the Dominican Republic. Give our spiritual leaders wisdom, patience, and guidance. **We pray for God's people and their leaders.**

*Silence is kept.*

As we survey the news of the nations, sharpen our attention to what is happening in the world around us. Compel us to pray for those in authority and for the people they govern, that there may be peace between nations and neighbors. **We pray for God's world and all its people.**

*Silence is kept.*

As we build relationships with those with whom we live and work, open our eyes to your presence in their lives, and the ways we can serve you by serving them. **We pray for our neighbors and friends.**

*Silence is kept.*

As we see and learn of those who suffer in any way, increase our capacity to love and to pray. We pray especially for \_\_\_\_\_. **We pray for those who are suffering with illness, loss, and the struggles of life.**

*Silence is kept.*

As we say goodbye to those who have departed this life, [especially \_\_\_\_\_], comfort us in our grief, assuring us of your love. **We pray for those who have died.**

*Silence is kept.*

*Presider* Grant, Lord God, to all who have been baptized into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, that, as we have put away the old life of sin, so we may be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. And since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts.

**Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.**

*The Presider then says*

My sisters and brothers, I invite you- wherever you are- to take into your hands the gifts you offer today. Gifts of food, gifts of money, gifts of whatever form, and join me as we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good our vows to the Most High.

Let us pray.

Loving God and merciful Creator, whose hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: we come to you with thanksgiving and praise. We offer to you this day our gifts of time, talent, and possessions, knowing that all we are, and all we have, is a gift from you.

**Please accept these gifts, and help us to reach out to others as you, our God, have reached out to us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### ***A Prayer of St. Chrysostom***

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them:

**Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Concluding Hymn**

LEVAS 143

*Wade in the water*

Wade in the wa - ter, wade in the wa - ter, chil - dren,

The image shows the musical notation for the hymn 'Wade in the water'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is written in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

**Fine**

Wade\_\_\_ in the wa - ter,\_\_\_ God's a-gon-na trou-ble the wa - ter.---

1. See\_\_\_ that\_\_\_ host all dressed in\_\_\_ white,\_\_\_\_\_  
 2. See\_\_\_ that\_\_\_ band all dressed in\_\_\_ red,\_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Look\_\_\_ o - ver yon-der, what do I see?\_\_\_\_\_ God's a-gon-na trou-ble the  
 4. If you don't be-lieve I've been re - deemed,\_\_\_\_\_

1. The lead - er\_\_\_ looks like the Is - ra - elite,\_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Looks like\_ the\_\_\_ band that\_\_\_ Mo - ses led,\_\_\_\_\_  
 wa - ter.---  
 3. The Ho - ly\_\_\_ Ghost a - com - ing on\_\_\_ me,\_\_\_\_\_  
 4. Just fol - low me down to\_\_\_ Jor - dan's stream,\_\_\_\_\_

**D.C.**

God's a - gon - na trou - ble the wa - ter.---

## Blessing

*A priest blesses the people, saying*

May Almighty God, who led the Wise Ones by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from Light, lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord.  
**Amen.**

May God, who sent the Holy Spirit to rest upon the Only-begotten at his baptism in the Jordan River, pour out that Spirit on you who have come to the waters of new birth. **Amen.**

May God, by the power that turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana, transform your lives and make glad your hearts. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, + the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

*Presider* Let us go forth in the love of the Father who created us, rejoicing in the Son

who was born on earth for us, and in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

*People* **Thanks be to God!**

## **Postlude**

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### **REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH**

**To make an offering to St Barnabas**, please mail your check to the church: 20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

### **CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION**

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They will be in need of our continuing help in the weeks of winter to come.

**Needed right now:** *boxed/shelf-stable milk, cooking oil, salt/pepper, spices, coffee, tea bags, sugar, flour, canned tuna, crackers, cake mix, canned frosting, dish soap, women's hygiene products.* You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. Arrangements will be made for those who need to bring donations to the church; contact Nancy for details upcoming.

Donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at [www.faithinaction1.org](http://www.faithinaction1.org), by [Facebook](#), or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action*, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118. **If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**

## Enrichment for Our Spiritual Journey

**Join St Barnabas'** twice-weekly Zoom check-in! Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. The third Thursday meetings of each month are Labyrinth Talks, hosted by Rob. Contact Marion if you need the link.

**Watch** Washington National Cathedral's live-streamed Eucharist and Daily Office services, <https://cathedral.org/calendar/>

**Join in** a short, weekly, meditation with Presiding Bishop Curry here: <https://episcopalchurch.org/habits-of-grace>

**Watch** our Diocesan Cathedral's services at Bishop Bonnie Perry's sermons, <https://www.edomi.org/whatsheaid/sermons/>

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### Upcoming Commemorations

- Jan 10 William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645
- 11 Mary Slessor, Missionary, 1915
- 12 Aelred of Rievaulx, Abbot, 1167; and, Caesaria of Arles, Monastic c.465
- 13 Hilary of Poitiers, Bishop, 367
- 16 Richard Meux Benson, Religious, 1915; George Berkeley, Priest, 1753; and, Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, 1932

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**Opening hymn** Tune: Bunesan; Text: © 1982 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Company) tr. by George Lockwood, © 2012, The Jubilate Group (admin. by Hope Publishing Company) Used by permission of OneLicense #A-722706 for Jun 24, 2020 - Jun 23, 2021  
**Two Collects for Epiphany** from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*. New York: HarperOne, 1997, p.580  
**Concluding prayer** at the Intercessions adapted from *The Armed Forces Prayer Book*, 1951.



## January 10, 2021 – Epiphany 1B Baptism of Our Lord

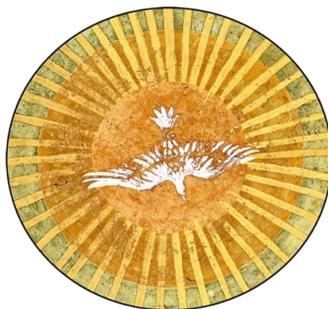
*The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord is celebrated each year on the Sunday following the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. The event of Christ’s baptism is recorded in all four gospel accounts:*

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And 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. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:9-11).

“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’” (Luke 3:21-22).

“The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John testified, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God’” (John 1:29-34).

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 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. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:13-17).



*Detail from 13th-century fresco above baptismal font, Zica monastery, near Kraljevo, Serbia.*



## Epiphany 1B: January 10, 2021

### Genesis 1:1-5

This is the beginning of the “priestly” (or “P”) creation story, written by the priestly class of Israelites during the exile in Babylon. The priests wrote of a God so powerful that he could bring the world into existence simply by speaking. Such a God would be able to deliver the people from their painful separation from Jerusalem, to lead them back home to rebuild their ruined Temple. The powerful Word of God says, “Let there be light,” and the text pronounces that the command was fulfilled. God even looks at the work and approves: God “saw that the light was good.” God speaks light into existence, and then “sees” that God’s own creation is good.

God notices and comments on God’s own work in the world, something that we can practice in our daily lives. Further, the power of the Word of God, right in this beginning text of the Hebrew Bible, reminds us of the power of scripture itself.

- Where have you noticed God’s creation in the world lately? What has made you say, “it is good”?
- Where in this text do you find God speaking to you? What does it mean to you that the Bible is the Word of God?

### Psalm 29

The might and strength of God continue into the psalm. The psalmist echoes language in Genesis 1; while Genesis says, “a wind from God swept over the face of the waters,” the psalmist writes, “The voice of the LORD is upon the waters.” This voice is a “powerful voice” that forcefully “breaks the cedar trees.” God is expressing God’s power – and, perhaps, strong emotions. Is God expressing anger with a voice that “splits the flames of fire,” “shakes the wilderness” and “makes the oak trees writhe”? It certainly feels like an image of anger, and it’s an image of anger that is not small but huge, powerful, breathtaking – beautiful, even. God’s strong emotion and voice are enough to rattle the world, to bring change, to bring justice. It’s a reminder that we can have strong emotions, too, and sometimes those emotions can be a force for change.

- Can you express your strong emotions or your anger to God in prayer?
- Are there places in your community or the world where you wish God would act today with strength and power?

### Acts 19:1-7

Paul comes upon some disciples in Ephesus, then part of the Roman empire, now part of modern-day Turkey. Finding that they were given John the Baptist’s baptism of repentance, but not baptized in the name of Jesus, he baptizes them as Christ-followers and they receive the Holy Spirit. The Book of Common Prayer allows any baptized person to administer Baptism in an emergency situation, but always with the required words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 313). Baptism, once performed, is “indissoluble” (BCP, p. 298). But this passage reminds us that although we are only baptized once, our call as Christians is ongoing. We may think we are going along, doing what God wants us to do, and then we meet a Paul, we encounter the Spirit, and we are asked to go deeper.

- Do you remember your baptism? If you were baptized as a baby, do you remember your confirmation, where you affirmed those vows? Look over the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 304-5) and reflect on what it means to live those vows.
- Where might God be calling you to go deeper into your relationship with God?

### **Mark 1:4-11**

Well, in case you haven't noticed by this time, today's lectionary readings all have some kind of epiphany, a moment of revelation, an insight into God's presence and work in the world. In Genesis, God pronounces some words and creates light. In Psalm 29, God cracks open the cedar trees. In Acts, the Holy Spirit comes upon the newly baptized, and they speak in tongues.

Here in Mark's Gospel, we get a voice from heaven, declaring that Jesus is a beloved child of God. We also have the sign of John himself, clothed in a way that ancient readers would have recognized as looking like the prophet Elijah, and saying that someone else – someone great – is coming. This just increases the anticipation and suspense at that moment when Jesus emerges from the river Jordan, dripping wet, and the sky breaks open and the Spirit comes down like a dove. An epiphany, for sure.

The thing is, this epiphany about Jesus is an epiphany for all of us, too. This revelation, this epiphany about Jesus is also an epiphany about *us*. As Church Father Athanasius of Alexandria said in the fourth century, "He became human that we might become god." Jesus' incarnation reminds us that we are all the Beloved, we are all children of God, with whom God is well pleased. Remembering this belovedness can strengthen us during difficult times and help us live into our call as followers of Christ.

- Have you heard God's voice telling you how loved you are? Try sitting in silence for a few minutes and listening for that voice.
- When have you experienced an epiphany, a sudden insight into something deeply real, deeply true? Where did that insight lead you?

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### **Our Mission:**

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ,  
and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world,  
guided by the values of  
Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.

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