

United Church of Phelps
Order of Worship
Baptism of the Lord January 9, 2022

Announcements, Joys & Concerns

Centering Music: Organist Kay Oosterling WE THREE KINGS
arr Diane Bish Tune by John Hopkins Jr.

Call to Worship (Isaiah 43:1) (Responsive)

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Hymn: "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" page 400
Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, Mount of thy redeeming love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God;
He to rescue me from danger, Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor, Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.

Call to confession (Leader)

We belong to God. Nothing can break this covenant. Let us, then, with confidence approach God to honestly confess our sins in prayer.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

God, you call us to beloved community with you and with each other. But we exclude and reject those we deem different. You claim us as beloved, but we turn against each other in anger and hate. You liberate us and lead us in Christ's path of peace, but we build walls and dismiss peace as impractical and unrealistic. Redeeming God, forgive our worldly ways. Call us and claim us once again for the work of building your beloved community. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (Isaiah 43:1)

"Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, we are redeemed, we are made new. Amen.

Prayer for illumination (Leader)

Help us, Holy God, to connect to your word anew. Open the Scriptures to us in a way that is life-giving. Encourage us to listen to the message your Spirit makes known in word and worship. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Old Testament reading: Isaiah 43:1–7

Israel's Only Savior

¹ But now, this is what the Lord says—
 he who created you, Jacob,
 he who formed you, Israel:

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters,
 I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
 they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,
 you will not be burned;
 the flames will not set you ablaze.

³ For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
 Cush[a] and Seba in your stead.

⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my sight,
 and because I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.

⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
 I will bring your children from the east
 and gather you from the west.

⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
 and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring my sons from afar
 and my daughters from the ends of the earth—

⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made."

Psalm 29

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings,
 aspire to the Lord glory and strength.
- ² Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
 worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.
- ³ The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
 the God of glory thunders,
 the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.
- ⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful;
 the voice of the Lord is majestic.
- ⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
 the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
- ⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,
 Sirion like a young wild ox.
- ⁷ The voice of the Lord strikes
 with flashes of lightning.
- ⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the desert;
 the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
- ⁹ The voice of the Lord twists the oaks
 and strips the forests bare.
- And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
 the Lord is enthroned as King forever.
- ¹¹ The Lord gives strength to his people;
 the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Acts 8:14–17

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Message: Baptism of the Lord remembrance

Today's lesson is taken from Luke 3:15–17, 21–22. It is here twice from differing translations to appreciate the richness of the event.

The Word of the Lord:

New International Version

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will

baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

The Message

Luke 3:15-17

15 The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, "Could this John be the Messiah?"

16-17 But John intervened: "I'm baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

21-22 After all the people were baptized, Jesus was baptized. As he was praying, the sky opened up and the Holy Spirit, like a dove descending, came down on him. And along with the Spirit, a voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life."

Lesson: Selections from Rev. Ronald J. Allen Commentary of Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Affirmation of faith (from A Brief Statement of Faith) Unison

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Call for the offering and Prayer of Dedication: (Leader)

A generous God calls us to live generous lives. We present our tithes and offerings to further Christ's mission and ministry. Bless and multiply these gifts, God, that they may be a blessing to others. May whoever benefits from these offerings know of your love for them and our desire to serve. Amen.

Hymn: “When Jesus Came to Jordan” page 252

**When Jesus came to Jordan To be baptized by John,
He did not come for pardon, But as the sinless one.
He came to share repentance With all who mourn their sins,
To speak the vital sentence With which good news begins.**

**He came to share temptation, Our utmost woe and loss,
For us and our salvation To die upon the cross.
So when the Dove descended On him, the Son of Man,
The hidden years had ended, The age of grace began.**

**Come, Holy Spirit, aid us To keep the vows we make,
This very day invade us, And every bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction, The gift we covet most:
To share the resurrection That leads to Pentecost.**

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer: (Leader)

Before we are born, before we do anything or make something of ourselves, before we make our first mistake or confess our first sin or fail majorly, you claim us, God our Creator, and call us beloved. We give you thanks and praise this Sunday for Jesus’ baptism and for ours, for the sign and seal of your claim on us and the sacred water from which we emerge newly born in Christ. That you come so close, Holy God, close enough to kiss our forehead with holy water and Holy Spirit, is astonishing. How can we comprehend a love such as this? How could we ever earn this amazing grace? You call us to you in love, O God, and send us to love others in Christ’s name. Hear our prayers this day as we hold the weary and the suffering in our hearts and minds. We pray for those recovering and rebuilding from tornadoes and devastating storms. Shelter and protect those who have lost their homes, God. Be their refuge and their strength. We pray for refugees, for children and families, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles seeking asylum, safety and opportunity. Your love knows no boundary or border, Holy God. Help us to love as you love. We pray for the sick and their caregivers. We pray for weary first responders and hospital personnel. Give hope to those who are called to help and heal. Help us see this global pandemic to its end. We pray for countries and communities without access to vaccines or affordable healthcare. Help us, Holy God, to dismantle oppressive systems, help us build new and just systems for all your children to know health and happiness. We pray for those who move into this new year feeling hopeless and beyond repair. Remind them, Savior God, that the night is not night to you. Remind them, Covenant God, that you have called them by name, that they belong to you. United as the Body of Christ we lift these prayers to you, Savior God. Hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together, “**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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.

Charge and benediction (Leader)

Remember, you are God's beloved, called and claimed to love as you have been loved. May God bless you and keep you, this day and in the days to come. Amen.

Postlude: Organist Kay Oosterling RAISE NOW YOUR SONG ON HIGH

Camille Saint-Saens arr by Todd Kendall from "Christmas Oratorio"

Liturgy courtesy of Teri McDowell Ott and the *Presbyterian Outlook*.