

Home Service for January 11, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

*Come to the waters of baptism. Touch the Spirit's power. Feel the Spirit's loving embrace. Come and be made new.*

Call to Worship:

Come! Let us follow Jesus to the edge of the Jordan River to be baptized.

We come to be cleansed and made whole.

Come! Let us witness John's confusion and Jesus' insistence that John baptize God Incarnate.

We come to join Jesus in choosing life in the kingdom of God.

Come! Let us hear God declare the truth of Jesus' identity and the truth of our identity as baptized people.

We come to remember and embody who we are as beloved children of God.

Come! Let us worship God who leads us into the baptismal waters and salvation life.

We come to worship God who empowers us through divine presence to live together as the family of God.

Opening Prayer:

Eternal God, at the baptism of Jesus, you revealed him to be your Son, and anointed him with the Holy Spirit, Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful to their calling as your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

We are incredibly stubborn, O Lord. We have entered the season in which your light has been given to the world, your blessings have been poured out on the world, and yet all we can think about is our own problems, our own needs, our own desires. Help us to desire you, Lord. Help us to yearn for your presence. Pour your baptismal waters over us again, cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance. Nourish and heal us so that we may joyfully serve you. Wash away our jealousy, greed, and all negative thoughts and behaviors that stand in the way of our truly being the people you have called us to be. Again, let us receive the blessings offered in creation, in the birth and baptism of Jesus, and in the ministry of the saints of light. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

*The love of God is always offered to us, freely, joyfully, for all eternity.  
Rejoice, dear friends, this is the good news of our Lord. Amen.*

Read Psalm 29

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

<sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendor of his<sup>[a]</sup> holiness.

<sup>3</sup> The voice of the Lord is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.

<sup>4</sup> The voice of the Lord is powerful;  
the voice of the Lord is majestic.

<sup>5</sup> The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;  
the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,  
Sirion<sup>[b]</sup> like a young wild ox.

<sup>7</sup> The voice of the Lord strikes  
with flashes of lightning.

<sup>8</sup> The voice of the Lord shakes the desert;  
the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

<sup>9</sup> The voice of the Lord twists the oaks<sup>[c]</sup>  
and strips the forests bare.

And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

<sup>10</sup> The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord gives strength to his people;  
the Lord blesses his people with peace.

Prayers of the People:

*Creator God, when everything first began, water became a symbol of refreshing, of washing away, of renewing. Through the waters of creation you brought forth abundant life. We have gathered this day to remember Jesus' baptism, how your Spirit proclaimed that He was your beloved Son in whom you were very well pleased. Our spirits resound with that proclamation. In His baptism, Jesus' ministry was initiated. He dedicated his life to you completely and without reservation. Help us to dedicate our lives to you, to offer our best for you, to be of*

*service to you by serving in your world. As we have lifted before you the names of people near and dear to us who need your healing touch and your tender mercies, we have also lifted ourselves up as people in need of your grace. In our world there is war, oppression, hunger, and alienation. We have not been good stewards of the world. We have not cared for one another. Heal us and this world, Lord. Renew us with your life-giving waters and re-affirm our baptisms as your children. Let us go forth to be people of peace and mercy. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.*

## Lord's Prayer

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 forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: Isaiah 42:1-9

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
<sup>2</sup> He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
<sup>4</sup> he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”  
<sup>5</sup> This is what God the Lord says—  
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,  
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,  
who gives breath to its people,  
and life to those who walk on it:  
<sup>6</sup> “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will keep you and will make you  
to be a covenant for the people

and a light for the Gentiles,  
<sup>7</sup> to open eyes that are blind,  
to free captives from prison  
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.  
<sup>8</sup> “I am the Lord; that is my name!  
I will not yield my glory to another  
or my praise to idols.  
<sup>9</sup> See, the former things have taken place,  
and new things I declare;  
before they spring into being  
I announce them to you.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism <sup>35</sup> but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. <sup>36</sup> You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup> You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

<sup>39</sup> “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. <sup>41</sup> He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 3:3-17

This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from

Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with <sup>[b]</sup> water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with <sup>[c]</sup> the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

## Message

Mankind’s sinfulness needed and needs God’s forgiveness. Jesus came into this world as the very love and mercy of God. Jesus did not travel from place to place with fanfare. Jesus did not have an earthly army to display his strength. Jesus did not travel with servants who took care of his every need. It was a challenge for the people of Jesus’ day to believe in this man from Nazareth as the King of kings and Lord of lords. From time to time the disciples argued who was the greatest among them. Jesus had to remind them that God does not determine greatness with the same measurement mankind uses. Jesus came to do his Father’s will. Jesus even followed the laws of men. Jesus who lived as the fulfillment of God’s will and every prophecy came to the Jordan to be baptized.

I discovered something I did not know, the rite of baptism did not originate with John the Baptist. At that time, baptism was a Jewish rite of purification that was performed when a Gentile person decided to convert to Judaism. It symbolized the cleansing of past sin, enabling the convert to embrace the faith of Israel as a new

person. However, we know that the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to John and were baptized by him, “confessing their sins,” it indicates a totally new dimension to this religious rite. It did not matter to John the Baptist whether one was converting to Judaism, or had been a Jew all their life. According to John, all people were sinful and in need of repentance and forgiveness, to prepare for the coming of God’s kingdom.

Jesus was not in need of forgiveness, but John, and all those who came to him to be baptized, were in need. And through Jesus’ submission to baptism, his submission to the will of God, Jesus identified himself and his ministry as bringing the grace of God to fruition. Jesus was baptized to fulfill God’s promise of redemption for all those who enter the waters of baptism with him. Through the waters of baptism, we are united with Jesus the Christ, that we share in his righteousness.

And when Jesus emerged from those waters of Baptism, the heavens suddenly opened, the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus, and a voice from heaven declared, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Clearly, Jesus did not enter the waters of John’s baptism for his own redemption, but to so identify with us, that we might come to know him, and through his submission to the will of God, receive the grace of God for our redemption.

The baptism of Jesus was unlike any of John’s other baptisms, for it was a baptism in which the Holy Spirit took over, taking it out of the hands of John and placing it in the hands of God. John’s baptisms were a prophetic, preparatory washing and cleansing for the coming of the Messiah. But the baptism of Jesus was a baptism in which the heavens are open, there was a voice, and the Holy Spirit made Jesus’ unique identity known.

As Christians, we should daily remember our baptism, in the sense of daily dying to self, and rising to do the will of God; daily repenting of our sins, and seeking God’s forgiveness and so we should. But our baptism also assures us of the grace and presence of God in our lives, as we face whatever comes our way. Our baptism assures us that Christ identifies with us and walks with us on our life’s journey. The truth is, the baptism of our Lord, enables us to recall our baptism as both a submission to the will of God, and an experience of God’s grace.

God’s Son was baptized. Jesus did not need baptism. The world needed Jesus to be baptized. At his baptism Jesus showed how much he would do to do his Father’s work. At his baptism the Father testifies that the work of Jesus is pleasing to him. At his baptism John the Baptist was given another opportunity to proclaim Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus came to do his

Father's work. Our heavenly Father accepts the humble work of Jesus, our Savior. Everything Jesus did he did and still does for us.

So may we daily recall our baptism, may we submit to the will of God for our lives, but as we are united to Christ, who gave his life for our redemption. As we daily recall our baptism, we confess our sinfulness, but may we recall that through the grace of God, we are embraced by God as a child of his kingdom. As we daily recall our baptism, we die to self, but find that we are given greater potential for life, and our hearts fulfillment, in covenant with God. Amen.

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, through the power of your Holy Spirit, open our hearts and minds to a deeper appreciation of your saving grace in Jesus, your beloved Son. As we reflect upon his baptism in the Jordan River, enable us to cherish anew our own baptism, through which you have embraced us with your redeeming grace, and made us children of your kingdom. Inspire us through the gift of faith to walk in covenant with you. This we ask, in Christ's holy name. Amen.

Benediction:

*Go in peace; love and care for one another in the name of Christ; and may the Spirit of God, which filled John and Jesus, fill your hearts, souls, and minds; may the power of God, which upheld them, strengthen you for each day; and may the love of God, which directed their every action, be your guiding light and your shining star, both now and forevermore. Amen*