



10th January 2021 First Sunday of Epiphany: The Baptism of Jesus

WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE

O Lord, open our lips:

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

**Faithful One, Your Word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Christ, When for us You Were Baptised

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQnd17PVT_8

COLLECT

**Eternal Father,
at the baptism of Jesus
You revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us,
who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling
as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,**

**who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.**

THE WORD OF GOD

St Paul says; 'The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.' (1 Corinthians 4.20)

**Through our lives and by our prayers
may your kingdom come.**

Ps 29 (The Message version, Msg)

1-2 Bravo, God, bravo!

Gods and all angels shout, "Encore!"

In awe before the glory,

in awe before God's visible power.

Stand at attention!

Dress your best to honour him!

3 God thunders across the waters,

Brilliant, his voice and his face,

streaming brightness—

God, across the flood waters.

4 God's thunder tympanic,

God's thunder symphonic.

5 God's thunder smashes cedars,

God topples the northern cedars.

6 The mountain ranges skip like spring colts,

The high ridges jump like wild kid goats.

7-8 God's thunder spits fire.

God thunders, the wilderness quakes;

He makes the desert of Kadesh shake.

9 God's thunder sets the oak trees dancing

A wild dance, whirling; the pelting rain strips their branches.

We fall to our knees—we call out, "Glory!"

10 Above the floodwaters is God's throne
from which his power flows,
from which he rules the world.

11 God makes his people strong.
God gives his people peace.

Read by David Suchet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed2E7JgOa8>

Anglican chant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDi7NEAkvXA>

*I've inverted to customary order of the readings here
to give the gospel story its temporal place ahead of
the events in Ephesus.*

Mk 1.4-11 The Baptism of Jesus (Msg)

1 1-3 The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!
—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of
the prophet Isaiah.

Watch closely:

I'm sending my preacher ahead of you;

He'll make the road smooth for you.

Thunder in the desert!

Prepare for God's arrival!

Make the road smooth and straight!

4-6 John the Baptizer appeared in the wild,
preaching a baptism of life - change that leads to
forgiveness of sins.

People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem
and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by
him in the Jordan River into a changed life.

John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with
a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

7-8 As he preached he said, "The real action comes
next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere
stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you
here in the river, turning your old life in for a
kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism **by the
Holy Spirit**—will change you from the inside out."

9-11 At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in
Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The
moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky
split open and **God's Spirit**, looking like a dove,
come down on him. Along with the Spirit, a voice:
"You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love,
pride of my life."

Miracle Maker clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZ5jm5Ix5bY>



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK #2

Holy Spirit is promised by John as the One who will bring a wholly new, much more powerful sort of baptism than the water baptism he was performing. It is a 'change-your-life' baptism, working from the inside-out.

Christianity has sadly been mutated into a series of rules and regulations imposed from the outside.

The water baptism of John addresses our inability to follow these rules in our own strength. We repent, that is, apologise for breaking the rules, again, and intentionally turn around to try better next time.

Spirit baptism transforms us from the inside into those who actually want to live in the flow of God's beautiful created order, and empowers us to do so.

It's something like the Covid19 vaccine we're celebrating arriving just now. We've been trying to be saved by the imposition of external rules to follow, but it won't work ultimately. The vaccine will change us on the inside. Literally changing our lives for the good.

Like the vaccine, though, we need to be willing to accept it, to allow it to be put into our bodies... This is what the next reading is about.

HYMN 2:

Breathe on Me Breath of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PecTUYMultE>

Holy Spirit You are Welcome here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFByOX8Fb0M>

Acts 19.1-7 Christians in Ephesus receive the Holy Spirit (Msg)

19 1-2 Now, it happened that while Apollos was away in Corinth, Paul made his way down through the mountains, came to Ephesus, and happened on some disciples there.

The first thing he said was, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart?"

Did he get inside you?"

"We've never even heard of that—a Holy Spirit? God within us?"

3 "How were you baptized, then?" asked Paul.

"In John's baptism."

4 "That explains it," said Paul. "John preached a baptism of radical life-change so that people would be ready to receive the One coming after him, who turned out to be Jesus. If you've been baptized in John's baptism, you're ready now for the real thing, for Jesus."

5-7 And they were. As soon as they heard of it, they were baptized in the name of the Master Jesus. Paul put his hands on their heads and the Holy Spirit entered them. From that moment on, they were praising God in tongues and talking about God's actions.

Altogether there were about twelve people there that day.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK #3

*So, there it is. These early Christians had believed in their heads, but never, as the Message puts it, embraced God with their hearts. They'd never actually **invited** God to come inside them by The Spirit's baptism.*

This is described variously in the New Testament, and through church history, as 'baptism in the Spirit' (John's term), or 'being filled with the Spirit' (Paul's term).

Paul actually says, 'Go on being filled by the Spirit' (Eph 5.18). It's not a one-off experience, but is ongoing.

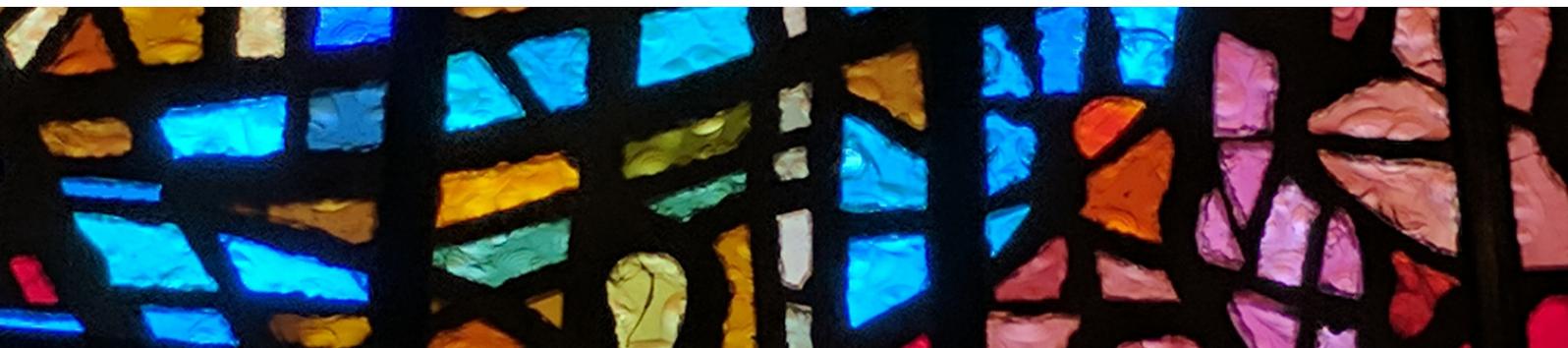
We'll need a second jab of vaccine, and maybe further top ups in years to come. We need an ongoing filling with the Spirit, like fuel in a car, electricity in a house.

This is all part of God's plan to make a home in us, so he can transform us from within, empowering us to live in the flow of his beautiful created order.

God is a walking God (2Sam 7), a breathing God (Gen 2.7), an active God (Jer 2.27-8). He's not an idol sitting in a building that we come and visit Sunday by Sunday: he visits us where we are, wherever that is. An old song by Kelly Willard comes to mind:

*"Make Yourself at home, Make Yourself at home
Make Yourself at home within my heart Lord..."*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4J96TueDCA0>



AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

HYMN 3

Come Down O Love Divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDgktutI>

Welcome Holy Spirit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPYqkFWqwTE>

PRAYERS

The following form of prayer may be used:

*We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.*

*Jesus said: 'Unless you change and become humble like little children, you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.*

*We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.
You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freedom to captives, and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name,
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.*

*Send us to bring help to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.
Send us to tell the world the good news of your healing love.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.*

*Send us to those who mourn, to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.*

Send us to proclaim that the time is here for you to save your people.

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

In faith we pray:

*That you will strengthen us in your service, and fill our hearts with longing for your kingdom
(Isaiah 61.1-3 & Luke 4.18-19)*

HYMN 4

I Bind unto Myself Today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRHjyJCZFnM>

...Jean Watson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1OCffhJHYw>

THE BLESSING

*Christ the Son of God perfect in us
the image of his glory
and gladden our hearts
with the good news of his kingdom;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.*

Extras

Come Down... O'Brien

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4umvYRh7dug>

Come Down O Love Divine, Ortega

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLQu6_Tjk9M

St Patrick's Breastplate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGHWiAGpIP0>

Iona: I bind unto Myself Today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-He--hlMr0>