



Liturgical Service

A Short Service of Reading and Reflection
January 11, 2025

The Baptism of Jesus

Preparing

We are invited to reflect before the service begins.

The one thing I love most about the Baptism of our Lord [Gospel reading] is not just that God the Father says “This is my son, the beloved with whom I am well pleased,” but that God says this – before Jesus had really done anything. Think about that. God did not say “this is my son in whom I am well pleased because he has proved to me that he deserves it, he has quiet time with me each morning and always reads his Torah and because boy can he heal a leper.” Nope. As far as we know Jesus hadn’t even done anything yet and he was called beloved. The one in whom the Father was well pleased...

In your own baptisms, God proclaims that in you his beloved children, God is also well pleased. In the waters of your baptism, God claimed and named you as God’s own.¹

Prelude: Chorale Prelude on "Jewels" by Roberta Bitgood

The pastor leads and we respond by reading the bold type:

Praise the One who spoke and made everything!
Let the rivers ripple with joy;

let the mountains stomp their feet.
Praise the One who adopts all of us as children!
We will sing of God's glory;
we will shout our joy to the heavens.²

Amen.

The pastor briefly shares announcements.

Inviting

The liturgist continues:

Our God in heaven, who anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his baptism: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may boldly confess him as Lord and Savior, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world; in the Name of Jesus.

Alleluia! Amen.

The cantor sings (Hymnal #333). The congregation joins on the second stanza.

On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings!

**Then cleansed be every life from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.**

Praying

The liturgist continues:

Manger-dwelling God,
we heard the songs of the angels,
yet we easily tune-out the cries of the needy;
we feel the breath of our children on our faces,
yet remain untouched by your Spirit of peace;
we are surrounded by gifts as precious as those
brought by the Wise Ones,
yet have trouble sharing with those
who are from other countries, other faiths.

Forgive us, Grace swaddled in mystery.³

After a period of silent reflection on our sin and God's grace, we continue:

Christ is baptized, the world is made holy: he has taken away our sins.
We shall be consecrated by water and the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God, we are forgiven!

We will go to tell others of all we have seen, heard, and know.

Amen.

The liturgist may remind us of special blessings, needs and concerns, and then says:

I invite you to kneel as we pray.

Our holy Guardian God, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

Christ, Servant of God, with whom the Creator was well pleased:

Send your Spirit upon us to flood us with your life.

We pray silently.

Christ, Chosen of God, who did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoldering wick:

Have mercy on all who seek you in truth.

We pray silently.

Christ, Son of God, whom the Creator sent as a light to the nations:

Enlighten all with the gifts of faith and lead them to you.

We pray silently.

Christ, Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world:

Cleanse us by your blood of the new covenant.

We pray silently.

Christ, Savior of us all, whose hand the Lord grasped in the waters of the Jordan and the terrors of the desert:

Release the captives and free us from fear.⁴

We pray silently.

Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to the Lord:

So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!⁵

Amen.

The congregation sits.

Listening

Listen to the word of God from Isaiah, chapter 43, verses 1-7.

Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the pastor says:

Please join in reading from Psalm 29.

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's Name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 God makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.
- 7 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.
- 8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forests bare.
- 9 And in the temple of the Lord

all are crying, “Glory!”

10 The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;

the Lord sits enthroned as Sovereign for evermore.

11 The Lord shall give strength to the chosen people;

the Lord shall give the people the blessing of peace.

After a period of silent reflection on the Psalm, the lector says:

Listen to the word of God from Acts, chapter 8, verses 14-17.

Lesson from the New Testament

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the cantor says:

Please stand and join me in singing ___ stanzas of hymn 84, “God the Omnipotent.”

The people continue standing as the liturgist continues:

Listen to the gospel according to Luke, chapter 3, verses 15-17 and 21-22.

Lesson from the Gospel

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

We reflect silently on the Gospel.

Offering

The liturgist continues:

Please be seated.

Let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your heavenly Parent.

You can give at the doors to the sanctuary, or you can visit lasierra.church and click on “Give.”

Offertory: Miniature by Flor Peeters

Considering

The homilist prays:

God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in our Savior's coming. May our hearts always receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Amen.

Homily

Affirming

The liturgist says:

As we celebrate Christ's birth,
and remember his death and resurrection,
we speak of that mystery we call faith:

**By Christ, we are redeemed from sin;
by Christ, we are delivered from death;
by Christ, we are adopted as God's children.**

We join the cantor in singing (Hymnal #333).

**We hail You as our Savior, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Your grace we waste away
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.**

**Stretch forth Your hand, our health restore,
And make us rise to fall no more;
Oh, let Your face upon us shine
And fill the world with love divine.**

Responding

The pastor says:

With a star's radiance, O God, you guided the nations to the Light; in a prophet's words you revealed the mystery of the Messiah's coming. Scatter again the darkness that covers the earth and divides the peoples. Make our hearts thrill anew to see the multitudes carried as children in your arms. In Christ and through Christ's Gospel draw the ends of the

earth into your family, that disparate cultures and warring nations may be gathered together as one.⁶

Alleluia! Amen.

Angelus (organ chimes)

Blessing

Postlude: March for a Church Festival by W.T. Best

The pastor says:

The God of creation goes with us now as we go to care for all that has been given to us.

The Christ goes with us now from the waters of baptism as we seek to serve with humility and hope.

The Spirit of God goes with us now as we would show others how to find the kingdom.

Alleluia! Amen.

Upcoming Texts

January 18: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; and John 2:1-11.

January 25: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; and Luke 4:14-21.

Visit <https://lasierra.church/liturgical-service/> to view upcoming texts and participants, download this liturgy, or watch online.

¹ Nadia Bolz Weber, *Sermon on Baptism, Belovedness, and how God is Like a Duped Teacher* (2014).

² Thom M. Schuman.

³ Adapted from Thom M. Schuman's *Lectionary Liturgies*, lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com.

⁴ Adapted from *Benedictine Daily Prayer* (2005).

⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁶ Adapted from *Benedictine Daily Prayer* (2005).