



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Baptism of Our Lord **January 11, 2026**

Prayer of the Day

O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

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."

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World. Amen.

No shepherds. No angels. No Magi. No star. No stable. Not a word about Mary and Joseph. Matthew's story of Jesus begins at the River Jordan. There's no list of ancestors. None of the cosmic wonder that opens John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Matthew's word is far more ordinary and direct: "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him." Jesus entered the river with others to be washed in a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus went under the waters of the Jordan as the others had--under the waters his ancestors crossed after 40 years of wilderness wandering. Historic waters, yet they looked quite ordinary.

It seems to be a strange place to begin the narrative of Jesus; wouldn't you agree? Matthew is not interested in the birth story at all. Which leads me to so many questions that I have and maybe they are questions that you have as well. Why does Jesus' baptism matter? How is our baptism connected to Jesus'? Why was Jesus baptized in the first place?

Why was Jesus baptized in the first place? I know that for most of us it is not a burning question that we spend sleepless nights and endless hours worrying about. After all we have other worries: the economy, an ever increasingly polarized culture, wars and rumors of wars. At home, we are preoccupied by concerns about our children or their jobs, or getting into college, or losing a loved one, or a parent struggling with dementia, a sibling struggling with a substance abuse issue, and so many more. Yet I have a hunch, some of us have asked this question.

We are not the first to worry about this. Indeed, Jesus' baptism by John was one of the early and rather thorny questions the Evangelists had to deal with. If baptism is about forgiveness, why would the sinless Son of God need to be baptized?

The famous four have difficulties answering this question. John doesn't even report Jesus being baptized, but instead turns the topic over to John the Baptist to report seeing the Spirit descend on Jesus. The other three; Matthew, Mark and Luke do share an account of the baptism but in the end they do not resolve the question. In fact, when you listen to Matthew's brief version one can note that Jesus, for a grown man, really doesn't do or say much at all to give us a small inkling of what is going on.

As Matthew writes, "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."

Jesus is rather passive in all that happens and maybe that is the way it should be. At his baptism Jesus doesn't have to do anything, but rather simply receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and God's Favour. Listen to the powerful words of acceptance, identity, blessing and commitment:

"You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased."

Imagine how these words must have felt to the adult Jesus? How much strength he would have gained from these words to begin his ministry? These words would have served as a constant reminder of who he is, whose he is – to hear that he is accepted, loved and pleasing.

This is the connection to our own baptisms. We all long to hear words of acceptance, identity and blessing; which is the gift of Baptism. Many of us do not remember our baptism – we were infants and that too can be the beauty in itself. As infants, we can't do anything – not even make a decision for Jesus or even a commitment. Rather we are passive recipients of God's blessing and favour. We are called God's beloved children not because of something we do but because of who God is – a loving parent who wants nothing more than to see us grow and thrive.

In Holy Baptism God says we are enough; we are pleasing to God and deserve to be loved. This identity of being a child of God cannot be taken away from us or lost. Rather, God continues to come into our lives to call us beloved and blessed and promise once again to be always both with us and for us. And knowing this we can face all the challenges we face: at home or in the community, concerns about the world or our personal lives. We can face whatever might be of worry with greater confidence knowing that God is on our side.

My friends in Christ. The New Year is here – decisions will be made, relationships started and some will end, careers will change, new schools will be entered, illness endured, challenges to conquer, risks that will be taken, love shared. So much will come at us. Some of them we can prepare for and others we simply can't imagine. It will feel like we are driving in a snowstorm at night and looking through the windshield; all we can see are snowflakes coming at us at an alarming rate – some hitting the windshield and others glancing off to the side. Daunting. Intimidating. Frightening. Disheartening at times.

Until we remember that God is with us through all of it. God is on our side. God will not abandon us but will walk alongside us, strengthening us, encouraging us, granting us grace to become the people God wants us to be.

“You are my beloved child. With you I am well pleased.” Powerful words. God’s words to us.

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.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord’s face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

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STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Nancy Briscoe, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

Potluck Lunch followed by Mysteries of the Northwest Passage and Sir John Franklin presentation will be shared by Cathy and Lawrence on Sunday, January 18th. See you there!

Dear Members and Friends of St. Timothy’s.....

Charlotte and I would like to thank you for your Christmas greetings and good wishes that were received personally or through the mail. We are truly blessed by the wonderful family of St. Timothy’s. The blessings of the Christ Child be with you this day and throughout the New Year.

Peace! Pastor Bruce and Charlotte