



The Baptism of Our Lord

As I was putting the service plans for January together, I got excited about observing the Baptism of Our Lord on January 14. But then I figured out that the lessons for that particular Sunday are for the Second Sunday after Epiphany instead—the wedding at Cana. Since I don't get the change to preach on our Lord's Baptism this January, I decided to write about it in the newsletter.

The season after Christmas is called Epiphany. The word "epiphany" means a "manifestation" or a "revealing" of something. In this season, the lessons are all about God revealing His salvation to us and to the world. Thus, in the Baptism of Our Lord, God manifests Himself, revealing the saving work of His beloved Son:

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened 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" (Luke 3:21-22).

Jesus doesn't introduce Himself; John the Baptizer was called to do that, to prepare the way for the Messiah. And in the Baptism Jesus receives from John, God marks Him as the fulfillment of all salvation history. In His baptism, Jesus is anointed to complete the great exchange for the salvation of the World.

Now, the details of Jesus' Baptism are fairly clear: Jesus is in the water, the heavens open up, the Holy Spirit descends as a dove, and the Father's voice from

heaven speaks. However, the meaning isn't nearly so clear.

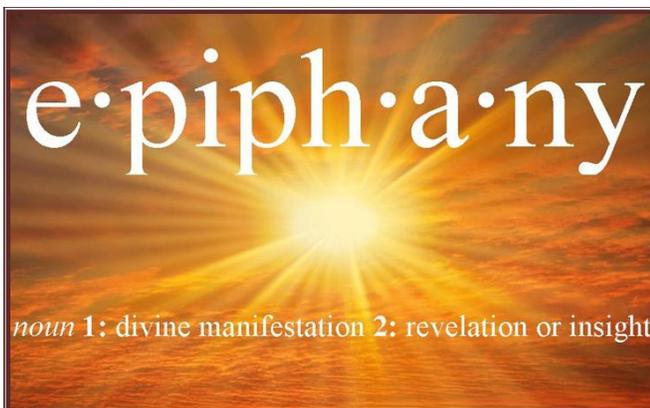
Here we behold the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all three persons working together. The first time we behold all three working so closely together in the Bible is Creation itself. Now, the Holy Trinity is working together to set into motion the final fulfillment of our Redemption. This Baptism of our Lord marks the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry—that work of redemption which begins in the waters of the Jordan and finds its culmination on the cross of Calvary.

The simple fact that many are confused by all this is seen even in John the Baptizer. John's confused about what's going on. But Jesus isn't. Here Jesus submits to the Word and to the will of His gracious Father. Here Jesus prays, "Amen, amen. Yes, yes, it shall be so. Thy will be done," just as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

This is captured in the hymn, "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" (LSB 438):

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
The guilt of sinners bearing
And, laden with the sins of earth,
None else the burden sharing;
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint,
That spotless life to offer,
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
The mockery, and yet replies,
"All this I gladly suffer."

The Baptism of Jesus is a window into His sacrificial death as our Messiah. Through this window we see Jesus come from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. We behold John blasting away at sinners and offering a baptism for sinners. And, there on the bank of the Jordan, the spotless Lamb of God comes along, acting as if He were a sinner, just like the rest of us. The scene unfolds, John says, "No sinner's



baptism for You!” — Jesus gently pushes past and tells John, “This must be done in order to fulfill all righteousness.”

Jesus is baptized into our misery and wretchedness and sin. The reality of our spiritual condition is that we’re helpless, fallen children of God. Don’t be fooled. There’s nothing a sinful human being can do to save him or herself. And the humanity that stood on the banks of the Jordan that day shared in the rebellious history of Israel. Likewise, all humanity — all those born a natural birth of a man and a woman, all those who are descendant of Adam and Eve — shares in the history of rebellion.

Who can rescue us from our own sinful nature? Only a God who is sinless could save fallen humanity. And not just any God, but a God who has also taken on our human flesh and blood — the unique, the special, the only-begotten Son of God. Only the God-Man who knew no sin, but who took our sin upon Himself, could make us righteous before God the Father. The hymn continues:

This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend,
The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send
To gain for us His favor.
“Go forth, My Son,” the Father said,
“And free My children from their dread
Of guilt and condemnation.
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear
But by Your passion they will share
The fruit of Your salvation.”

In His Baptism, Jesus completes the great exchange. At His Baptism, Jesus binds Himself to our poor, miserable condition that He might accomplish in us this great exchange of His righteousness for our unrighteousness. Most certainly, Jesus’ willingness to do just this reveals His wondrous love for us:

“Yes, Father, yes, most willingly
I’ll bear what You command Me.
My will conforms to Your decree,
I’ll do what You have asked Me.”
O wondrous Love, what have You done!
The Father offers up His Son,
Desiring our salvation.
O Love, how strong You are to save!
You lay the One into the grave
Who built the earth’s foundation.

In this life, the only direction that those marked with the name “Christ” can go is back to one’s Baptism. There, at your Baptism, Jesus has joined

Himself to you and you to Him. There, at your Baptism, Jesus has buried you in His death and raised you in His resurrection to eternal life. There, at your Baptism, the poor, miserable condition of your sin is drowned daily and the pure and perfect saint emerges. When the Invocation is said, that is, when we say, “In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” Jesus reminds you of your Baptism. In and through and by your Baptism, Jesus leads you before His heavenly Father’s throne:

Lord, when Your glory I shall see
And taste Your kingdom’s pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be,
My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before Your throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown;
With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As Your own bride shall we be brought
To stand in joy beside You.

United with God your Father in the grace of Jesus Christ, redeemed and glorified through the Holy Spirit’s work in Baptism, you’re granted faith. This faith beholds the sinful condition of your hearts and hands and lips. But this faith also beholds something — someone greater. This faith beholds your Savior, Jesus Christ, who was born for you, baptized for you, crucified for you, and raised from the dead for you.

And because of all this, this same faith knows that the words spoken to Jesus at His Baptism have been spoken to you: “You are My Son, whom I love, with You I am well pleased.”

In Jesus’ name,
Pastor Mackey

Dear saints of Grace:
Once again Brenda and I thank God for Grace and for each of you. It’s truly an honor to serve as your pastor — a task that is both humbling and a cause for rejoicing. We thank you for your prayers, your care of us, and your generosity. God works mightily through you. We pray that we’re as much of a blessing to you as you’ve been a blessing to us. Thank you, and thank God for you.
In Christ’s love,
Pastor Mackey

A Note About the Epiphany Season



The Sundays after *Epiphany* (from the Greek meaning “manifestation” or “appearance”) continue the joyful celebration of the newborn Christ. These one to six Sundays are marked with those signs that reveal Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, and Savior of the world: Visit by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with His baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast of Cana in Galilee, culminating in the Transfiguration of Our Lord. *This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him (Jn 2:11). We made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... we were eyewitnesses of His majesty (2Pt 1:16).*

Announcements

Mites

LWML Mite Box Sunday is January 7. Be sure to gather all that loose change and drop it in the big offering box on the back table in the Sanctuary.

2018 Flower Chart

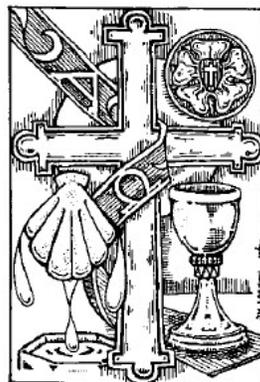
The new 2018 Flower Chart is now posted and ready for you to sign up to donate flowers for your favorite occasion. The cost is \$10 to fill one vase or \$20 for both vases. Checks are payable to Grace Ladies Aid.

Grace Crafters

Grace Crafters meet the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. This winter we are meeting in the church library. We will meet January 8 & 22, questions, contact Cathy Branscome at (765) 759-5285 or email mrsbee2004@aol.com.

The Lord's Supper

Pastor Mackey would like to extend the opportunity of private communion to those members of Grace who would rather not brave the frigid temperatures or the inclement weather on Sunday mornings. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please contact the church office, 282-2537.



Confession & Absolution

Martin Luther is known to have said, “When I urge you to go to Confession, I am doing nothing else than urging you to be a Christian.” Pastor Mackey is offering Private Confession and Absolution each Thursday evening from 6 - 7p.m.

Chat n Chew

After a short break, Chat n Chew is back. Weather permitting, plan to join us at King Buffet in North West Plaza on January 15 at 11:30. Please RSVP to Diana James or the church email

New Bible Study Begins

Join the Adult Bible Study during the Education hour on Sundays as we begin to explore and learn from the new, improved Small Catechism. We will be ordering these books at a sale price of \$14.49 on January 2. The order envelopes and order form is on the back table in the Sanctuary.

Free for Lunch Bunch

Weather permitting, Free for Lunch will be on January 29 at 12:30 p.m. Please RSVP by Sunday, January 28 to Diana James (765) 358-4446.

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Years Day Office Closed	2 7 p.m. Planning Council	3	4 6-7 p.m. Confession & Absolution 7 p.m. Evening Prayer/ Confessions Study	5	6 <i>The Epiphany of Our Lord</i> 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Fellowship Hall Reserved
7 <i>The Baptism of Our Lord</i> <i>The 1st Sunday after Epiphany</i> 8 a.m. Divine Service /Installation of Officers and Board Members 9:20 a.m. Christian Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Divine Service w/ Installation of Officers and Board Members 12 p.m. Jr .Confirmation	8 6:15 p.m. Hand Bells 7:15 p.m. Choir	9 7 p.m. Boards of Elders	10 4:30 – 5:45 p.m. LCMS U Bible Study @ Rm 308 Student Center	11 6-7 p.m. Confession & Absolution 7 p.m. Evening Prayer/ Confessions Study	12	13
14 <i>The 2nd Sunday after Epiphany</i> 8 a.m. Divine Service 9:20 a.m. Christian Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 12 p.m. Jr .Confirmation	15 9:30 a.m. TLC 6:15 p.m. Hand Bells 7:15 p.m. Choir	16 9 a.m. Pastor @ Zion Wabash, Winkel	17 4:30 – 5:45 p.m. LCMS U Bible Study @ Rm 308 Student Center 17	18 <i>The Confession of St. Peter</i> 6-7 p.m. Confession & Absolution 7 p.m. Evening Prayer/ Confessions Study	19	20
21 <i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i> 8 a.m. Divine Service 9:20 a.m. Christian Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 12 p.m. Jr .Confirmation	22 6:15 p.m. Hand Bells 7:15 p.m. Choir	23 Pastor on Campus CTSPW	24 <i>St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor</i>	25 <i>The Conversion of St Paul</i> 7 p.m. Parks Wedding Rehearsal	26 <i>St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor</i> 5 p.m. Parks Wedding	27
28 <i>Septuagesima</i> 8 a.m. Divine Service 9:20 a.m. Christian Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 12 p.m. Jr .Confirmation 2 p.m. Pastor Circuit Forum – St James, Maion	29 9:30 a.m. TLC 6:15 p.m. Hand Bells 7:15 p.m. Choir	30 1 p.m. Parish Services 7 p.m. Boards of Stewardship, and Ed.	31 4:30 – 5:45 p.m. LCMS U Bible Study @ Rm 308 Student Center			

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR JANUARY

Acolytes

7th Jacob Ludwig
 14th Colton McCoy
 21st Emilee Smith
 28th Elise Boyd

Greeters

7th Henry & Amy Miller
 14th Linda Cook
 21st Rob & Melissa Myers
 28th Marvin & Pam Addison

Assisting Elder

8:00 a.m. Dave Heinkel
 10:30 a.m. Marvin Addison & Randy Willmann

Ushers

8:00 a.m. Brad Brammer
 10:30 a.m. Dave Price & Kyle/ Nicholas Price

Camera Operator

7th Shea Hill
 14th Devon Hill
 21st Eric McCoy
 28th Glenn Branscome

Altar Guild

Jessica Parks
 Kathi Gilland
 Renee Busha'
 Janet Walker

Birthdays

1/1 Dave Heinkel
 Rob Myers
 1/3 Owen Crone
 1/8 Gary Parks, Sr.
 1/9 Debbie Branscome
 1/10 Renee Busha'
 1/13 Shauna Trusedell
 1/17 John Harman
 1/20 Roger Doctor
 Martha Eckelman
 Janet Walker
 1/21 Carol Doctor
 1/22 Mitchell Bowdell
 1/23 Ann Ludwig
 Brian Ludwig
 1/24 Becky Levihn
 1/28 Luke Overfield

Anniversaries

1/4 Rob and Melissa Myers
 1/20 Steve and Ann Ludwig

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

610 N Reserve St

Muncie, IN 47303

Church Office: 765-282-2537

E-mail: gracelutheran2@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.gracemuncielcms.com

By Grace through Faith



Same Program - New Name



The weekly televised program "Worship for Shut-Ins" is now known as "Worship Anew", as of Sunday, December 3rd. Visit www.WorshipAnew.org for more information about this exciting news!

January 7, 2018 – The Baptism of Our Lord

"The Gospel Unfolds" - Sermon Text: Mark 1:4-11

Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege

The Gospel unfolds as God appoints a man (John the Baptist) to introduce the Gospel. This Gospel is directly linked to forgiveness. At Jesus' Baptism, the Gospel begins to unfold, identifying Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the One who pleases the Father. The Gospel now unfolds for each of us in our Baptism.

January 14, 2018 – 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

"Come and See!" - Sermon Text: John 1:46

Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

God ought to reveal Himself in people and things that are larger-than-life, dramatic, and

bombastic – right? Wrong! He invites us to "**Come and See**" Him in the insignificant, mundane, and humble. Our worship this week will help us to "**Come and See**" God in the simple Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ.

January 21, 2018 – 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

"Fishers of Men" - Sermon Text: Mark 1:14-20

Rev. James Elsner

Fishing is a favorite sport for many. Casting and reeling a hook to lure the fish. "Fishing" for people? It's better done with a net. And the net of the Gospel of God's love in Jesus is best.

January 28, 2018 – 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

"A New Teaching!" - Sermon Text: Mark 1:21-28

Rev. William Mueller

Jesus isn't what the people of Capernaum were expecting – and how wonderful that is! Are we guilty of making assumptions about Jesus – only to discover how wrong we were? Praise God Jesus is far, far more than was ever expected!