

*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21*

The power and will of work accomplished around the church is just amazing. As we begin to take down the decorations from Christmas and move to Epiphany, as we move from 2020 to 2021 it would be a good time to look at all our blessings in our lives. I am especially looking at the gifts of help all this year at First Evangelical Lutheran church and am full of gratitude for all of you as the church continues to be the “light in the darkness” at church in these times.

All year long people have kept the church operational, whether it be in prayer, monetary gifts and service as we have gone forward to continue to have the “Good News” proclaimed. We have known and preached that the church is wonderful, the sanctuary unbelievable and worship is so special, yet the church is not just the hour on Sunday morning. We know the church is you in your life outside of the building. What is God up to in your life?

In our baptismal call as we remember those all-important drops of water filled with the Holy Spirit we continue to walk with Christ and do His will. This year has been difficult in more ways we can imagine and you may not even be thinking about your calling in Christ. That is understandable. Yet, maybe turning our eyes on what we do have in our baptismal calling things will look differently. When we hear the words from our Baptism we are called to join in the faith: **We welcome you into the body of Christ into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

Our Baptism invokes faith, and it opens our hearts and minds to help in unity and peace to the entire world (Melinda Quivik). It is our calling to walk with each other and bring glory to Jesus Christ. That leads to unity with each other and the peace that will only happen when we receive that gift from Christ.

Thank you so much for all you do to support the church, especially now in December and January. It may have been Christmas decorating or taking items down, shoveling or helping with the churches shortage of power, for checking up on each other and calling or writing, for supporting the decisions that the church has made, for the staff and church council, for the boards and supporters, for the musicians and photographers, for the parents that are stepping up to turn Live Worship on and helping them grow in faith and the list can go on and on. Thank you for all you are doing as we muddle through the mess of this pandemic, yet we do so in faith, courage and trust in the God that promises to be with us. Always.

This year it might meld well to give thanks for at the very least five things each morning. There will be more, yet start with five. Maybe a journal. Maybe you ask the kids and those in your life what they might add to the “thankful list.” Giving, gratitude, and the Good News is not a gimmick. We know whose we are and who is with us to protect us.

In God, Our Refuge and Strength,

*Pastor Brenda*

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**Budget meeting-Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. In person.**

**Confirmation-Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Zoom**

**-Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Zoom.**

**-Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. Zoom.**



## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

January 10, 2021-Baptism of Our Lord

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

“We are called by God to grow in faith together, sharing Christ’s love with each other and our community”



Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark’s gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit’s movement that distinguishes Jesus’ baptism from John’s. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God’s beloved children and setting us on Jesus’ mission to re-create the world in the image of God’s vision of justice and peace

### Prelude

#### Welcome

**Hymn** “That Boy-Child of Mary” (vs. 2,4, refrain, 5,6 refrain)

**Red Worship Book 293**

**2** His name is Jesus, God ever with us, God given for us in Bethlehem.

**4** Gift of the Father, to human mother, makes him our brother in Bethlehem.

*Refrain- That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.*

**5** One with the Father, he is our Savior, heaven-sent helper in Bethlehem.

**6** Gladly we praise him, love and adore him, give ourselves to him in Bethlehem.

*Refrain- That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.*

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

**C: Amen.**

L: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

L: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### Greeting

**Red Worship Book pg. 203**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day

L: Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*Out of chaos, God brings order. Out of the formless void, God brings light. This familiar story was good news for the Israelites, who experienced much chaos in their history. It remains good news for us. God created and continues to create new life.*

**First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

**Special Music**

**“Water Life”**

**Deanna Gorsegner**

**1** Before I can remember the covenant was sealed with Father, Son, and Spirit, in water was revealed. The cleansing was for certain, with water and the Word; gentle words were spoken, in heaven they were heard.

*Refrain- They were singing waterlife, beginning life, waterlife all my life, waterlife, Spirit life, waterlife.*

**2** A simple sweet beginning, a loving place to start: Christ began the singing that swells within my heart. his love became my calling, his life my ministry. His name is my adoption into his family. **Refrain**

**3** My hope and expectation for true community begins with resurrection, his death and life in me. His Spirit fills the Body: his church through water sees promise for tomorrow, his waterlife in me. **Refrain**

**Psalm 29**

L: Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,

C: ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

L: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God’s name;

**C: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

L: The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;

**C: the LORD is upon the mighty waters.**

L: The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;

**C: the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

L: The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;

**C: the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;**

L: the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,

**C: and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

L: The voice of the LORD

**C: bursts forth in lightning flashes.**

L: The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;

**C: the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

L: The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.

**C: And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, “Glory!”**

L: The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;

**C: the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

L: O LORD, give strength to your people;

**C: give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace**

*In Ephesus, Paul encounters people who had received John’s baptism of repentance but had never heard of the Holy Spirit or of baptism in the name of Jesus. After Paul baptizes them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit.*

**Second Reading: Acts 19:1-7**

<sup>1</sup>While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup>He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup>Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?”

They answered, “Into John’s baptism.”<sup>4</sup> Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.”<sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>6</sup> When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—<sup>7</sup>altogether there were about twelve of them.

### **The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark**

**C: Glory to you, O Lord. (spoken)**

**Red Worship Book pg. 206**

*Mark’s gospel reports the story of Jesus’ baptism with some irony: the one on whom the Spirit descends is himself the one who will baptize others with the Holy Spirit.*

### **Gospel: Mark 1:4-11**

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.<sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.<sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.<sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.<sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

<sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

### **”The Gospel of Our Lord**

**C: Praise to you, O Christ. (spoken)**

**Red Worship Book pg. 206**

### **Children’s Sermon**

Ask your parents about your baptism: Say the “thanksgiving for baptism” prayer over a bowl of water- seal yourself with the sign of the cross or with each other. Say: “(Your Name), child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

### **Sermon**

#### **God is on the Loose Mark 1: 1-11**

**Pastor Brenda Wicklund**

**Grace mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah. Amen.**

We feel and imagine water today as we read our Scriptures. Water can be many things. It can be refreshing on a hot day, it can be scary in a boat on the lake when a storm comes up in chaos and it can be just the gift of a bottle of water. We appreciate our water....so thankful for our water.....so blessed with the gift of water.

In our Genesis 1:1 text, we hear, “***In the beginning when God created the heavens, the earth, the earth was a formless void, and darkness covered the face of the earth, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.***” We hear chaos, we hear God in our midst at the very beginning, always there. We hear and picture God getting ready to create, in chaos. Had we been there, would we have been frightened? Happy? God in the midst of this entire formless void, a type of wilderness.

When we put this beside “The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ” in the Gospel of Mark we hear about the messenger written from the prophet Isaiah: “***See I am sending one ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’***” **Mark 1:2-3.** John the baptizer preparing the way of the Lord. In the wilderness. In the wilderness, with the wild things, without shelter and buildings, eating only what God provided there, the humility of being taken care of and really not needing much, only indebted to God.

We hear much about John. His outfit was camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his neck, eating what was there, locusts and wild honey. All people from the whole Judean countryside, and Jerusalem were going out to him. All people going out in the wilderness to see this “wild man” or calm man, baptized by John for the forgiveness of sins, or to repent. He starts saying that it was not about him, one was coming whom I am unworthy to untie his thong on his scandal. “I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1: 8).

The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, from a man that walks to a different drum, listening to God and humbly abiding by God's word, in the wilderness, with only what he has, preparing the hearts of many, many people for the Savior that will bring life, light and the Holy Spirit.

What an exciting beginning as we hear about Jesus Christ! Right in the wilderness, outside the synagogues and sanctuary right in the midst of chaos. Enter Jesus Christ. In the wilderness after being prepared by John. John is getting people ready and prepared for Jesus Christ, and is telling the truth and asking people to repent. To all people that will hear. He is bringing the people to the edge of the boundary to repent and straighten up because great things are going to happen and the time is now.

***“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved: with you I am well pleased.’” Mark 1:9-11***

Just like that, God is on the loose. The heavens are torn apart and Jesus Christ, not saying a word in his first appearance in the Gospel of Mark, the first written word of the Gospels, in the wilderness on the boundaries, on the loose. Right here with us, in the chaos and wilderness, with each and every one of us. What a beginning scene. What a wonder. Jesus Christ baptized with the Holy Spirit and God beside them and each one of us. On the edge of the boundaries and in the entire world.

We can relate to being in the wilderness and on the edge of a boundary. The change that each of us go through from one day to the next invites fear. Yet we hear John the baptizer and all people in God to turn around, repent, and look at what John is pointing to, Jesus.

His baptism, the promise of the drops of water on our baptism, makes a difference. The water makes a difference, it changes the wilderness to calm, our worries to hope, our life to mission. God is indeed on the loose. This is a great time to ask what God is up to in our lives, our communities and our church. Where is God in your life right now? How close are you to him? Are you living out your baptismal calling? Is your faith strengthened and are you at peace in all this chaos?

Our Baptism invokes faith, and it opens our hearts and minds to help in unity and peace to the entire world (Melinda Quivik). It is our calling to walk with each other and bring glory to Jesus Christ. That leads to unity with each other and the peace that will only happen when we receive that gift from Christ. We are not alone. We are beloved children of God. We have a mission to share in the world and now is a great time to discern how we might bring this out to the world in different ways. Rejoice and be glad. Remember all you can about your baptism seal yourself with the sign of the cross, with your family or by yourself and remember, God is on the loose in you...

We close with the baptismal ritual in the ELW: **We welcome you into the body of Christ into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world. Amen**

**Hymn**            **“Love Has Come”**

**Red Worship Book 292**

- 1** Love has come—a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
- 2** Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers; Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.
- 3** Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas; Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

## **Prayers of Intercession**

L: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

*A brief silence.*

L: For the church throughout the world and its leaders, that guided by the Holy Spirit they proclaim the forgiveness of sins, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: For wilderness and water, wind and wild beasts, and all living things on earth, that God's goodness is revealed through creation and faithful stewards care for all God has made, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: For the nations of the world and their leaders, for laborers busy both day and night, and for peacemakers amid strife, that God inspire all people to use their strength wisely, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: For the sick and those who provide medical care, for the imprisoned and those who show them mercy, for the lonely and those who provide companionship, for all who suffer (*especially*), that God shower compassion, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: For the congregation gathered here, for students returning to school, for those seeking renewal in their daily work, that all the beloved of God experience grace and peace, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their labors, that their witness inspire us in our baptismal vocations, let us pray.

**C: Have mercy, O God.**

L: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior

**C: Amen.**

## **Offering Prayer**

L: O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace.

**C: Amen**

## **Words of Institution**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**Red Worship Book pg. 208**

**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.**

## **Prayer**

L: Christ Jesus, at this table we have feasted on your very life and are strengthened for our journey. Send us forth from this banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your good news and serve others in your name.

**C: Amen.**

## Blessing

Red Worship Book pg. 114

L God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter ☩ keep you in peace.

**C: Amen.**

## Hymn

“The Bells of Christmas”

Red Worship Book 298

- 1 The bells of Christmas chime once more; the heav'nly guest is at the door. He comes to earthly dwellings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
- 4 Oh, join with me, in gladness sing, to keep our Christmas with our king, until our song, from loving souls, like rushing mighty water rolls!

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*the worship is ended ... let the service begin...*



## Prayer Concerns ~ (Names will be on for one month unless requested longer.)

Nancy Nelson, Marsha Skoog (friend of Patty Sweeny), Larry Lammers (brother-in-law of Elaine Garaghty), Sue Youngblom, John Bassett, Max Tatting, John Shober, Pearl Anderson (sister of Joyce Seegebarth), Chelsley Exsted and 2 children (granddaughter and great grandchildren of Pat Anderson), Peter Thorvig, Kay Conway, George and Joan Wells (brother/sister-in-law of Gary and Gail Wells), Eric Mettling (deployed for service), Jessica Lindahl, Carol Bostrom, Leigha Ness (Pastor Brenda's great-niece), and Barbara Ekberg (sister of Loretta Sprado.)

## Next Week's Readings and Psalm

- [1 Samuel 3:1-10 \[11-20\]](#)  
*The calling of Samuel*
- [Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18](#)  
*You have searched me out and known me. (Ps. 139:1)*
- [1 Corinthians 6:12-20](#)  
*Glorify God in your body*
- [John 1:43-51](#)  
*The calling of the first disciples*

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