

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 12th January 2025
Family Worship - Baptism of the Lord
 Minister: Revd Neil Coulson
 Organist: Mr Stephen Hogger

Hello, I hope you are well. Today, our focus is on the baptism of Jesus, and this year our readings for this Sunday in Epiphany are Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

Beloved of God, come, turn to Christ.
 When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan
 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
 he knew he was beloved by God.
 Let us know the warmth of God's love today.

A gathering prayer

Loving God, we come to worship.
 You have called each of us by name,
 we belong to you.
 Pour out your Spirit on us, we pray,
 that we may know your love today. **Amen.**

A prayer of approach

We come to worship, because we are called and chosen.
 We come because of God's power and love and devotion to us.
 We come to share the blessings of God and to receive more.
 We come to stand with God and with each other.
 We come humbly before the God who created the world,
 who gave us Jesus, who poured out the Holy Spirit upon us.
 Humbly we come and here we worship. **Amen.**

GG 21 Name of all majesty

1 Name of all majesty,
 fathomless mystery,
 King of the ages
 by angels adored;
 power and authority,
 splendour and dignity,
 bow to His mastery,
 Jesus is Lord!

3 Saviour of Calvary,
 costliest victory,
 darkness defeated
 and Eden restored;
 born as a man to die,
 nailed to a cross on high,
 cold in the grave to lie,
 Jesus is Lord!

2 Child of our destiny,
 God from eternity,
 love of the Father
 on sinners outpoured;
 see now what God has done
 sending His only Son,
 Christ the beloved One,
 Jesus is Lord!

4 Source of all sovereignty,
 light, immortality,
 life everlasting
 and heaven assured;
 so with the ransomed, we
 praise Him eternally,
 Christ in His majesty –
 Jesus is Lord!

© Timothy Dudley-Smith

A prayer of adoration

Lord, you enfold us before we know it.
 You know us by name long before we hear your call.
 We belonged to you from the first;
 the welcome was always waiting.
 In astonished joy, we realise that we are beloved,
 and we turn from our ways to yours. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Almighty, Eternal God,
 we have walked journeys we should not have walked;
 done things we should not have done;
 said words that should not have been spoken.
 We have ignored the gifts of your Spirit,
 seeking to quench it rather than be cleansed by it.
 We have been as silent as a dark night when we should have
 been like a crackling fire bringing comfort,
 warmth and reassurance.
 Almighty and Eternal God, forgive us, we pray,
 and kindle your flame within us. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Lord, your forgiveness comes like cooling rain,
 streams in the desert of our wild, disorientated wanderings,
 calming our woes, washing our regrets into the sands
 that will shockingly and surprisingly bloom with new life,
 when we thought all the good seeds within us
 had dried to barren husks.
 From your forgiveness comes renewal,
 and the strength to rise again like a phoenix
 from the ashes of our wastelands,
 wallowing in despair no more,
 ready and able to move on – with you. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God, we thank you for the wild man of the wilderness
 who calls us to immerse ourselves in transforming water.
 In John of the Jordan, we see the raw need of our own nature,
 and in his baptism is the turning of the tide as we return to you.
 And we praise you for the carpenter-cum-preacher
 who knelt before him, wholly human, holy human;
 for Jesus, who submitted to the welcome of baptismal water
 in fellowship with us, that all might be blessed, and all might belong,
 known and named in the family of your followers. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Family Time

GG 2 Be still, for the presence of the Lord

1 Be still,
 for the presence of the Lord,
 the Holy One, is here;
 come bow before Him now
 with reverence and fear:
 in Him no sin is found
 we stand on holy ground.
 Be still,
 for the presence of the Lord,
 the Holy One, is here.

2 Be still,
 for the glory of the Lord
 is shining all around;
 He burns with holy fire,
 with splendour He is crowned:
 how awesome is the sight
 our radiant King of light!
 Be still,
 for the glory of the Lord
 is shining all around.

3 Be still,
 for the power of the Lord
 is moving in this place:
 He comes to cleanse and heal,
 to minister His grace —
 no work too hard for Him.
 In faith receive from Him.
 Be still,
 for the power of the Lord
 is moving in this place.

David J Evans

© 1986 Thankyou Music / Capitol CMG Publishing / Integrity music.

The young people go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 43:1-7

(OT p611)

Restoration and Protection Promised

43 But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
² When you pass through the waters, I will be with
 you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm
 you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
³ For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
 I give Egypt as your ransom,

Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
⁴ Because you are precious in my sight,
 and honoured, and I love you,
 I give people in return for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.
⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you;
⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
 and to the south, 'Do not withhold';
 bring my sons from far away
 and my daughters from the end of the earth—
⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made.'

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

(NT p56)

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

The Baptism of Jesus

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

R&S 134 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
 announces that the Lord is nigh;
 come then and hearken, for he brings
 glad tidings from the King of kings.

2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
 make straight the way for God within;
 and in each heart prepare a home
 where such a mighty guest may come.

3 For thou art our salvation, Lord,

our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

4 To heal the sick stretch out thy hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Spirit blest, for evermore.

Charles Coffin (1676-1749)

Reflection

A moment for personal reflection as Stephen plays

R&S 294 Come down, O Love Divine

1 Come down, O Love Divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

2 O let it freely burn,
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3 Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with
loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till he become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Bianco Da Siena (d. 1434)
tr. R. F. Littledale (1833-90)

Our prayers of intercession

When we walk through the flood
and the world seems dangerous and unpredictable
May we not be afraid!
Help us to know that you are with us and will never leave us.
Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When social media spreads misinformation, mistrust and hate
and where many voices compete for our loyalty and attention;
give us wisdom in choosing where we place our trust.
Help us to challenge lies with facts.
Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When the vulnerable go cold and many children live in poverty
but others enjoy luxury and plenty

and close their eyes and hearts to the need all around:
 help us to hear your call to build a more equal world.
 Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When conflict destroys hope and life and reduces neighbourhoods to rubble
 across the Middle East, in Ukraine, in South Sudan, in Yemen;
 keep us believing that a new future is possible.

Help us to restore what has been shattered by war and fear.

Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When leadership fails and there is dissatisfaction with political responses
 and insurgency seems appealing in the name of change;

give us wisdom and patience for the long-term work that is needed.

Help us to pray continually for all with leadership roles in church and in society.

Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When people are in danger and homes and businesses
 are destroyed by wildfire, floods or earthquakes,
 may we remember our true security in you.

Give courage to emergency and rescue services, hospital staff
 and all who seek to mend broken bodies and lives.

Help us to show compassion to all in need.

Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When suffering comes and we walk through the dark
 not knowing if we have enough strength for tomorrow;

give to us what we need to manage this day

and be close to those we know who are in need.

Help us not to lose hope.

Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

When the way ahead is uncertain

go ahead of us and lead us always onwards -

deeper into the love that made us and that will bring us home.

Help us to hear you day by day calling us by name.

Strengthen your people, O Lord.

All: Surround us with your peace.

Prayers for those we love who are in need

R&S 489 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
thou my best thought in the day and the night,
waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord;
thou my great Father, thy child let me be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my strong tower;
raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my
power.

4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Ancient Irish poem
tr. Mary E. Byrne (1880-1931)
and Eleanor H. Hull (1860-1935) altd.

A sending out prayer

Holy Spirit, go with us into the world.
Re-source us with your power and your presence.
Father God, help us to know your love,
and that we are your beloved sons and daughters.
Lord Jesus Christ, help us to learn from you,
and to follow your example,
that we may share love
with everyone we meet. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be upon us and those we love,
this day and always. **Amen.**

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**