



*"The Baptism of Jesus" by Mike Moyers.*

# **Christ Church** UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor  
Organist and Pianist, Matthew Lawrenz  
Nancy Charles, Song Leader

[www.uccmke.org](http://www.uccmke.org)  
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Today marks the first Sunday after the Epiphany, a season when the Church explores the identity of Jesus. Gospel after Gospel challenges us: who is this person of power and Spirit who has appeared among us? This week we begin our new sermon series, *The Light Shines in the Darkness*. This series calls us to shine forth our Christian faith in the world by putting what is in our hearts into action.

The focus of our service this week is the story of the baptism of Jesus by John in the River Jordan. As the Spirit descends upon him, Jesus is named and claimed as God's beloved child by a voice from above. The same Spirit would later drive Jesus into the wilderness where he would be tested for forty days and nights. Jesus *also* was baptized! This is good news for us and says much about Christian discipleship.

*\*Please recite the gold words aloud.*

## Prelude

## Words of Welcome

Opening Song *O Love, How Deep, How Broad*

1. O love, how deep, how broad, how high, how passing thought and fantasy: that God, the Son of God, should take our mortal form for mortals' sake.
2. For us baptized for us he bore his holy fast and hungered sore; for us temptations sharp he knew, for us the tempter overthrew.
3. For us he rose from death again; for us he went on high to reign; for us he sent his Spirit here to guide, to comfort, and to cheer.
4. All glory to our Lord and God for love so deep, so high, so broad-the Trinity whom we adore forever and for evermore.

Opening Litany (Isaiah 40:3-5, John 1:5)

One: A voice cries out:

**All: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,**

One: Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**All: Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;**

One: The uneven ground shall become level,

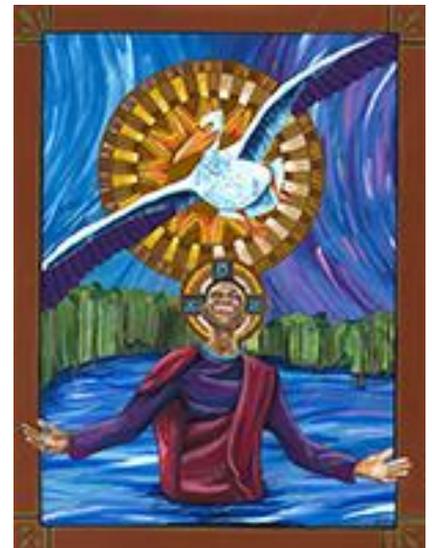
**All: And the rough places a plain.**

One: Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

**All: And all people shall see it together,**

One: For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

**All: The word of our God will stand forever.**



*"Bayou Baptism"*  
by Lauren Wright Pittman.

One: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it. Let us worship holy God together.

### Opening Prayer

*Creating, Calling, and Faithful God,  
we come to this time and place to be with you,  
to worship you, and to learn from you.*

*May our time together  
be like your creation of light in the darkness  
that you called good.*

*May it be that you would call us good  
while we respond to your call and as we listen to you. Amen.*

### The Gloria

#### Old Testament

The book of Genesis is a story about beginnings. It begins with the advent of God's creation of the universe and world. In the beginning, a wind or spirit from God swept over the watery chaos (*tohu wa-bohu*) or "formless void," and God called forth light. The word for "wind" in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, also means breath and spirit (*ruach*). God saw what God created was good and separated the light from the darkness. This is *literally* the day that the Lord made!

#### Living Psalm Ps 139

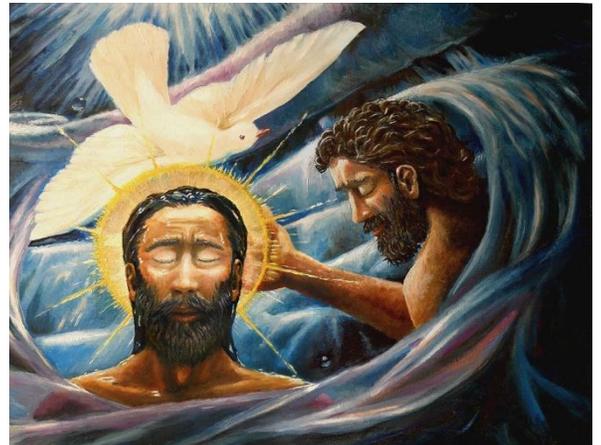
##### Maria Mankin

It's something, isn't it,  
to imagine being known  
so thoroughly  
that the pain you hold  
is understood without you  
having to say a single word,

without you having to testify  
about your decision from last year  
or ten years ago or yesterday,

Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey

#### [Genesis 1:1-5 \(ICB\)](#)



*"Baptism of Christ" by Dave Zelenka.*

when you said the thing that led  
to the other thing that brought you  
so low you thought you'd never be  
known for more than the pain that  
crystallized around your hopes and  
your heart?

It's something, isn't it,  
to believe in One  
who isn't afraid of your broken parts  
or ugly deeds or the cowardice  
or the fear or the anger or the

hundred other ways you have tried  
to make yourself disappear  
when you felt unworthy  
of a great and abiding love  
and had persuaded yourself  
that forgiveness was beyond reach  
and grace, an undeserved gift?

It's something, isn't it,  
to be loved by God,

to be both fearfully  
and wonderfully made  
just as you are –  
not happier, not a work in progress,  
or with fewer secrets or scars –  
but just you, as you are,  
welcome at the table?

## **New Testament**

[Mark 1:4-11 \(ICB\)](#)

Mark's account of the baptism of Christ is to the point. John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People came from all over the countryside to be baptized by John, confessing their sins. John came to where the people were gathered and told them that one was coming after him who was more powerful than he could ever be. Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and *Jesus also* was baptized by John in the River Jordan. When Jesus departed the waters, the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove. A voice from the heavens declared that Jesus was the Son, the Beloved, and God was well pleased.

**Sermon**      **The Light Shines in the Darkness – Words Matter**      Pastor Dan Stark

## **Remembrance of Baptism**

Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey

Jesus also was baptized by John. He gets in line with the rest of us! This is a perfect week to revisit the meaning of our own baptisms, our relation to Jesus' baptism, or to consider being baptized in the future. It's not just Jesus to whom God says, "You are my beloved child, with you I am well pleased" - these words are also addressed to us!

*One: Our God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good. Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and embraces all of us. Jesus embraces those who are poor, oppressed, marginalized and all others who come seeking. We follow Jesus with our Baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being. We join Jesus in love and service. Let us prepare our hearts and minds to see, feel, and hear again the vows of Baptism.*

One: Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your Baptism?

**All: I do.**

One: Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

**All: I do.**

One: Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

**All: I do**

One: Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

**All: I do.**

One: Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

**All: I do.**

One: In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your Baptism as a mark of acceptance and welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life.

**All: O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received.**

**We thank you that you claim us,**

**that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us,**

**that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling.**

**In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world.**

**Establish us to be places of refreshment.**

**Root us and nurture us in love,**

**that with all your people, that we may rightly and justly serve you.**

**Fill us with your fullness**

**that our lives may overflow in service and love. Amen.**

**Song of Response**

*Surely it is God Who Saves Me*

1. **Surely it is God who saves me; I shall trust and have no fear. For the Lord defends and shields me and his saving help is near. So rejoice as you draw water from salvation's living spring; in the day of your deliv'rance thank the Lord, his mercies sing.**

2. **Make God's deeds known to the peoples; tell out his exalted Name. Praise the Lord, who has done great things; all his works God's might proclaim. Zion, lift your voice in singing; for with you has come to dwell, in your very midst, the great and Holy One of Israel.**

**Prayers of the People**

*Hear Our Prayers, O God...*

**For health & healing:** *God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Ps. 147:3*

We pray for:

~Our nation during these divisive times. For peace and resolution to the violence that took place at our nation's Capital. For people to choose their words wisely and for accountability.

~The Fritsch family as Howard Fritsch, Christ Church lifetime member passed away this past Monday.

~Dave and Nancy Wareham as their 90-year-old aunt Jeanette recently passed away.

~Kim O'Brien and her family as she recuperates from surgery last week.

~Jack who has recently been diagnosed with Leukemia. From Dick and Joan Gaeth.

~A friend of Sonia Stark who lost her mother on Christmas Eve due to COVID. Prayers for the Way family.

~Noelle Simons that her treatments go well.

~Bill Kroening as he receives a series of 5 radiation treatments for Prostate cancer. He is blessed they caught it early.

~Bob Kroening who recently has had setbacks of breathing problems and recurring cancer. Prayers as he has begun a regimen of 6 chemo drug treatments that will be spread out over winter.

~Nick Miller, nephew of Nancy & Brad Charles who has started using heroin again. Prayers for the whole family.

~Ian, Molly Pufall Brown's husband who has 2 upcoming appointments in the couple of weeks for something in his blood noticed in his annual physical blood work. Praying for a good outcome. From Molly Pufall Brown.

~Tom, brother-in-law of Doris and Paul Mayeshiba who is suffering from ALS and as a result has become a paraplegic.

~Matt, brother of Doris Mayeshiba for a speedy recovery from a recent spinal surgery on his neck.

~Dawn, daughter in-law of Laurel and wife of Brad Dayton, for continued healing from her heart attack and manages diabetes and dialysis 4 times per week.

~Tracy, daughter of Nancy Kaye, who is at home with Nancy awaiting liver and kidney transplants. She is doing well.

~Maureen, friend of Susie Klockow, who has breast cancer.

~Kathy, Ken Klockow's sister who is in Nursing home hospice.

~Jeanie, good friend of Sue Klockow whose father is at the VA hospital suffering from Congestive heart failure.

~Dan, friend of Molly Pufall Brown, who is very sick with an undiagnosed illness. Prayers also for his wife and 2 young children.

~Kelley, friend of Nancy Charles as she receives radiation treatment for breast cancer.

~Bernee, friend of Nancy Kaye who has end-stage lung cancer and is in a nursing home in hospice.

~Joe and Laurie, son in law and daughter of Jackie Struck. Prayers for continued healing for wounds as he goes to wound care weekly. A ramp has now been installed at their home which makes it easier for both of them.

~Family of Ken and Sue who live in California close to the wildfires.

~Continued prayers for Julene Flanagan's nephew, who is struggling with mental health issues.

~Continued prayers for Julene Flanagan's family member who is struggling with health issues related to kidney disease.

## **Prayer Song**

*Into My Heart*

## Call to Offering

### Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey

*Faithful God,*

*Bless us in our baptismal calling*

*to be in ministry of showing hospitality to others.*

*We offer the gifts that we have been given to be used*

*not for conquest and dominance,*

*but for use in liberating the poor and hurting people*

*who pray for our liberation as well as their own.*

*Receive and multiply our gifts for life-giving ministry. Amen.*

### Doxology

### Closing Song

*Go, My Children, With My Blessing*

**1. Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone. Walking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own. In my love's baptismal river, I have made you mine forever.**

**Go, my children with my blessing – you are my own.**

**2. God, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure. Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure. Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory. Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.**

**3. I, the Lord, will bless and keep you and give you peace; I, the Lord, will smile upon you and give you peace: I, the Lord, will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother. Go, my children, I will keep you and give you peace.**

### Sending Blessing

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.*

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.*

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.*

*Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!*

### Postlude

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Some Prayers and Liturgies by UCC Worship Ways

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### Happy Birthday to these wonderful people!

Kim O'Brien January 10

Bill Kroening Jr. January 11

Jordan Mowery January 11

Joe Heino January 12

John Whiting January 14

### **Thanks**

~ "To my friends at Christ Church, thank you for sending the surprise gift in the mail. I love the snowflake ornament that I hung on the Christmas tree. Every time I look at it, I think of my friends at Christ Church. I also like the note tablet that I will use for my grocery list and anything else I want to remember. Thank you for your thoughtfulness. These gifts help me to feel connected to my friends at Christ Church. Sincerely, Betty Budzien."

~" Dear Friends at Christ Church, thank you so very much for the gifts at Christmas. The ornament and purse tablet are very nice and handy. Thank you for thinking of me. God Bless you all. Love, Jackie (Struck)."

~On the behalf of the Member and Session of Tippecanoe Faithing Community, our Divine Intervention collaborators, and volunteers, and, most importantly, our Guests, thank you for the \$1200 Endowment Grant toward the Larry Under the Bridge and Project Home programs of the Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless mission!

~" Together we are changing lives in our greater community. Your continuing generosity and support are deeply appreciated. We all look to the day when this ministry may not be needed, but until then...humble thanks, for together so much is possible! Within God's Abiding Grace Christian Pavlock, Clerk of Session" (excerpt from thank you letter).

### **Announcements**

#### **2021 Giving Envelopes**

The 2021 Giving Envelopes are available to be picked up during church office hours. They are located outside of Pastor Dan's office. Even if you normally give electronically the box of envelopes also has other special giving opportunities to assist the church with utilities, building, mailing etc. costs and missions.

#### **NEED: BVCC Food and Infant Pantry**

You can still donate to the pantry as the Food pantry at the BVCC remains open. The community center is requesting the following donations:

CANNED: Fruits, Jam/Jellies, Peanut Butter and Vegetables.

SINGLE SERVING SNACKS, SUCH AS: Applesauce, Fruit cups, Granola Bars, Crackers/Chips, and Fruit Snacks.

PACKAGED: Mac 'n Cheese and Cereal.

Monetary donations are always appreciated as well.

*Donations can be dropped off at the BVCC @ 1320 E. Oklahoma Ave.:  
Tuesdays thru Saturdays 9:30am-12:30pm.*

If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email [pastor@uccmke.org](mailto:pastor@uccmke.org).  
Christ Church UCC, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

We are currently worshipping online-only. Learn more here.

<https://www.uccmke.org/covid-advent>

You can make your offering to Christ Church at [www.uccmke.org/donate](http://www.uccmke.org/donate) or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

