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Worship
January 10, 2021

(To watch the videotaped version of the worship service, click the link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uct8qX94ICK-omDHSc71en4w/featured>

GATHERING

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

OPENING HYMN “*Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized*”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Worship is a time to learn the ways of God.

As God’s love is genuine, may our love toward one another be authentic.

Worship is a time to be caught up in the Spirit of God.

We call upon God to instill within us a spirit of generosity, hospitality, and hope.

Worship is a time to nurture peacefulness within and among ourselves.

We pray for a humbleness of heart and a willingness to forgive and receive forgiveness.

May this time of worship nurture us in the ways of God.

A BRIEF CONFESSION

If we say we have no sin, if we believe we are not broken; we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We trust that your mercy is our forgiveness, your compassion our healing.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We live in the power of a forgiving God.

We live in the presence of Jesus the Christ ... we are forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE “*Glory to God*”

GREETING

The Lord be with you

Be filled with the spirit of God today.

We worship to open our hearts for God’s blessing.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 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. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Second Reading

Psalm 29

A Psalm of David.

**Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;
worship the LORD in holy splendour.**

**The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over mighty waters.
The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

**The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

**The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

**The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'**

**The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.
May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

PSALM RESPONSE

*"The Lord Will Bless His People"
The Lord Will Bless His People with Peace.*

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

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.'

SERMON

Baptism of our Lord, Jan. 10, 2021. "Why is He Baptized by John?" Bethany

We can imagine in our minds eye the crowds down by the river Jordan, brought there by the preaching of John the Baptist. Many of them no doubt hoping that maybe in their lifetime the Messiah would come. The words of John were surely the Word of God, otherwise, why would so many come, why else would so many look deep within themselves, and then submit themselves to John's baptism of repentance? This was a baptism John said was to prepare one for the coming Messiah, the one whom John said, he was not worthy to unite his sandals. Now, when it seems all the people have completed their baptisms, now comes one all alone to be baptized. John's Gospel will tell us that John recognizes this person who now comes to be baptized. This is the one of whom John has been proclaiming. This is Jesus who comes to John there at the Jordan. One of the great questions down through the centuries has been why Jesus came to be baptized by John with a baptism of repentance? After all the church has stated throughout its' history that Jesus was without sin, so what is going on here.

I believe that there are four reasons for Jesus' baptism by John.

1. Through his baptism, Jesus identified himself with all of us, that he was totally human, and he would not decline being baptized by John. By being baptized by John, Jesus was sending a message that God walks with us, and now God walks with us in a new and dynamic way in the person of Jesus the Christ.
2. Jesus' baptism was the moment in which the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and would lead Him throughout his ministry. This coming of the Spirit upon Jesus is the prelude too the coming of the Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit to us at the time of our baptism.

3. For us as the baptized people of God, this baptism of Jesus reminds us that the Spirit of God will never leave us following our baptism. The Holy Spirit is there throughout our lives to strengthen us in our faith; there to encourage us in our faith during those dark times when faith in Christ seems to escape us; the Holy Spirit is there calling us to repentance when we stray from the Word of our Lord; the Holy Spirit is there calling us to fulfill God's will for our lives in Christ as we serve others in His name.
4. Jesus is also reminding us that being part of a community of believers is important to our faith, thus we are called by the Holy Spirit to be part of the Body of Christ that is the church. It is in this Body of Christ we find our faith nurtured; where we find ourselves challenged at times and reminded of whose we are: we are Christ's child always. And it is in community that we find that the Holy Spirit will lead us to places unknown.

The story of a child baptized because Grandpa and Grandma wanted their Granddaughter baptized even though the parents didn't care too much. And what God did with this child's life.

We never know where God will lead us as His children. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY *"River of Glory"*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*We believe in God,
Creator of the universe,
Giver of every good gift,
Author of life itself.*

*We believe in Jesus Christ,
who reminded us of the coming of God's kingdom,
who commanded us to care for those in need,
who taught us to store up treasures in heaven, not on earth,
and who gave us the example of self-giving love.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who inspires us to faithful stewardship of God's gifts and
that God has given us gifts to be shared freely and generously, in a spirit of love and joy.
We believe that faithful stewardship is an act of worship,
a means of praising God who has blessed us abundantly.
We believe that God has great things in store for us,
for it is in giving that we receive. AMEN*

(Allen & Sara Ewing-Merrill, 2004)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless our lives, lead us in your ways, gives us hearts for gratitude and service. Fill us with your grace, that what we desire is also what you desire. Grant us the understanding that our hearts' true desire is the love of you. May the love of Christ urge us on, may we walk by faith. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless those who govern. Bless the leaders of nations, countries, towns, and cities. Bless all those who lead in all manner of ways – social, political, and religious. Fill the hearts of all with your wisdom. Guide us in the way of justice and integrity for all. Guide us to walk by faith. Holy God, tend to those who suffer in mind, body, and spirit. Tend to the tired, the dying, the poor and the hungry. Help us to follow the love of Christ, a love which urges us on to seek and serve Christ in others. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... We pray for Bethany members on our prayer list. Give them the blessing of your presence amid their times of trial. We pray for our congregation in this time of suspended worship that we will still continue to be a committed community of faith seeking to be the light of Jesus in our community and world. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Holy God, giver love and blessing ... We pray for our world in a time of pandemic and societal distress and change. Give our leaders wisdom, compassion, insight, and courage to lead in ways that serve all the people under their charge. We pray for doctors and nurses, EMT's, and all those on the frontline of healthcare amid this COVID-19 pandemic. Give them health, energy, compassion, and the strength to care for those struggling with illness and hospitalization. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Listen to each of us, Lord, as we come to you in a moment of silent prayer

Into your hands, great and compassionate God, we commend all for whom and about which we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OFFERING *(Please mail your weekly offering to the church - 4300 N 82nd St. Scottsdale, AZ 85251)*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

God of all blessing, giver of all good gifts; day by day you shower us with what we need to live and prosper. With glad and generous hearts and in a response of thanksgiving, we return a portion of our wealth. May what we give be a symbol of our gratitude and a blessing of your love for those who may be helped through our offering. AMEN

THE 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.**

SENDING

Benediction

People of God, look for Jesus!

Seek him as a treasure in this great wide world.

Seek him in the eyes of your loved ones and in the eyes of strangers.

May your heart burn within you as the Lord draws close to you this week.

CLOSING HYMN "Joy to the World"

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace to live and serve in the way of the cross.

C Thanks be to God!