

**First Presbyterian Church
Chippewa Falls, WI
Worship Service
January 8, 2023 – 10: 15 AM
Baptism of the Lord**

PRELUDE:

WELCOME:

Pastor Ken: Good Morning, welcome to worship here at First Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls. I am so glad that we can worship together, both in person and on ZOOM as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

TIME OF CENTERING:

Pastor Ken: As we move from getting here, to being present here in this space, I would like to invite you to sit back, relax and get comfortable. Take a couple of deep breaths, close your eyes, and think about God being present with you, where you are, right now. Slowly breathe in God's peace, and slowly exhale your anxieties and fears. Breathe in God's Peace, and exhale your anxieties and fears. Take a moment to savor that and to invite God's Spirit to be present with you, and with each of us as we seek to worship God together. (PAUSE)

Centering Prayer:

Let your Spirit come,

Fall upon us now.

Let your Spirit come,

Fall upon us now.

Let your rain fall down,

Fall upon our souls,

Come and wash us now,

Come and make us whole.

Let your Spirit come,

Fall upon us now.

Let your Spirit come,

Fall upon us now. AMEN

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Psalm 29

One: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

All: Ascribe to the Lord the glory of God's name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

One: The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

All: May the Lord give strength to God's people! May the Lord bless God's people with peace!

One: Let us worship God!

HYMN: **“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”** **No. 356**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION, PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

One: Jesus said, ‘Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Let us confess our sin before God and our neighbor. (Matt. 11:28-30)

All: **You have given Christ as a covenant to the nations, O God, yet your people continue to live at war. Your prophets proclaim justice and peace, yet we dwell amid hostility and oppression. You judge your people with fairness; we implore you to have mercy upon us. Give sight to eyes that are blind to your truth. Enlighten our darkness, that we may behold you even in the midst of our enemies. Free us from seeking your own grandeur, so that in humility we may live at peace with your people.**

One: The promises of God are with us still. As the prophet foretold, a Servant is sent. A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench. He knows our weakness. Trust the promises of God in Jesus Christ:

All: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

SONG RESPONSE: **“Gloria Patri”** **No. 579**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: Having received forgiveness and grace, let us share the peace of Christ with one another”
May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. AMEN

HYMN OF PREPARATION: **“Dear Lord and Father of Mankind” No. 345 vs. 1-3**

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: **Psalm 29**

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 splendor. 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!

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17 from The Message

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called "the Baptizer," was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: "Change your life. God's kingdom is here."

John and his message were authorized by Isaiah's prophecy:

Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!

John dressed in a camel-hair habit tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life.

When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there. Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire.

"I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I'm a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him. John objected, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized, not you!"

But Jesus insisted. "Do it. God's work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism." So John did it.

The moment Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters, the skies opened up and he saw God's Spirit—it looked like a dove—descending and landing on him. And along with the Spirit, a voice: "This is my Son, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life."

SERMON: Rev. Ken Ribe

RENEWAL OF BAPTISM:

One: Do you choose to turn away from the power of evil in the world which defies God's righteousness and love?

All: I do.

One: Do you choose to turn away from the power of sin that binds you, and holds you back from becoming all you can be?

All: I do.

One: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and confirm Him as your Lord and Savior?

All: I do.

One: Do you intend to be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying His Word, and showing His love, to your life's end?

All: I do.

One: Let us join with the church universal and affirm what we believe by saying together the New Creed, from the United Church of Canada.

We believe in God;

**Who has created and is creating,
Who has come in Jesus,
The word made flesh,
To reconcile and make new,
Who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

**To celebrate God's presence,
To love and serve others,
To seek justice and resist evil,
To proclaim Jesus,
 Crucified and risen,
 Our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, and life beyond death,
 God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

One: We have reaffirmed our baptismal vows, and so I invite you to come forward to the baptismal font, to receive a token and a blessing as a reminder of your baptism. You may then return to your seat.

While you come forward, "**Just As I Am**" will be played on the piano.

If you are unable to come forward and wish to receive a token and a blessing, raise your hand when everyone has come forward, and I will come to you.

CLOSING HYMN: “Christ of the Upward Way” No. 344

CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION:

BENEDICTION CHORUS: “Prayer of Good Courage”

**O God you have called us,
to ventures where we cannot see the end.**

**By pathways not taken,
through perils unknown.**

**Give good courage,
not knowing where we go,
to know that your hand is leading us,
wherever we might go.**

A—amen. Amen, Amen, Amen, A-a-a-amen

POSTLUDE: