**Worship Plan for Sunday, January 7, 2024** **\* Baptism of Our Lord**

**Introduction to the day**

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.

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: A Life-changing New Chapter**

Jesus does not become the Son of God at the moment of his baptism. Indeed, his relationship to God the Father is eternal—from forever in the past, through the incarnation, and forever into the future. But Jesus’ baptism is a watershed moment (pardon the pun) representing the beginning of his public ministry and revelation as both fully human and fully divine.

At the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is an unknown person from Nazareth, a remote town about which scripture says little (but for Nathanael’s insinuation of its bad reputation at John 1:46). Jesus would have seemed much like the other people who came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. Yet this is the Son of God who has chosen to join all the people on this earth, to live like we live, to experience what we experience. So Jesus gathers with the multitude that comes for this ritual of a new beginning with and through God. And a new life does open in front of Jesus. The unexpected suddenly erupts for this ordinary-seeming man: in this human among humans a new chapter is initiated in God’s story for the world—a new chapter that will come to involve a new kind of baptism.

This new baptism forms the church—both initially and yet today. No longer the temporary washing in water that John performed, Christian baptism is a definitive act of God, through water and the Holy Spirit, in which we are “marked with the cross of Christ forever” (ELW, p. 231) and raised to “newness of life” (Romans 6:4). As we follow Mark and the other evangelists’ accounts of Jesus’ ministry, even to death and beyond, we will learn what it means to be marked with Christ’s cross. But foundational to this—and the gift that makes it possible for us—is that the Creator’s words to Jesus resonate in our own baptism: “You are my child, my beloved; with you I am well pleased.” It’s a life-changing new chapter for us too.

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Greeting**

Welcome to worship today, we are glad to have you with our Faith Lutheran Church community. I'm Pr. John Barton and I will be leading our service today. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

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

**And also with you.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Today after the worship service, please join us in the Fellowship Hall for cake to celebrate Pastor John.

Monday, the 8th: Faith R&D meets at 1:00

Tuesday, the 9th: Hymn Planners meet at 10:00; Outreach meets at 3:30

Wednesday, the 10th: WELCA Bible Study is at 10:00; Remembering & Honoring meets at 2:00

Friday, the 12th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30

The altar flowers were provided by Rudy & Evelyn Bosinger

For the month of January, we are collecting boxes of stuffing, mashed potatoes, rice sides (spanish rice, rice pilaf, etc), grocery bags, and empty egg cartons for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in the wire basket in the foyer.

The flower chart for 2024 is hanging outside of Lynn's office and it’s still pretty bare. Please sign up to donate flowers for as many services as you would like to! Each arrangement is $35.00.

If you haven't already taken your 2024 offering envelopes home, please do so as soon as possible.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office. Thank you!

**Farewell Litany**

**Farewell to Pastor John: Marlene Rosselli**

Your ministry among us has embodied a grace-filled, loving, welcoming, inspiring, and inclusive spirit. Today we give thanks for the ways you have honored your ordination vows and blessed so many people in this congregation: preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, forgiving sins, keeping confidence, affirming questions, inviting prayer, holding boundaries, blessing the chaos, and helping others experience safety, challenge, and love in the body of Christ.

**Release from Call: Diane Swarts**

We are glad for the relationships you have built in this community; your pastoral leadership in our joys, sorrow, and growth; and the deep spiritual connections you have to members of this congregation and their families. But today your role in the lives of these members is changed. You are no longer their pastor, which means you must decline the invitation to officiate their baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals. This will allow them to build trust, grow, and grieve with their next pastor.

Do you promise to honor this boundary for the sake of the health of this congregation and its leadership?

**Pastor John: I do.**

Do you receive our grace and release for anything that feels unfinished in your ministry here?

**Pastor John: I do.**

Do you trust our gratitude as you move forward into a new chapter of life and ministry elsewhere?

**Pastor John: I do.**

**Prayer: Roderick Sinclair**

Let us pray. Gracious God, bless your servant, John. Surround him with our gratitude and love in this season of change, that he would sense your presence and delight in his daily life. Thank you for giving John to us to know as a sibling in Christ, a steward of your mysteries and a worker for peace. We release him from his call to pastor of Faith Lutheran, trusting that you will continue to use John to bless the church and the world through Jesus, who is transformed and transforms us. Amen.

**Blessing: Pat Adams**

Creating God, who makes all things new, prepare your heart and mind for new beginnings. Jesus the Christ, whose story makes us whole, knit your love for this call into the fullness of who you are. Spirit of Mystery, who comes beside us with power, guide your discernment and delight from this day on and forevermore.

Amen.

**Silence**

Let us take a moment of silence to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

**And now please turn to hymn 288**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (ELW 288)**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

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.

**Amen.**

**Children's Chat**

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

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

1In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2the 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. 3Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 4And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PsalmODY: PSALM 29**

1Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

2**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God’s name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

3The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

4**The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.**

5The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

6**the Lord makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

7The voice of the Lord bursts forth in lightning flashes.

8**The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

9The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. And in the temple of the Lord all are crying, “Glory!”

10**The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

11O Lord, give strength to your people; give them, O Lord, the blessings of peace.

**Amen.**

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

1While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. 2He 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.” 3Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” 4Paul 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.” 5On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—7altogether there were about twelve of them.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 151)**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

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

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5And 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. 6Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7He 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. 8I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” 9In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And 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. 11And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**And now please turn to hymn 290**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day:*Go Tell It on the Mountain* (ELW 290)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Apostle's Creed**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

**Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Pastor and Assisting Minister: Prayers of Intercession**

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

Inspire wisdom and a spirit of proclamation in your church, God of forgiveness. Uplift leaders to share the truth of your word in community. Encourage us to live into the promises of baptism, working for justice and peace in all the world. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Renew your creation, God of thunder and mighty waters. Restore the rivers in which your children are baptized. May fields flourish and grow. Summon the stewards and caretakers of the land to cherish your good works. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Give strength to your leaders, God who is present in every country and community. Raise up leaders committed to equity and healing. Grant them discernment and compassion as they lead in love. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Protect and cherish the most vulnerable among us, God of strength. Accompany those separated from family or hurting from broken relationships. Shelter our unhoused neighbors and any experiencing poverty. Protect those incarcerated in prisons and detention centers. Care for the sick and suffering, especially Jamie, JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Frank Ehrig; Carole Erickson; Annette Hassell; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Eric McGavran; Terry Milroy; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Marilyn Rieti; Dee Seel; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; Michael Weller; Peggy Westby and family; Harold & MaryAnn Whitford; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Encourage this congregation, God who calls and sends disciples. Guide us in accompanying, learning from, and serving our neighbors on the margins, following the example of Jesus. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Trusting the assurance of the Holy Spirit, we remember all who have died and rest in God’s care. Give hope to those who grieve even as we rest in your eternal promise of resurrection. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering**

At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship. Whether you give of your time, talents, or treasures, a combination of them, or are discerning how you can give to God's beloved community, thank you so much for all the ways you give and help to make the ministries of this church possible!

**Assisting Minister: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Musical Offering: *In the Bleak Midwinter***

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ELW p. 152)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface (ELW p. 153)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God’s children are welcome to Christ’s table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you’ve received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**During Distribution:*Let Us Break Bread Together* (ELW 471)**

**During Distribution:*Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**And now please turn to hymn 543**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*Go, My Children, with My Blessing* (ELW 543)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Invitation**

The Church Council Members and I would like to invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you.

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