



# First Lutheran Church

## Gospel of Matthew

### Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



**Devotion Time:**  
**It's Baptism**

Week 2: Matthew chapters 3 and 4

Opening Prayer

God of our daily life, you washed us in holy waters to claim us as your children. Renew us in these waters today, that we may turn away from the ways of the world and toward the ways of your Son, Jesus Christ, our holy example of right living. Amen

Do you remember your baptism? For most of us, we do not remember our own baptism, because we were brought to the font as an infant or young child. There are some who will remember because they were teenagers or young adults. Still, for most of us as adults, we are more likely to remember your child's baptism than your own.

And what is it we remember about our baptism? Is it the temperature of the water poured over our heads? How about the countless flashes of a camera snapping pictures before or after worship? Do we remember what food we served at the celebration meal? Or which guests showed up under-dressed or who didn't show up, no matter how many times we reminded them of their invitation?

Do we remember the words spoken by the pastor to parents or sponsors or to the congregation? Do we remember what the sermon was about? It is fascinating that Matthew records the baptism of Jesus and he doesn't tell us who came with Jesus. We do not know if his mother was with him that day. We do not know what friends were with him. We do not know what food was being served after John finished baptizing all the people that day. We don't know what John said as Jesus entered the water, what words were spoken between the two of them, beyond this being the proper order for things.

All Matthew tells us is the words that God spoke ... "This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

When we think about our own baptism, we may not remember most of the details of that day either. We won't remember the hassle of getting our kids properly dressed or behaving well enough through the service. We won't remember which guests we had spats with, or which person took the best pictures. We probably won't remember what we promised or how the congregation prayed for us. But God does not forget these words spoken to you that day ... "You are my child, beloved, with whom I am well pleased." God never forgets you are in the holy family.

Remember your baptism

Light a candle and place it in the center of your table.

Jesus says, "I am the light of the world."

Reflect on the many ways we experience light, from sunlight to lamps.

Who reflects the light of Christ to you?

Place a bowl of water next to the candle. Dip your finger in the water and then make the sign of the cross on your forehead. Go around the table and as you make the sign of the cross on one another, say the words, "Remember you are a child of God."

How do we experience throughout the day. What makes water holy is not some divine prayer, but knowing God is there. How can we treat all water as holy water?

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

First Lutheran Church \* 116 South B Street \* Monmouth, IL 61462

309-734-2106 \* office@flcmonmouth.org \* www.flcmonmouth.org

Pastor Jamie Gallagher \* prjamie@flcmonmouth.org