

January 12, 2025 + 10:30 A.M.  
Second Sunday of Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord

**We Join in Worship**

*If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our  
Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.*

Liturgist: Jean Smith

**PRELUDE**    *Foundation*

arr. R.H. Herbek

**WELCOME**

**CHORAL INTROIT**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalms* 29)

Leader: Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of the LORD's name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.

**ALL: 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.**

Leader: The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. The LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.

**ALL: 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 the LORD's temple all say, "Glory!"**

Leader: The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.

**ALL: May the LORD give us strength! May the LORD bless us with peace! Let us worship the LORD!**

**\*OPENING HYMN** "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (356)

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION:**

Leader: 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. Together let us confess and repent, living into John's prophetic call.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (unison)

God of love, descend upon us as we speak our prayer to you just as you descended upon your Son at his baptism. We confess that we have not fully lived into the call that you placed upon our lives at our baptisms. We have not fully lived into the dreams that you have for our lives and for the life of all Creation. We have not loved our neighbors fully. We have not embodied courage fully. We have not enlivened joy fully. Remind us of our baptisms. Remind us of your call. In the name of Jesus Christ, your Beloved, we pray. Amen.

## KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming." Jesus Christ, the one who is more powerful forgives us.  
ALL: **Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!**

## GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH: (From *The Second Helvetic Confession*)

Leader: Inwardly we are regenerated, purified, and renewed by God through the Holy Spirit; and outwardly we receive the assurance of the greatest gifts in the water, by which also those great benefits are represented, and, as it were, set before our eyes to be beheld.  
ALL: **And therefore we are baptized, that is, washed or sprinkled with visible water. For the water washes dirt away, and cools and refreshes hot and tired bodies. And the grace of God performs these things for souls, and does so invisibly or spiritually.**

<b>We Hear God's Word</b>
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## EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: as we hear your word this morning, may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Isaiah 43:1-7*

SECOND LESSON: *Acts 8:14-17*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 3:15-22*

SERMON: God's Dream

MUSICAL MEDITATION: *Come, Be Baptized* Smith, arr. Schrader

## 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.

## CHORAL RESPONSE

<b>We Respond in Faith</b>
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**OFFERING INVITATION:**

Leader: Today we remember our baptisms. In baptism we commit to the mission of Jesus Christ. As we give our tithes and offerings, may we do so according to that commitment. Please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website.

**OFFERTORY** *Lord, When You Came to Jordan*

Brian Wren

**\* DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION:** (Unison)

**O God, we dedicate these tithes and offerings to you as a commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ, a mission that we joined in our baptism and remember this day. In the name of Jesus Christ, your Beloved, we pray. Amen.**

<b>We Go into the World</b>
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**\* CLOSING HYMN:** "Baptized in Water" (492)

**BENEDICTION****CHORAL BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring*

Schop/Bach

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\* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

## Life of the Church

### **PEEK AT THE WEEK:**

SUNDAY 1/12:	Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Fellowship Hosts: Endowment/Shine the Light
MONDAY 1/13:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 1/14:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Mission – 6:00 PM Stewardship/Finance – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 1/15:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) “Bring Your Own Bible” Bible Lesson 7-8 PM Zoom GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 1/16:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 1/18:	Gladys’ Table Prep

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AND POTLUCK JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>!** We will be having our annual congregational meeting on January 26, 2025 after worship in the Fellowship Hall. Session will be providing the meat and drinks and congregation members are asked to bring a potluck dish to share. Please sign up in the narthex to indicate your attendance and dish you will be bringing.
- **SOUP SALE JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>!** Next Sunday, come prepared to purchase some delicious soup and support our church’s general fund in doing so. It’s a win-win opportunity!
- **FPCH SPIRIT WEAR SALE JANUARY 19-FEBRUARY 2** On Sunday, January 19, 2025, we will begin sales for Session’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Spirit Wear Fundraiser for the General Fund. There are a variety of items available this year, including short and long sleeve t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, full-zip hooded sweatshirts, quarter zip collar sweatshirts, baseball caps and beanie hats. You will have an opportunity to order items on-line, with a credit or debit card, after church in fellowship hall on Sunday, 1/19, 1/26 and 2/2. If you have any questions regarding the Spirit Wear Sale, please contact Tracy Oprea at (219) 616-7181.
- **“BYOB” (BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE)** meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm. Each week’s discussion is independent of each other, so come as often as you are able. Zoom meeting links will be emailed out the morning of the study. Contact Heather Casiano or Pastor Tyler with any questions.
- **THE BIBLE IN TODAY’S WORLD** Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am at the church. We’re reading through *A is for Alabaster* by Anna Carter Florence. The book takes us through the alphabet of both the Old and New Testaments, focusing on one Scripture passage per letter. Join us for great conversation and perhaps a new way of reflecting on God’s Word. Contact John Toren or Heather Casiano with any questions.
- **BUILDING USE FORMS** Just a quick reminder that for the safety and security of everyone using our building, we need to have building use request forms filled out by both members and non-members whenever they use any area of the building outside of regular church activity functions.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don’t already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

**Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:**

- **KARING KITCHEN** The Karing Kitchen is in need of small appliances, as these are in great demand for newly housed people. Please consider donating microwaves, toasters, toaster ovens, panini grills, etc. Gently used items are fine! Check with Cheryl Steen or Carolyn Ham if you would like to donate or have questions.
- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **BIN OF WARMTH** Bring in clean, gently used stuffed animals, scarves, hats, and gloves for distribution to migrant families with young children who need the joy of loving welcome!
- **GOT SNEAKERS?** We are still participating in the Got Sneakers Fundraiser where there is nothing to buy or sell; all we need is your support and your gently worn, used, or new sneakers! Blue bins are located in the narthex, and inside and outside DOOR D by the office. Every pair counts!

## Prayer List

Anthony  
Brady Vanes  
George Griner  
Guy Hendricks  
Bill and Anettia Holmes  
Daniel Litwicki  
David Markley  
Pat and David Kingen  
Diana and Ray Mendoza  
Janet Orem  
Jeanne Nestor  
Cindy Waltz and Sister  
Yvonne Suroviak  
Wendy  
Georgette Sknerski  
Jakob Holden  
Denise Matthys  
Steve & Melinda  
Jan Oprea  
Florance Cody  
Josephine Kim  
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea  
Nick  
Laura Buono Domsic  
The Windstrups  
Ruth Dekker  
Rick Parker  
Gary Everhart  
Bonnie Kern  
Tim  
Barbara Morton  
Caroline Studer  
Holly Letnich  
Jaden Mendez  
Darlene O'Brien  
Charles  
Robin  
Donn Davies

Doug & Sue Matthews  
Robert Urich  
Janet Terpstra  
Glen Nahler  
Tammy  
Tom  
Jana Tolley  
Larry & Bonnie Perryman  
Virginia Marshall  
Delta Rose  
Winnie Owen  
Charity Lynn  
David Hamblin  
Judy  
Breeanne  
Mom Bechtler  
Gloria  
Victor  
Crystal and David Cervantes  
Marian Clayton  
Lou Ann Sulowski  
Ella P  
Edie Delgano  
Melissa  
Katie  
Rita Stronczek  
Flora Reichanadter  
Suzanne Barnes  
Bill and Suzanne  
Ashley  
The McBride Family  
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon  
Sharon  
Janet  
Lois and Tom  
Bob  
OGB  
Loved ones of Frank Falzone

### **Isaiah 43:1-7**

43 But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.  
2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
3 For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.  
4 Because you are precious in my sight  
and honored and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.  
5 Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;  
6 I will say to the north, "Give them up,"  
and to the south, "Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the end of the earth—  
7 everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."

### **Acts 8:14-17**

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit 16 (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

### **Luke 3:15-22**

15 As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people. 19 But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."



## God's Dreams

*Isaiah 43:1-7; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-22*

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God.*

Those breathtakingly beautiful words from *Isaiah* were always part of baptisms in the church that raised me in the faith. One of the saints would make these felt banners with the name of the person being baptized and the line, "I have called you by name; you are mine." That simple line in and of itself is a good working definition of what it means to be baptized. God knows us by name. God calls us. God claims us. Hallelujah! Amen! And then there is all that other good stuff in there. The constant message of the angels and the messiah: "Do not fear." The acknowledgement of the raw power of water and fire coupled with the reassurance that God will bring us safely through both simply because God is God and because God knows us, calls us, and claims us. And so, we are redeemed!

All of these elements became manifest many, many years after *Isaiah* spoke those beautiful words when, along the Jordan River, the miraculous child of Elizabeth and Zechariah was doing his baptism thing. He preached about repentance and redemption. He called people into God's call upon their lives, a call that required transformation of heart and transformation of action. He brought people to the water so that they could pass through the water. All for the sake of reminding people that God knows them and that God claims them. And he spoke of the one through whom God's redemption would come, even referring to fire like *Isaiah* before him. "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

And then he came, that miraculous child of Mary and cousin of John, the one for whom John was preparing the way. He also passed through the waters, and, in doing so, he committed himself to God's call upon his life. When he came up out of the waters, "The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'" What an amazing event! It gets me every time. The full power of God on display with the heavens opening up and then that full, raw power descending as a gentle dove while calling Jesus by the most important names he would ever hear: "My Son, the Beloved." And this was before Jesus' public ministry—before the wonders and signs and sermons and Kingdom building and crucifixion. This was before Jesus gathered the disciples and amassed the masses. This was before Jesus cast out demons and welcomed in the outcast. This was before Jesus taught a new way of living based upon love. This was before Jesus challenged the religious leaders and the local king and the mighty emperor. This was before Jesus flipped the tables at the Temple and redefined the very meaning of the Temple. This was before Jesus walked on water and calmed storms and fed thousands. This was before Jesus did any of the things that we now reference when calling him our Lord and messiah.

At that moment, all of that was just a dream for the future, the possible reality that could come to pass. At that moment, Jesus' true identity was not known to the world outside of his family, the shepherds of Bethlehem, and the magi. At that moment, Jesus was simply Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, the child of Mary and Joseph. He had lived for decades with a life so unremarkable that we know nothing about it. And in that, simply being who he was, he was beloved by God. It was not because of what he would do later in life. It was because he existed as an intentional creation of God. It was because he was a child of God. I hope we can all take that in for the remarkable truth that it is. God loves us and claims us for who we are, not for what we do. Our belovedness is in our very existence. And so, we are always enough and more than enough in God's eyes. That is the true heart of baptism! Hallelujah!



So, God's love is there no matter what, simply because we exist as God's intentional creations, as God's children. And in the fullness of God's love, God has dreams for us just as any good parents have dreams for their children. God had dreams for the type of adult Jesus would turn out to be. God had dreams for the righteousness he would live and the justice he would struggle for and the kingdom he would build. God had dreams for the miracles and the movement. God had dreams for his having a chosen family around him who would love him and support him. God had dreams for his joy. And so, that baptism was both a claiming and a calling. The claim of belovedness and enoughness. The call of a dream that could come true.

Baptism reminds us that we are enough in our very existence, that we are worthy of God's love and that we are filled with God's love no matter what. And baptism calls us to live into the dreams that God has for us. They are dreams for us individually, based on God's full knowledge of who we are and what we are capable of. They are dreams for us collectively, based on God's vision for all Creation and what all Creation together is capable of. They are beautiful dreams of peace and justice and community and love. They are powerful dreams of us living according to the Way of the beloved one who was claimed in the Jordan River. They are inspired dreams of creativity and creation. They are love-filled dreams of all children living full lives and all people experiencing full joy. And they are realistic dreams, because they are the mind of the Creator of everyone and everything that ever has been, is, and ever will be! Oh yes, God's dreams can come true!

There is an important catch, though! God does not force those dreams upon us. God does not control us and make us do whatever is necessary for those dreams to come true. God gives us the freedom and the gifts and the power to make them come true if we choose to do so and if we put in the effort required. God calls out to us and invites us into the possibility of what could be. It is up to us to respond to that call. It is up to us to make the choice.

It should be the easiest invitation to say, "Yes!" to. It should be the easiest choice to make. But trust and believe, I know how hard it is! It is hard to live into that baptismal call, to live into God's dream, especially after we have been pulled into the illusions and delusions of the life that society calls us to. It is hard to break free of illusions and delusions of power and material wealth and security and supremacy. It is hard to break free of illusions and delusions that somehow life is fine when so many of God's children are suffering across the world. It is hard to break free of illusions and delusions of comfort and complacency. It is hard to resist! It is hard to rebel! It is hard to challenge! It is hard to change! It is hard to transform! It's hard because it's scary. It's hard because it risks the unknown. Trust and believe, I know!

But let's take a moment and truly envision the dream that God has for us individually and for us collectively across all Creation.

We may all have different visions of that dream, as it should be! But I am sure that all those visions are beyond beautiful. I am sure that every single vision of God's dream is more wonderful than any illusion or delusion that society can project onto us! And I am sure that every aspect of God's dream is worth risking the unknown, is worth challenging our current realities, is worth facing our fears of change. For, God will be with us as we pass through the waters! God will make sure that we are not overwhelmed by the rivers! God will protect us from being burned by the fires! God will save us from being consumed by the flames! For, we were made by God with intention. We are known by God. We are claimed by God. We are beloved of God. No matter what. So let us dream with God! We have nothing to lose. We have everything to gain. This is the promise and power of our baptism! Amen!

# Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 356

Robert Robinson, c. 1758

1. Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of God's unchanging love!
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.

Tune: NETTLETON, opposite.

- Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.
3. O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

# Baptized in Water

492

BUNESSAN 5.5.8.5.5.9

Michael A. Saward, 1981

Gaelic melody  
Arr. Dale Grotenhuis, 1985

C Am Dm G F G C

1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Cleansed by the  
2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Dead in the  
3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it, Marked with the

Em Am Em G C Am F C/G

blood of Christ, our King; Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust-ing the  
tomb with Christ, our King; One with His ris - ing, Freed and for -  
sign of Christ, our King; Born of the Spir - it, We are God's

Am G C G/B Am G7 C

prom - ise, Faith - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.  
giv - en, Thank-ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.  
chil - dren, Joy - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.