



**Baptism of Jesus Yr B 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Leader : Alison / Greeter : Wendy**

**Meditation Hymn: Holy holy holy (TIS 723)**

**(please remain seated)**

*Holy, holy, holy.  
My heart, my heart adores you.  
My heart knows how to say to you:  
Holy are you Lord.  
(repeat x2 )*

**Welcome:**

**Greeting:**

As we celebrate the baptism of Jesus today, may the Lord be with you

**And also with you**

**Moment of Stillness:**

*As we begin our service, let's take a moment to be still and aware of  
God's presence within and all around us.*

### **Christ Candle:**

In this season of Light, we light this candle to remind us of God's light shining in the darkness.

**May we carry this light of hope, peace, and justice to the world around us every day.**

### **Acknowledgement First Peoples:**

This is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.

We acknowledge and give thanks for the Gadigal and Wangal people who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual relationship of the First Nations Peoples to this Country.

**We commit to walking with and learning from the elders of this land, and to the ongoing journey of justice and reconciliation.**

### **Call to Worship:**

Today we celebrate a special baptism;  
the baptism of Jesus of Nazareth.

God says:

Look! See my chosen servant, the One in whom I utterly delight;  
I have placed my Spirit on him, he will bring true justice to the nations.

When Jesus was baptised, the heavens opened up, and Spirit came down like a dove; and there was a voice from heaven saying:

“This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am delighted.”

The joy of the Lord be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## Opening Prayer:

Most wonderful God, we too delight in your beloved Son. As we gather in his name today to praise you, may the heavens be opened for us, that we may catch a glimpse of that Light and Love that transforms our lives and our world with a beauty not of our making.

**Amen**

## Hymn: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (TIS 454)

***1 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness  
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name.***

***2 Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,  
high on his heart he will bear it for you,  
comfort your sorrows, and answer your prayerfulness,  
guiding your steps in the way best for you.***

***3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness  
of the poor wealth you would reckon to own:  
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,  
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.***

***4 These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,  
he will accept for the name that is dear,  
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,  
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.***

***5 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,  
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name***

### **Prayer of Confession:**

Sky-shattering God, we confess that we have not always paid much attention to the baptism of Jesus but viewed it as a nice story which begins Jesus' ministry.

We don't always see ourselves as standing in that long line of those marked for service; and therefore, it is easy for us to dismiss this as a nice story and nothing more.

Yet you have called us by name, knowing each of us, and loving us.

We are astonished by this.

We know that we have behaved in very unloving ways and in some behaviours which do not promote your love and peace.

God of water and life, forgive us. Help us to be people who not only recognise the light, but who are willing to live in that light, bringing help to others in your name.

For we pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

### **Words of assurance:**

People of God, you are known and loved by the Creator.

You are marked as God's chosen ones to bring hope and peace to others.

Be at peace and live in hope.

Hear then the words of Christ to us:

“Your sins are forgiven.”

**Thanks be to God**

### **Peace:**

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**And also with you.**

*Let's share Christ's peace with one another. from where we are seated.*

## **Moment for the young at heart: Graham Mills**

### **Bible Readings: Paula Rix**

#### **Introduction to Hebrew Bible reading:**

With Solomon as the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, we know it had to have been written sometime before his death in 931 BC. The content of Ecclesiastes reflects someone looking back on a life that was long on experience but short on lasting rewards.

The message of Ecclesiastes is that however difficult things may be because of the curse upon mankind in this fallen world, there is purpose and grace for all. There is enduring hope and satisfying life as we walk with God.

#### **Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11**

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;  
a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.

#### **The God-Given Task**

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

## **Mark 1:4-11**

4 so John the baptizer appeared[a] in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with[b] water, but he will baptize you with[c] the Holy Spirit."

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. 11 And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Hear the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection: Dr Andrew Thornley**

*Moment of Stillness:*

**Prayers of the People: Ron Brown**

**The Lord's Prayer:**

**Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name.**

**your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil  
For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours.**

**Now and forever.**

**Amen**

**Communion Song: Gather us in**

***1. Here in this place new light is streaming  
Now is the darkness vanished away  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings  
Brought here to you in the light of this day***

***Chorus:***

***Gather us in, the lost and forsaken  
Gather us in, the blind and the lame  
Call to us now and we shall awaken  
We shall arise at the sound of our name***

***2. We are the young, our lives are a mystery  
We are the old who yearn for your face  
We have been sung throughout all of history  
Called to be light to the whole human race***

***Chorus:***

***Gather us in, the rich and the haughty  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly  
Give us the courage to enter the song***

***3. Here we will take the wine and the water  
Here we will take the bread of new birth  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth***

***Chorus:***

***Give us to drink the wine of compassion  
Give us to eat the bread that is you  
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true***

***4. Not in the dark of buildings confining  
Not in some heaven light years away  
But here in this place the new light is shining  
Now is the kingdom, now is the day***

***Chorus:***

***Gather us in and hold us forever***

***Gather us in and make us your own***

***Gather us in, all peoples together***

***Fire of love in our flesh and our bones***

**Baptism of the Lord Communion Liturgy - Rev Carolyn Thornley**

**Remembering Our Baptism and Holy Communion**

Today we celebrate our two sacraments; of our baptism and of communion. One celebrates birth and new life, and the other, our continued nourishment and growth.

When we approach the font or the table, we first confess our sins.

**Nourishing God, you tell us not to fear for you are with us. But we are so full of fear that we cannot love you with our whole heart. We use the freedom and power you have given us, not to resist evil, injustice, and oppression, but to rebel against your love to hurt our neighbours and ignore the cries of the needy. Cleanse us of our fear. Feed us the courage to put our whole trust in your grace.**

**ASSURANCE**

The Holy Spirit has not abandoned us. We are still God's beloved, and the Holy Spirit continues to work within us.

**We remember our baptism and are thankful!**

We come to the table, for God continues calling us each by name bringing the fullness of the new life we glimpsed at our baptism.

**We offer ourselves anew to God, listening for the guidance of the Spirit!**

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**



Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God,  
creator of heaven and Earth.

In time beyond our dreaming  
You brought forth life out of darkness,  
and in the love of Christ your Son  
You set man and woman at the heart of your creation.

The Spirit moved over the water in the beginning.  
Through the Sea you led the children of Israel  
to freedom and the Promised land.  
When Jesus was baptised in Jordan  
the Spirit came upon your Beloved,  
in whom you are well pleased.

And so we join with faithful people of every time and place,  
and the whole creation in the eternal hymn.

**Song: You are holy**

***You are holy, you are whole.  
You are always evermore  
than we ever understand.  
You are always at hand.***

***Blessed are you coming near;  
blessed are you coming here  
to your church in wine and bread,  
raised from soil, raised from dead.***

***You are holy, you are wholeness,  
you are present,  
let the cosmos praise you Lord!  
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,  
our Lord!***

You told us when we pass through the waters, you will be with us.

You told us that you love us so much, because we are precious in your sight, you will redeem us. You saved our biblical ancestors and us through water, but the story never ends there. You continue to nourish us through the fullness of time, sending Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb.

When he grew up, your Spirit descended on him like a dove, proclaiming his belovedness as he emerged from the water. He began his ministry preaching new life because the time of redemption had come. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

On his last night with us, Jesus sat at a table and fed his disciples as he feeds us now. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with us, saying "This is my body, which is given for you."

When supper was over he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it with us, saying, "Take, and drink. As often as you do this, remember me."

The cup reminds us of the new covenant, a covenant by water and the Spirit in which God reminds us again of our belovedness and calls us to new life.

And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this gift of water and on these gifts of bread and wine. May these two gifts, the water and the meal, redeem us again by washing away our sin and filling us with good things.

By your Spirit, incorporate us into God's new creation, making us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world. May your spirit work within us, that being born through water and the Spirit, and fed through Christ's body, we may be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen

#### BREAKING THE BREAD

The bread of life.

The cup that keeps us in eternal life.

## GIVING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

This is an open table and all are invited.

I invite you to come forward to place a sign of the cross on your forehead remembering your birth through water and the Spirit. I then invite you to take the bread and wine back to your seats so that we can partake together.

The body of Christ given for you.  
Christ's blood shed for you.

## PRAYER

The God of all grace, who has called us each by name as Beloved, establish and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace.

## **Community News:**

### **Offering Prayer:**

***As we faithfully give for the life and mission of God's church in this place and in the world (either online or in the plate), let's pray our offering prayer.***

Thank you, God of grace, for all the gifts you give us.

Help us to be gracious givers in response to all that you have given us.

Use these gifts, here today, to be your light in the world

**Amen.**

### **Song: And Did You See Him, Little star**

***And did you see Him little star,  
long, long ago?  
and was it you, I wonder, shone  
on manger low?  
And did you see the shepherd men,  
when angels sang?***

***'Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,'  
the message rang.***

***And did you guide the three wise kings  
with shining light?  
and bring them to the holy Child  
on that great night?  
And will you still shine down on earth,  
though from afar,  
and lead us back to Bethlehem,  
O little star?***

### **Benediction & Blessing:**

Go now as a light to the nations.  
Honour the Lord;  
preach what you know of the risen Christ,  
and fulfil all righteousness.

And may God strengthen you and bless you with peace;  
May Christ Jesus bring forth justice for you and among you;  
And may the Holy Spirit alight on you and affirm you as God's beloved ones.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
In the name of Christ.

**3-fold-amen**

### **Pastoral Prayers: Heather Thompson**

#### **Acknowledgements:**

Image: Baptism of Jesus by He Q

Opening prayer~ written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer's Home page.  
<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/10BAPTIS.htm>

Call to Worship ~ written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer's Home page.  
<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/10BAPTIS.htm>

Communion-Adapted from Shannon Sullivan, Baptism of the Lord Sunday, United Methodist Church and Uniting in Worship 2.

Benediction ~ copyright © 2001 Nathan Nettleton. Posted on LaughingBird.net