



Beyond Human Time

Sunday, January 7, 2024
Baptism of Our Lord



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, January 7, 2024

PRELUDE

A Medley of Carols

Wilbur Held

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Acts 19 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 (in Acts 19), 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.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather today.

It is time to worship!

We listen for God

It is time to hear!

We receive God's grace.

It is time to be loved!

We leave in peace.

It is time to serve others!

We celebrate the birth of Emmanuel, God with us, who is always here in this time and place.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

With God, there is always time for forgiveness. We trust God, and we confess our sins together.

Brief pause

Holy One,

We have not stayed awake. We have missed you when you appeared in our neighbors, in strangers half a world away, in the suffering planet. We have wasted the time and the skills that you gave us and assumed we were powerless to mend the breaches in our world. Sometimes, we have given up on your mercy, justice, and love. Speak tenderly to our anxious hearts. Tear open the heavens and heal what we have done. Amen.

People of God, hear this good news: In the name of † Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven. Forgiveness gives us the courage we need. Wherever we wait for God's time to come, we will witness wonders.

Amen.


GATHERING HYMN Sts. 1, 2, 5, 6	Bright and Glorious Is the Sky	ELW 301
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GREETING

The grace of God, who was, who is, and who is to come, be with you all.

And also with you.

GLORY TO GOD



Glo - ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a
Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed
joy - ful song to the Christ, the Liv - ing Word. Glo - - -
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home.
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor - -
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: Acts 19: 1-7

In Ephesus, Paul encounters people who had received John's baptism of repentance but had never heard of the Holy Spirit or of baptism in the name of Jesus. After Paul baptizes them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ho - ly God, ho - ly and glo - ri - ous,
glo - ry most sub - lime, you come as one a - mong us
in - to hu - man time, and we be - hold your glo - ry.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:4-11

At Jesus’ baptism, Jesus hears the voice of God, receives the Spirit of God, and is acclaimed Son of God. For Christians, this narrative illumines Christian baptism, when also believers are adopted as children by the name of the triune God. Mark includes no birth narratives: for this first gospel, the Spirit comes into Jesus at his baptism. This gospel is yet another Trinity Sunday, summing up the Christmas cycle. .

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

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!

ELW 308

Sts. 1, 2, 3, 4

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

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

A brief silence.

#1 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.

#2 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.

#3 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. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Deepen our kinship with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Colleen & Fred (Corinne & Evan), Connie & Tom, Jackie, and Bob & Phyllis. Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We follow you in showing love and care in our world to all who are hungry, thirsty, ill, or experiencing any struggles.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of

- Mary S. who died on 12/28
- Jim K, godfather of Roger K, who died on 12/30
- Christopher F, nephew of Rich and Sue T, who died on 12/27

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Morey R, who continues to face health challenges
- Karen B, who continues undergoing treatment for cancer

Hear also these concerns we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God, you are always with us. We gather these prayers together, and we entrust them to your endless love in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting

blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Arise! Shine!

words by J. Paul Williams (based on Isaiah 60:1-6)

Music by Joseph M. Martin

Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY

Your bless - ings are im - mea - sura-ble. Our homes are warm, our
praise you, God, for love, for life, for sav - ing us from
bel - lies full. We of - fer now our - selves to you. God,
dark - est night. Now send us forth so we may tell the
use good us news an - y way you choose. We
E - man - uel.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Loving God, for the time we have, and for the gifts we offer, we say:

Thank you.

For the chance to help others, and for the people whose lives will be better because of these gifts, we say:

Thank you.

For the ways you are changing the world, we say:

Thank you.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who appears wherever people need our help.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

God, our Creator

the abundance of your goodness overflows into creation.

Through the generations

your goodness continues to flow in friendship with humanity.

From beyond time into this moment

your goodness comes in this meal.

When the time was right, you entered our human existence in Jesus, who was born humbly, who spent his life with the unlikely and unloved, who healed and taught and preached the good news of your way.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Whenever we share this bread and cup,

Jesus is here with us, in this moment, in this time and place.

Whenever we share this bread and cup,

God takes us out of time and joins us with God's people in every time and place.

Whenever we share this bread and cup, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Send the Spirit of your presence on us now, O God, so that we too will overflow with goodness.

Strengthen us by this meal, so that through us, your presence will flow out in mercy, justice, and love. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We prepare for you, praying as you taught us,

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 from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Love has come! Taste and see God's goodness!

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give_ us your
peace. Pre-pare us to re- ceive_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-
joice! Re- joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

COMMUNION HYMNS

This Is the Spirit's Entry Now

ELW 448

Baptized and Set Free

ELW 453

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God our redeemer,

you have fed us at this table

with gifts of grace, truth, and life.

As you have gathered us in joy,

send us forth as messengers of your peace.

Make us shine with the good news of your glory,

born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

God our Creator, present before time; † Jesus our Redeemer, arriving at the right time; The Holy Spirit our Enlivener, acting in our time; Bless you now and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN	Songs of Thankfulness and Praise	ELW 310
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Proclaim the good news.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Allegro maestoso e vivace
from Sonata II, op. 65

Felix Mendelssohn

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Thank you to Chrisanne Gates for serving as our guest organist today.

The altar flowers are given by Laurie Tokarz in loving memory of Diane Weltzer and Helene Moran.

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: The church office will be closed Monday, January 1. Pastor Amy, Pastor Hoffman, and Sarah will be away from 12/25-1/1. While our pastors are away, Pastor David Gerhardt is also available to handle pastoral emergencies. He can be reached by phone at 585-429-5675.

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Breath of God

Breath figures frequently in Scripture. God's breath or Spirit hovers over the chaos in creation in Genesis. Breath or Spirit enters the nostrils of the created in the story. Breath and Spirit is breathed onto the disciples by Jesus when he appears to them after his resurrection. In the gospel text, as Jesus rises from the waters, the Spirit, the breath of God, descends like a dove. Jesus, having held his breath under the water, rises as a model of death and life for us, breathing in the life of the Spirit. He is a risen and claimed by God as the beloved with whom God is pleased.

Of course, breathing is two things, breathing in and breathing out. You can hold your breath, but there is no way to hold it forever. Consider how this reflects the Spirit's power in Jesus and then in our baptism. In baptism, the gift is not just one of repentance and forgiveness, but, as the Acts text emphasizes, also involves the Spirit living and acting in the baptized. While it is a gift for our own lives, like the gift of breathing in, it is also encouragement and life, a breathing out of the Spirit into the world. Baptism is both for our own sake and for the world. In our baptism, we breathe in forgiveness and reconciliation and breathe out the Spirit in our life and works. That's the full life of the baptized disciple.