

Epiphany 1 - Sunday 10th January

Opening - hymn of praise

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voices, let us sing:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beams,
thou silver moon that gently gleams,

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,

O praise him, Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice,

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for thy Lord to hear,

Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou fire so masterful and bright,
that givest man both warmth and light,

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfoldest blessings on our way,

O praise him, Alleluia!

The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
let them his glory also show:

O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Based on a canticle by Francis of Assisi
(1855 - 1933)

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Penitential Rite

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us
to purify a people as his own.
Let us confess our sins. cf Titus 2.

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw *us* to himself
and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins,
that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.****

Collect

Father in heaven,
who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan
proclaimed him your beloved Son
and anointed him with the Holy Spirit:
Grant that all who are baptized into his Name
may keep the covenant they have made,
and boldly confess him as Lord and Saviour;
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

1st Reading: Acts 19:1-7

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples **2** and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when[a] you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." **5** On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. **7** There were about twelve men in all.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Response:

**Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Move among us with holy fire
As we lay aside all earthly desire,
Hands reach out and our hearts aspire
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Holy Spirit, we welcome You.**

**Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Please accomplish in us today
Some new work of loving grace we pray
Unreservedly have Your way
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Holy Spirit, we welcome You.**

Words & Music: Chris Bowater

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations
and believed in throughout the world. *cf 1 Timothy 3.16*

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark
Glory to you, O Lord.

Mark 1:4-11 New International Version (NIV)

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness,
preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of
Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were
baptized by him in the Jordan River. **6** John wore clothing
made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and

he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. **8** I baptize you with[a] water, but he will baptize you with[b] the Holy Spirit.”

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11** And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

In this season of Epiphany - of seeing Jesus and realising who he really is - we read this account of his Baptism as it is the time when the prophet John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the one who is to come - and the one whose sandals he is unworthy to untie.

Not only that - the heavens open and God himself tells Jesus before the gathered crowds - “you are my Son”... “with you I am well pleased”... So Jesus is shown forth to the world - as the Christ, the Messiah, God with us... even as the wise men identified him so many years before.

Though most of us come from loving and supportive homes - sadly too many children grow up in our world never hearing a parent say to them (either in words, in looks, or in hugs), ‘You are my dear child’, let alone, ‘I’m pleased with you.’ And too

many, sadly, have experienced angry voices, bitter rejection, and the slamming of doors.

So even though it may seem extraordinary to us all - impossible even, especially to people who have never had this kind of support from their earthly parents, it is important today to take time to realise that God looks at us too - he chooses to delight in us - and he invites us by being baptised into Christ to be every bit as much his child, his Son or Daughter, as Jesus is.

Can you hear God say that to you "You are my dear, dear child; I'm delighted with you."?

Now let's notice Jesus went from this high point of affirmation, affirmation from his cousin John the Baptist and affirmation from his Father in heaven, into the desert to pray.

There are several times in the gospels when we are told that Jesus went away from the crowds to pray.

In Celtic Morning prayer recently I read:

"Time for everything but prayer.

Why is there so little anxiety to get time to pray?

Why is there so little forethought in the laying out of time and employments so as to secure a large portion of each day for prayer?

Why is there so much speaking, yet so little prayer?

Why is there so much running to and fro, yet so little prayer?

Why so much bustle and business, yet so little prayer?

Why so many meetings with our fellow men, yet so few meetings with God?

Why so little being alone, so little thirsting of the soul for the calm, sweet hours of unbroken solitude, when God and his child hold fellowship together as if they could never part?

It is the want of these solitary hours that not only injures our own growth in grace, but makes us unprofitable members of the Church of Christ, and that renders our lives useless."

Horatius Bonar

Wow - challenging stuff that doesn't mince its words.

Now, I have told some of you before that Andrew and I once belonged to a church where the minister preached on prayer and he suggested that we must all have a prayer time, preferably the same time each day, when we could guarantee not being disturbed. Well inspired or pressurised (I am not sure which) we went home with our three under fives and searched the clock round for an hour when we could reasonably guarantee not to be disturbed. That hour for us began at 4.30am and so we dutifully set our alarm clocks and got up to pray in the only hour in the day we could reasonably guarantee not to be disturbed - holy fervour or insanity? We tried for a few days but were rapidly not unreasonably convinced that God was saying we needed to sleep in that time.

Nevertheless I do believe that God is calling me, is calling all of us to be people of prayer.

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

1 Thess 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

So I invite you, as I invite myself, to consider whether you are making sufficient time and space for prayer; whether it is as crucial to our daily living as the air the we breathe, the food that we eat and the sunlight on our skin.

The question is do we live (as psalm 42 says) with that thirst for God, the living God, and ask day and night "Where can I go and meet him?"

And is there a space in which "in sweet hours" God and his child (that's you and me) hold fellowship together as is they could never part...

In 2021 let us thirst for God the Living God - and seek to meet him often - until we see him face to face.

Response:

**Oh Let The Son Of God Enfold You
With His Spirit And His Love
Let Him Fill Your Heart And Satisfy Your Soul
Oh Let Him Have The Things That Hold You
And His Spirit Like A Dove
Will Descend Upon Your Life And Make You Whole**

**Oh Come And Sing This Song With Gladness
As Your Hearts Are Filled With Joy
Lift Your Hands In Sweet Surrender To His Name Oh Give
Him All Your Tears And Sadness
Give Him All Your Years Of Pain
And You'll Enter Into Life In Jesus' Name**

**Jesus, Oh Jesus
Come And Fill Your Lambs Jesus, Oh Jesus
Come And Fill Your Lambs** *John Wimber Ccli 27824*

Our Declaration of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.**

And we have seen his glory,
**the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth.** *from John 1*

Intercessions:

Jesus calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
Washed clean by the waters of baptism,

let us pray that we may live the life to which he has called us.

Lord Jesus, eternal Word,
proclaimed as the Christ by John the forerunner,
hear us as we pray for all who proclaim your word ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, baptizing with the Spirit and with fire,
strengthen us to withstand all the trials of our faith ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, bringing forgiveness to all who repent,
teach your Church dependence on your grace ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, fulfilment of the promises of old,
give hope to all who suffer or are ignored ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, beloved Son of the Father,
anoint us with the gifts of your Holy Spirit ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, bringer of hope,
share with all the faithful the riches of eternal life ...
Lord of truth, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
in you the Father makes us and all things new.
Transform the poverty of our nature
by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory. **Amen.**

Let's pray together the prayer that Jesus 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.

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Notices and Birthdays

The BLESSING

May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water
welling up to eternal life,
perfect in you the image of his glory;
and the blessing ...

Final Hymn *sung by St Martin's Voices*

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;

be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

- 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish, c 8th century

translated by Mary Byrne (1880-1931)

versified by, Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)

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Heading Out Prayer

As we go may we proclaim

To a troubled world,
peace from Christ.

To a searching world,
love from Christ.

To a waiting world,
hope from Christ

In the power of the Spirit,

And to the glory of God the Father Amen

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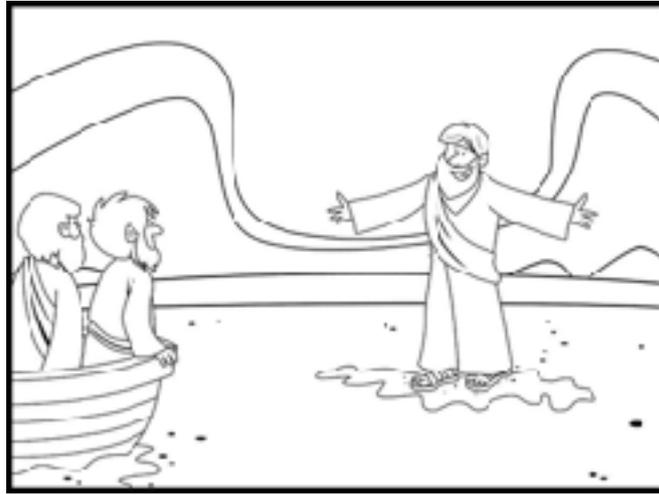
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Holy Spirit... we welcome you



Author: Lena London

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Jesus was baptised by his cousin John in the River Jordan.

What other stories about Jesus can you think of that involve water... (The picture is a clue to one of them!)

You might like to tell someone your favourite "Jesus and Water" story - or draw a picture of it!