

1ST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY (BAPTISM OF CHRIST)



OPENING RESPONSES

Be with us, Spirit of God;
nothing can separate us from your love.

Breathe on us, breath of God;
fill us with your saving power.

Speak in us, wisdom of God;
bring strength, healing and peace.

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.



O WORSHIP THE LORD



CONFESSION

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these.
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Because God was merciful,
he saved us through the water of rebirth
and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.
But through sin we have fallen away from our baptism.
Let us return to the Lord and renew our faith in his promises
by confessing our sins in penitence.

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.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse *us* from *our* sins,
and restore *us* in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

 COLLECT

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

 BIBLE READING

Mark 1.4-11

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.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



REFLECTION



HOW DEEP THE FATHERS LOVE FOR US



A TIME OF PRAYER



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has 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 for ever.**

Amen.

ROOTS at home



When have you experienced a fresh start?

Prayer Activity

You will need: a shallow dish or bowl, some small clean stones or pebbles.

- Fill the bowl about two-thirds with water. Be still and look at the reflections in the water. Play some quiet music if this helps.
- Think about John the Baptist and Jesus in the river Jordan, each choosing to be engulfed in God's will. Carefully place a stone in the water and give thanks for each of them.
- Think of people you know who are facing challenges. Place a stone for each person and pray for them. If you are doing this in a household, you could take turns. Notice how the water changes the appearance of the stones.
- After a while, take the stones out, one by one, praying again for each person: 'May the Holy Spirit comfort you and give you strength.' When you remove the last two stones, give thanks again for John and Jesus.

WALK

Take a trip to some water near you. Most of the year, the river Jordan is not very impressive – just muddy water and reeds – so a stream, a pond, a storm drain, even a puddle could be your 'Jordan'. When you are at this place, ask God what your calling is. Be open to an unexpected answer.

WATCH

- In the story of Hercules, the fifth task that he had to complete was to clean the King Augeas' stables of massive amounts of dung. Hercules said he could do this in just one day. The king did not believe him, and – providing him with a small shovel – promised a great reward if he could. Hercules, however, did not use the shovel but the power of water. Learn more about this story here: <https://youtu.be/F3svQQJZ3C0>
- Think about the power of water to clean and give a 'fresh start'. You could wash something at home – e.g. the front step, the inside of a cupboard – and, as you do your own 'Herculean task' and see things refreshed, talk to God. Ask to understand the personal fresh start on offer to you at this moment. What could it be?

MAKE

You will need: a piece of paper, a dinner plate, coloured pens/pencils.

- Happy or sad, content or restless, the ripples of our lives are constantly moving and God moves us towards new beginnings. Draw round the plate to make a large circle. Use the circle to make a picture of yourself –

but not who you are on the outside. Make a picture of your thoughts and feelings on the inside.

- Now look at your picture. Does it show you something about how you are feeling? Can you guess why some parts of the pattern are as they are? Pray about what you see.

DAILY PRAYER

Imagine that you have started the week with a blank canvas, a chance for new beginnings with God. Each day, think of one new thing that God may be calling you to do and write it on a piece of paper, or make an entry in your diary, praying for God's help in doing it.

At the end of the week, revisit what you have written, comparing it with what you have actually done.

 IMMORTAL INVISIBLE

 THE CONCLUSION

The Father's voice bears witness to the Son.
God has revealed himself to us.

The Son bows his head beneath the waters of baptism.
God has revealed himself to us.

The Spirit as a dove descends from heaven.
God has revealed himself to us.

Submitting to John's baptism, Christ delivers us from bondage.
God has revealed himself to us.

 BLESSING

May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water
welling up to eternal life,
perfect in us the image of his glory;
and the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen