

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK
Welcome to Morning Worship
The Baptism of Jesus
10th January 2021

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

Introduction

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the
glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
God gathers us from far away and carries us
With radiant eyes, with rejoicing hearts
We receive the abundance God gives

Prayer of Penitence

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel
the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us
examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Together we pray:

Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour
was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your
ways.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks
to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.



The wise men followed the star
to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

Hymn: [O thou who camest from above](#)

The Word of God – [Click Here](#)

First Reading: Acts 19: 1-7 read by Pat Lee

Second Reading: Mark 1:4-11 read by Carol Sanderson

Reflection prepared by Alan Hoggard.

Baptism of Jesus 10th Jan 2021 - The Secret ingredient

For all you who cook I'm sure that you have in one or two of your dishes a secret ingredient or a secret method that just transforms the dish that you are making. I know many of you may not believe this, but I do like to cook a curry. My secret ingredient is to add a little gram masala spice right at the end of the cooking, take the curry off the heat and just stir gram masala in and it makes all the difference – it is not hot as many of you may imagine in a curry but just gives the dish that wow of flavour....here endeth the cookery class.

I don't think that John the Baptist had the option of a kitchen or ingredients to hand to make a nice evening meal, in fact we are told that he ate locust and wild honey. There was a chef on the radio the other day who had introduced exciting a new ingredient into his salads I imagine this was pre lockdown because the customers loved it. The secret ingredient mixed with the lettuce and cucumber waslocusts. I supposed we get used to prawns and other creatures with legs and eyes and apparently the taste of locust was rather good so we will see whether it catches on.

I suspect even in the first century the mention of someone in this case John the Baptist eating locusts was not meant to make people think good idea! Must try that some day. It was probably meant to highlight the fact that he appeared as a strange wild man living in a new way that said: 'it's time for a change, ordinary days are gone – a new age is about to begin'.

That was the point of course. We sometimes think of repentance as being about going back wearily to the place where you went wrong, making a clean break with it and then hoping that you can start again. Well, that may be how it feels now at the beginning of this new year, as we are moving into a new stage of this pandemic – perhaps it is no bad time to face up to a new moment a time to consider the past if it must be done. However, John's message of repentance was essentially looking forward. if you suddenly got a call to say that someone really important was coming

to visit your house – I my case my mother – then you'd want to whip round the place with a duster and the vac or at least throw the pile of papers under the armchair. Maybe even do the leftover washing up. Sort the place out quickly – she's on the way.

That was the mood John was evoking – and that s the mood Mark is creating in his characteristically breathless opening of the gospel. This is where the good news starts, you can almost feel Mark being out of breath running all the way up to your house. Good News.....he's on the way.....get ready now - he's nearly here !

This year our readings will follow lectionary year B of the three year cycle and we will predominantly be following Marks Gospel, so it is good to understand the gospel of Mark – pithy and to the point – he gets on with it. Mark is in a rush to make sure we grasp the message of Good News. – a good gospel to read if you want and oversight of the good news of Jesus on earth.

In our reading from Acts Paul asks the Christians in Ephesus did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers. No, they replied we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit we have only received Johns Baptism of repentance.

It strikes me that many Christians are content to live like those Christians in Ephesus. Fulling believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, full in the knowledge of repentance and the forgiveness of sins because his sacrificial death on the cross. We rejoice in the good works of people in our communities and throughout the world, living good lives based on the teachings of Jesus, but that is only half the story it is the hard work without the blessing that God offers through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptised. And then as Jesus was coming out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the spirit descending upon him like dove.

You could say that the Holy Spirit is the secret ingredient of every Christian life although for some there is uncertainty and doubt as to whether the blessing of the Holy Spirit is necessary? As we study the Good news of the gospel of Mark in our services this year, we will see that it is the Holy Spirit that enables Jesus to share the Good News of Gods Love for the world. Mark is not complicated; his gospel is not one that is hard to understand, rather it is clear concise and to the point. The Holy Spirit is the inspiration for our day, it is the ingredient that enables us to see God working in others, to bring Hope into difficult circumstances, it enables us to tackle difficult and unknown challenges and enables us to find a way through that we would have never imagined. It is the light at the end if the tunnel that draws is into the future with confidence and assurance.

When Paul laid hands on the Ephesians, the Holy Spirit came upon them. Now I would love to lay may hands on you (!) but unfortunately Covid restrictions and social distancing prevent that physical action but I do pray that together we can open our hands in front of us and pray this prayer together:

'Lord Jesus at your baptism the Holy Spirit descended on you like a dove from heaven, we pray that you would send your Holy Spirit now to come into our hearts and lives. Fill us with your spirit of renewed faith, love, joy and peace that filled with the Holy Spirit we can fully experience the Good news of Jesus in our daily lives. In the name of the God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen'

This year 2021 can be full of hope and opportunity, not everything will run as we imagined or hoped, the vaccine is yet to be fully tested in the population and there is a more than a good deal uncertainty in our world. But as we walk in the light of Christ, are we ready to be daily filled with the Holy Spirit the special ingredient that will transform our lives, our church and our community. Amen

Hymn: [Holy are You](#)

The Creed

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession prepared by Soo Sykes

Heavenly father hear our prayers and let our hearts be open to you.

We pray for all those around the world who worship with you and to you. We pray for those who are persecuted because of their beliefs and whose lives are in danger. Give them your love and support and keep them safe. We pray for the families of those Christians who were executed at Christmas in Nigeria, let them know the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

We pray for all those who are affected by Corona virus. For doctors, nurses and carers. For families torn apart by death and disease. For those whose medical care has been put on hold and for those who cannot start treatment because the hospitals are too full to accommodate them. For all those who are ill and who need our prayers at this time

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord at this time we pray for those who have lost loved ones. We pray particularly for Pam and Rod but also for anyone we personally know. Let them feel your love surround them and for them to know that their loved ones are safe in your care

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

At this time we pray for all our families and friends, it is easy to become consumed in our own lives but we need to reach out and maintain contact with those who are alone or afraid.

Heavenly Father Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ

A prayer for our Church Growth

God of Mission

Who alone brings growth to your Church,

Send your Holy Spirit to give

Vision to our planning,

Wisdom to our actions,

And power to our witness.

Help our church to grow in numbers,

In spiritual commitment to you,

And in service to our local community,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

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.

The Collect for today

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

Hymn: [Breathe on me Breath of God](#)

Final Prayer

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our service ends with the Grace,
**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**