

The Baptism of our Lord – A River Runs through It

A Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival⁺

Service of Holy Communion

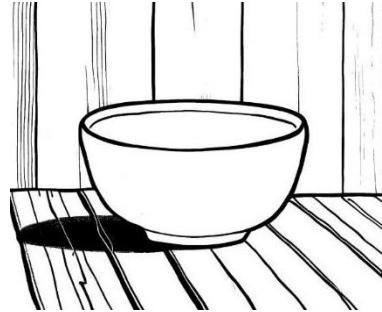


Preparation and Planning notes:

The Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters flows through this service like a river, connecting God's gift of water for all creation and for our personal lives with stories in the Bible in which water is central: Jesus' baptism, our baptism, and the call of life of all who are baptized.

Several preparations will need to be made in advance:

1. *A blue cloth, "flowing" from the base of the baptismal font like a river*
2. *Four pitchers, filled with water, should be placed near the font prior to the service, for pouring into the baptismal font, preceding each of the four major sections of the Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters*
3. *Green boughs and bowls for each person who will be doing aspersion during the Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters*



4. *Newspaper or Butcher paper prepared in advance with a large depiction of the "A River Runs Through It" image (see next page and attachment), preferably placed on a table in an accessible area so that each person (of all ages) can easily add their thumbprints.*
5. *Various colors of water-soluble paints in small bowls for making thumbprints*
6. *Wet wipes to clean hands after thumbprints are affixed to the "A River Runs Through It" image*
7. *Trash receptacle for the wet wipes*

ASPERSION: *To encourage full congregational participation, people of all ages should be invited in advance to lead the aspersion. It is recommended that the aspersion is practiced so that worshipers are sprinkled with water, not "soaked."*

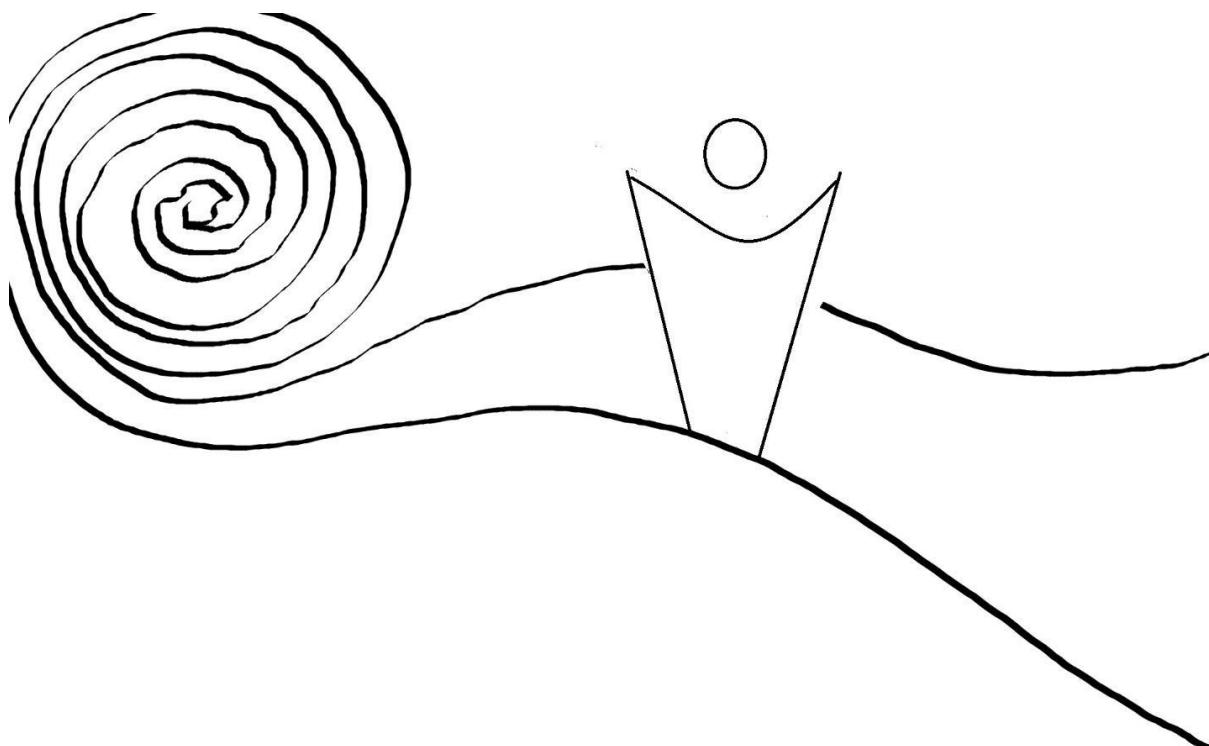
- *For each time of aspersion in the liturgy, it is recommended that, if the font is large enough, water is poured from a pitcher into the font.*
- *Next, a small bowl is dipped into the font to be filled with enough water, adequate for aspersion.*
- *If the font is not large enough to accommodate dipping a bowl, it is recommended that water is first poured from the pitcher into the font, and then directly into the bowl.*

Readers: *The First Reading is from the Beginner's Bible. The second reading is from the Easy to Read Version of the Bible. The Gospel Reading is from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE). It would be appropriate to have the first reading shared by a child's voice. It is preferable to have the readers chosen in advance so that the readings can be practiced prior to worship. However,*

readers may also be chosen at the start of the service, if this is part of local tradition and appropriate to a given context.

Music: The songs provided are suggestions. The hymn numbers are from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Congregations are encouraged to choose sacred music that reflects the piety of their particular worshiping community. Should musical ensembles or soloists be available, congregations are encouraged to include either intergenerational ensembles or soloists and ensembles that represent a variety of ages and abilities. Service music should reflect the water theme that connects us to the whole of creation.

Water and Welcome: Because this service includes aspersion, it will be important to include service notes to that effect, and also in the welcome to inform the worshipers that throughout the service they will be sprinkled with water, in remembrance of and Thanksgiving for Baptismal waters.



Liturgy, Gathering Music

Welcome

The liturgy begins at the Baptismal font. The “Call to Worship” is optional.

Call to Worship

P: All who are thirsty,

C: Come to the water.

P: All how are seeking,

C: Come to the water.

P: All who are longing for justice,
C: Come to the water.
P: All who are carrying heavy burdens,
C: Come to the water.
P: All who are in need of mercy,
C: Come to the water.
P: All are from every time and every place,
C: Come to the water.
ALL: Amen

Entrance Song

When Long Before Time (verses 1-3)

ELW #861

Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
Source and Fountain,
Living Water,
River of Life.

C: AMEN

P: Connected by water to all of creation,
Sustained by water, the foundation of life,
Joined to Christ by water and the Word,
We give thanks for the gift of Baptismal waters -
Waters that bathe us in Divine Love,
Waters that remind us of Divine Mercy
Waters that equip us for being bearers of this Love and Mercy in the whole world.

Water is poured into the font.

The congregation is sprinkled with water during the prayer.

A: Holy Trinity, +one God,
We give you thanks for this earth, our planet home
And the waters that fill and sustain it.

C: We thank you, God for water.

A: We give you thanks for oceans and lakes (include names of nearby oceans and lakes),
rivers and streams, (include names of nearby rivers and streams),
for rain and snow, fog and dew.

C: We thank you, God for water.

A: We give you thanks for water to drink,
Water to grow and cook our food,
Water to wash us,
And water in which we play.

C: We thank you, God for water.

A: We give you thanks for water that quenches our thirst,
 Nourishes our bodies,
 And helps to keep us healthy and strong.

C: **We thank you, God for water. Amen**

Song of Praise

Creator of the Water

by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

LANCASHIRE 7.6.7.6 D ("The Day of Resurrection")

**Creator of the water that makes the world so green,
 That satisfies the thirsty, and keeps us cool and clean,
 We take from your creation this gift we use each day;
 You call us now to use it in this most holy way.**

**As in the time of Noah, the sea engulfed the land,
 And through the Red Sea, Moses led Israel 'cross the sand,
 And to the Jordan waters, Christ went and was baptized —
 Your water has a power: it changes all our lives.**

**May this your gift of water, long springing from the earth,
 Become for all new Christians their fountain of rebirth.
 Lord, wash away their sinning, and give them life anew —
 Pour out your Spirit on them, that they may follow you.**

**God, through your gift of water, your family we become;
 You take away divisions; in Christ you make us one.
 Now send your Spirit on us and give us work to do
 That we may share with others the love we have from you.**

Word

Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters, continued

*Water is poured into the font.
 The congregation is sprinkled with water during the prayer.*

A: Creator God, Our Source and our Fountain,
 We give you praise for water stories in the Bible,
 Stories that tell us of your love and show us your mercy.
 C: **We praise you, God for water stories.**

A: We give you praise for
 The waters that provided Moses' mother a way to send him to safety,
 The waters that flowed from the rock when your people were thirsty in the desert,
 And the waters that parted to create a path for your people to freedom.
 C: **We praise you, God for water stories.**

A: We give you praise for

The waters in which Naaman was healed,
 The waters with which Jesus washed his disciples' feet,
 And the water by the side of the road in which The Ethiopian was baptized.

C: We praise you, God for water stories.

A: We praise you for
 The river in which your Son was baptized,
 The river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb,
 And especially for the Living Water who is Jesus –
 proclaimed to the Samaritan woman at the well,
 and to all people of all times and all places,

C: We praise you, God for water stories. Amen

First Reading

excerpts from Genesis 7-9

Many years passed after Adam and Eve left the garden.

People began to forget about God.

They began to do bad things.

There was only one good man.

His name was Noah.

God said, "I am sorry that I made people.

I will start all over again."

God told Noah to build a big boat called an "ark."

God showed Noah exactly how to build it.

When the ark was finished,

God told Noah to put animals in it.

Noah obeyed God.

He put some of every kind of animal

Into the ark.

Then God shut the door.

Soon rain began to fall.

The raindrops made little puddles,

Then bigger puddles.

The big puddles became streams,

Then rushing rivers,

Then sloshing seas.

Soon the whole earth was covered with water.

The ark tossed up and down on the waves.

But Noah and his family and all the animals

Were safe and dry inside the ark.

Then one day the rain stopped.

Noah opened a window in the ark.

He saw water everywhere.

He sent a dove to fly out and look for land.

But the dove came right back.

It could not find a place to rest.

The next time Noah sent the dove,

It brought back an olive leaf.
 The water was going down.
 The next time, the dove did not come back.
 It was time to leave the ark.

The ark was resting on top of a mountain.
 Noah and his family and all the animals came out.
 Noah thanked God for keeping them safe.
 Then God put a dazzling rainbow in the sky.
 It was God's promise that water would never again cover the whole earth.

Song *Springs of Water, Bless the Lord* **ELW #214**

Second Reading **Acts 10:34-43**

Peter began to speak: "I really understand now that God does not consider some people to be better than others. He accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what nation they come from. God has spoken to the people of Israel. He sent them the Good News that peace has come through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all people."

"You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John told the people they needed to be baptized. You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Messiah by giving him the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good for people. He healed those who were ruled by the devil, showing that God was with him."

"We saw all that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But he was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. But on the third day after his death, God raised him to life and let him be seen openly. He was not seen by everyone, but only by us, the ones God had already chosen to be witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death."

"Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one God chose to be the Judge of all who are living and all who have died. Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name. All the prophets agree that this is true."

Song *Blessed Be God, the Source of All Life* **ELW #210 (2x)**

Gospel Reading **Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

P: The Holy Gospel According to Luke.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Song *Blessed Be God, the Source of All Life* **ELW #210 (2x)**

Homily *A River Runs through It*

Hymn of the Day *Shall we Gather at the River?* **ELW #423**

During the Hymn, all worshipers add their thumbprint to the "A River Runs Through It" image, by dipping their thumb into paint, and placing their thumbprint on either side of the river.

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing of the Peace

P: Christ's peace is with you.

A: And also with you.

The congregation is invited to share with one another a greeting of peace.

Meal

Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters, continued

Water is poured into the font.

The congregation is sprinkled with water during the prayer.

A: Saving God, our Living Water.
We glorify you for Holy Baptism,
For water used according to your command
And connected to your Word.

C: We glorify you, O God.

A: We glorify you, O God
For making us your own,
Through the grace-filled water of life
And a bath of new birth in the Holy Spirit.

C: We glorify you, O God.

A: We glorify you, O God
For delivering us from sin and death,
And for raising us to new life in Christ.

C: We glorify you, O God.

A: We glorify you O, God
 That we have been made right by your grace
 And made heirs according to your promise
 And the hope of eternal life.

C: We glorify you, O God. Amen

If Holy Communion is not celebrated, the service continues with the Baptismal Remembrance Rite.

The Great Thanksgiving

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

P. Lift up your hearts.

C. We lift them to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Holy, Holy, Holy

ELW #191

P. In the night in which he was handed over,
 Our Lord Jesus took bread,
 And gave thanks;
 Broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat;
 This is my body, given for you.
 Do this for remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,
 Gave thanks,
 And gave it for all to drink saying:
 This cup is the new covenant
 In my blood, shed for you and for all people
 For the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

P. Praying now in whatever language or translation is the language of your heart, we pray as children of God:

**C. Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name;
 thy kingdom come;
 thy will be done;
 on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from the evil one.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

At the Breaking of Bread:

P: Glory to the Father and to the +Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

C: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN.

When you receive Holy Communion, you will be marked with water and the sign of the cross with the words below, before receiving the bread and wine. Those unable to come forward, will participate at their seats.

Child of God, remember that through water and the Word, your sins are forgiven. The old has passed away, you have been made new in Christ, and you are called to let your light shine for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of the world.

Please place your tithes and extra offerings in the offering plate as you come forward for Holy Communion.

Distribution

When Peace Like a River	ELW #785
Wade in the Water	ELW #459
We Know that Christ is Raised	ELW #449

When Holy Communion is not celebrated, the service continues with the Baptismal Rite. When Holy Communion is celebrated, the service continues with the Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters noted below.

Baptismal Remembrance Rite

Worshipers are invited to the Baptismal font to be marked with water and the sign of the cross with the words below. Those unable to come to the font, participate at their seats.

Child of God, remember that through water and the Word, your sins are forgiven. The old has passed away, you have been made new in Christ, and you are called to let your light shine for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of the world.

The service (with or without Holy Communion) continues below.

Thanksgiving for Baptismal Waters, continued

Water is poured into the font.

The congregation is sprinkled with water during the prayer.

A: Sustaining God, our River of Life we honor you
 For calling us to live among your faithful people,
 To hear your word and share in your Supper,
 To proclaim your good news in Christ through word and deed,
 To serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
 To strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

C: We honor you, O God.

A: We honor you, O God
 For showering us with your Holy Spirit,
 The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The spirit of counsel and might,
 The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
 The spirit of joy in your presence,
 Both now and forever.

C: We honor you, O God.

A: We honor you, O God
 By letting our lights shine before others
 So they may see our good works,
 And glorify you,
 As we bear your creative and redeeming word to all the world.

C: We honor you, O God. AMEN.

Sending

Blessing

P: May the blessing of the holy Trinity, + one God,
 Source and Fountain,
 Living Water,
 River of Life
 Be upon you this day
 And remain with you always.

C: AMEN

Sending Song

When Long Before Time (verses 4-6)

ELW #861

Dismissal

P: Go in peace.
C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

+ "Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival" liturgies are part of the Nourishing Vocation with Children Project at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. This liturgy was created by Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox. This full attribution must be included, along with the logos attributions and permissions below, on any reproduction or distribution of this material, along with the attributions below about the readings.

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Excerpts from Genesis 7-9, The Beginners Bible: Henley, Karyn. *Timeless Children's Stories*. Zondervan, 1989.

Acts 10:34-43. Holy Bible, Easy to Read Version

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22, Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.

