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Centering

- prepare a cup or bowl of water to remember your baptism
- offer a prayer of gratitude for the indigenous peoples whose land you live on
- light all the candles of your Advent wreath

Opening Prayer¹

Pastor Lisa

O God,
who am I now?
Once, I was secure
in familiar territory
in my sense of belonging

unquestioning of

the norms of my culture
the assumptions built into my language
the values shared by my society.

But now you have called me out and away from home
and I do not know where you are leading.
I am empty, unsure, uncomfortable.
I have only a beckoning star to follow.

Journeying God,
pitch your tent with mine

¹ <https://inthecoracle.org/2019/01/a-poem-for-epiphany/>

so that I may not become deterred
by hardship, strangeness, doubt.
Show me the movement I must make

toward a wealth not dependent on possessions
toward a wisdom not based on books
toward a strength not bolstered by might
toward a God not confined to heaven

but scandalously earthed, poor, unrecognized...

Help me find myself
as I walk in others' shoes.
Amen.

Opening Song

God of Love, We've Known Division

Ola Mullikin

WORDS: Rev. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2020

MUSIC: Attr. to B.F. White, 1844; harm. by Ronald A. Nelson, 1978

CCLI Song # 1730488

CCLI # 11365960

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Prayer for Illumination

Annelisa Neely

God of glory, your splendor shines from a star in the sky and a manger in Bethlehem into the darkness of our world. Open our eyes to Christ's presence all around us, and open our hearts to your Word, so that we may live more just and faithful lives. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Mark 1:4-11

Annelisa Neely

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And 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. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Song of Preparation

Dona Nobis Pacem

Vheneka

WORDS: traditional, Latin, Public Domain

MUSIC: traditional; arr. for marimbas by Karin Sonnen

CCLI Song #469107

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Remembrance of Baptism

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world? **I will.**

Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Song of Response*Baptized in Water*

Ola Mullikin

WORDS: Michael Saward

MUSIC: Trad. Gaelic melody

CCLI Song # 2700434

CCLI # 11365960

The Lord's Prayer

Annelisa Neely

**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 evil,

**for thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

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Words of Hope

First Coming

Madeleine L'Engle

God did not wait till the world was ready
till ... nations were at peace.
God came when the heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

God did not wait for the perfect time.
God came when the need was deep and great.
God dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine. God did not wait
until hearts were pure.
In joy God came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
God came, and God's light would not go out.

God came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

Benediction

Go now, into this tarnished world, clothed in the waters of baptism to follow the Word of God made flesh, Jesus Christ, the light of the world that will never go out. Amen.

Closing Song

Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service

Ola Mullikin

WORDS: Albert F. Bayly, 1961

MUSIC: Attr. to B.F. White, 1844; harm. by Ronald A. Nelson, 1978

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