

JANUARY 7, 2024
BAPTISM OF
OUR LORD



God reaches out to us through Jesus.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:4-11	The baptism of Jesus
Monday	Genesis 1:1-5	God creates light
Tuesday	Acts 19:1-7	Paul baptizes in Ephesus
Wednesday	Matthew 28:16-20	The commissioning of the disciples
Thursday	Psalms 145:14-21	The Lord is kind and merciful
Friday	1 John 3:11-24	Love one another
Saturday	Psalms 29	The voice of God in the storm
Sunday	John 1:43-51	Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And just as he [Jesus] was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

Mark 1:10 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of heaven and earth, we thank you for reaching out to us through Jesus' baptism so that your Spirit may rest on all of us with forgiveness and grace. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, you care for all that you create. We thank you for your power and glory that provides us food from the earth so that we may live in peace. Amen. (Psalm 29)

A Blessing to Give:

May the Holy Spirit bless you as God's beloved child.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
I'm Going on a Journey



WEEKLY MILESTONES



Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Talk or reflect on a baptism that you witnessed.
- Do you believe that baptism is a life-changing event? Explain.

DEVOTIONS



Read: Mark 1:4-11.

Jesus' baptism takes place in the context of a very important scene. John the baptizer is preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Huge crowds are drawn out to the wilderness to listen to John, where he baptizes and cleanses them from their broken lives. It is a time of truth telling that touches many lives. This happens in the wilderness, not in the center of political, economic, or religious powers like Jerusalem. It's a place on the edge, a place of vulnerability where surviving is not easy. Jesus' baptism happens in a life and death setting filled with hope for the future. After his baptism, Jesus sees the heavens torn apart and a divine voice announces Jesus as God's Son and the Beloved (v. 11). In Jesus, God is coming down from heaven to be with us through the Spirit that descended to be with Jesus, and through Jesus, to be with us. Jesus' baptism is the first story in the Gospel, and, therefore, has particular importance. It reveals God coming into our world through Jesus, the Son of God, bringing forgiveness and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss: How has God "come down" into your life?

Pray: **Loving God, you who reach out to us through Jesus and his baptism in the wilderness, give us confidence to trust that you have come for us with forgiveness and grace. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and the theme for this week, how can you help someone who feels alone?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Christian baptism ushers in a new life in Christ that involves daily repentance and forgiveness. To emphasize the daily renewal we experience in baptism, begin the day by making the sign of the cross on your forehead or over your heart and say: **"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I am a beloved child of God."**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org