

SENDING

*Closing Song

You Belong to Christ

GtG #492

The assembly is invited to join the cantor in singing our closing song.

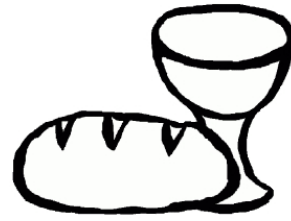
*Benediction

Postlude

I've Just Come from the Fountain

African-American Spiritual/arr. Richard Billingham

*I've just come from the fountain. I've just come from the fountain, Lord,
I've just come from the fountain, His name's so sweet.
O brother/sister/sinner, do you love Jesus? Yes, yes, I do love Jesus
O brother/sister/sinner, do you love Jesus? His name's so sweet.*



Worship Notes

The icon of Jesus being baptized by the Forerunner John is particularly significant for ancient Christian theology. Icons are used to teach, but also to draw us into adoration, for their “perspective” places the vanishing point behind the observer, causing us to enter into the scene. While we may learn from the details of the icon, it is not helpful simply to stay there, as though the icon is an object of artistic criticism. Instead, we grasp the details, but also allow the icon to serve as a means to our adoration of Christ, who is front and center. In this icon, we may see Jesus being plunged into the Jordan, and thus into the depths of the earth, by John's reverent hand: Jesus' hand offers us a priestly blessing as he descends. The gold tones in the blue Jordan show us the transfiguring presence of its LORD: he has blessed the waters, the very waters he ordered at the beginning. As his halo proclaims, he is “Ho Ōn”, the existing One who brings all into life, and new life. As John performs the deed, three angels stand to our right (Jesus' left) and adore, wondering at the sight. Above Jesus we see the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, with a remembrance that the Father also is present, in the radiant nimbus that goes offstage. In some icons of the baptism, the hand of God (representing his voice, “This is my beloved Son”) is present just above the dove. Here we grasp the Incarnate Son, the center of it all, flanked by humans and angels in worship, and united to the Holy Spirit and the Father. Unusually for an icon of Christ, his level is for a little “lower” than the Baptist and the angels, showing his deep humility in taking on our humanity. We, with the Jordan, John, and the angels, wonder at the sight!

In the Eastern Orthodox Church and those Eastern Catholic Churches which follow the Byzantine Rite, the sprinkling of holy water takes place on numerous occasions. The most important is on the Great Feast of Theophany (Epiphany) following the Great Blessing of Waters at the end of the Divine Liturgy. The Great Blessing takes place twice: once on the Eve of the feast, and once on the day of the feast. At both blessings, the priest sprinkles the entire temple (church building) and the faithful. He then begins the process of going to each family's home to sprinkle it with the blessed "Theophany water."



A Service of Word and Sacrament

GATHERING

Prelude

(text for meditation: GtG #827)

Variations on *O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright* Philipp Nicolai/arr. James W. Loeffler

1. *Dialogue* (after M. Praetorius)
2. *Invention* (after J. S. Bach)
3. *Pastorale* (after F. Mendelssohn)

*Opening Sentences

Leader: Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:

Do not be afraid to baptize me.

For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed human.

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan

The worship of the Trinity was made manifest

for the voice of the Father bore witness to You

And called You His beloved Son.

And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,

Confirmed the truthfulness of His word.

***People: O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself
And have enlightened the world, glory to you!***

*Opening Hymn

We Know That Christ Is Raised

GtG #485

*please rise in body and/or spirit

Prayer of Confession

People: Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you
with our whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

In your mercy, forgive what we have been,
help us amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be,
that we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings: Matthew 3:13-17; 4:15-17

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

*Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn yourself, O Naphtali;
River Jordan, cease flowing
And received with joy the Master coming to be baptized.
Adam, rejoice with our First Mother
And do not hide yourself as you did of old in Paradise;
For having seen you naked,
He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment—
Christ has appeared to renew all creation.*

*The Passing of the Peace

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: And also with you.

The assembly is invited to exchange signs of Christ's peace and reconciling love.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

*The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: **And also with you**
Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: **We lift them to the Lord.**
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
Leader: It is truly right to glorify you, Father ...
...
... we glorify your name and lift our voices in joyful praise:
People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**
Leader: We acclaim you, holy God, glorious in power...
...
... we praise you and we bless you.
People: **We praise you, we bless you,
we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.**
Leader: Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy ...
...
... Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
all honor and glory are yours, almighty God and Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
forever and ever.
People: **Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer

Communion of the People

*Prayer after Communion