

*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present. Whether you are joining us virtually or physically. May we together experience the presence of God*

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***We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord***

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

Worship should be a celebration; this is the beginning of a new year. We survived 2020, but there are still effects of the pandemic and the unrest at our door, with this said, it is time to embrace a new possibility, a new hope. The heavens have been torn open. But this isn't a threat; it's a promise of something new, something better. Let us commit ourselves this new year to a closer walk with Christ and let the waters of baptism renew us and cleanse us for our mission and ministry as followers of Jesus.

Today we come together in celebration of Epiphany and in remembrance of the beautiful ritual of baptism.

Epiphany is about seeing Christ, about the manifestation of Messiah in the person of Jesus. Certainly, the proclamation made at his baptism, the tearing open of the heavens, and the descending of the Spirit like a dove can also be a revelatory experience.

Do you remember your baptism? Some do, those who were baptized as youth or adults. Many don't, because it happened in our infancy. Yet even those of us who remember our baptism only because someone told us about it much later, we can still remember what happened afterward. Because now is afterward. The life we live as baptized followers of Jesus is that afterward. The new creation that we choose to make of ourselves every single day of our lives is that afterward.

And whether we hear it or not, the word that is spoken over us is a word of affirmation. God sees the light placed within us and pronounces it good. The voice proclaims, "you are my beloved, with you I am well pleased." Not done, not complete, not perfect, but good. In God's eyes, good.

Come, let us worship Him and celebration our blessed Savoir and redeemer!

**CALL TO WORSHIP (MARK 1)**

Lost . . .

**wandering without purpose, meaning, value, acceptance, or place.**

We wander lost. But the Spirit of God descends like a dove upon us. We hear the ancient words that name and claim us as children of God.

**We are cleansed, refreshed, and made new in the love of those words.**

**\*Praise Hymn #3043 You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd**

**\*Opening Prayer**

**Most wonderful God, foolish and flawed though we are, we too delight in your beloved Son. As in his name we gather in the house of many praises, may the heavens be opened for us, that we may catch a glimpse of that Light and Love that transforms our common days with a beauty not of our making. Through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!**

**We Hear God's Word**

**New Testament Reading..... Acts 19:1-7**

The word of God for the People of God, **Thanks Be to God**

**\*Faith Hymn #2248 Baptized in Water**

**WE COME, ASKING FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS**

An Invocation Based on Acts 19:1-7

**Lord, we come to you today, exposed, With the understanding that we have sinned against you. We have done wrong in your sight and we asked that you show us your forgiving spirit. Forgive us of our sins that we may be able to forgive ourselves. Lord, we want to be pleasing in your sight. We understand that our baptism was of water. It was a baptism of repentance. Today, we ask that you touch us, Lord, and baptize us in your Spirit. Pour out your Spirit upon us so that your sons and daughters may prophesy, Your young men may see visions, Your old men may dream dreams. Baptize us, Lord, in your Holy Spirit, so that we may do your will. It's in your darling Son Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

**Children's Message**

**\*Meditation\***

**INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

Sisters and brothers, our baptismal vows call us to compassion and mercy on behalf of those in need. We offer our prayers for the church and the world.

Sharing of our Joys and concerns:

Lord God, you revealed your Son in the waters of the Jordan and anointed him with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim good news to all people. Sanctify us by the same Spirit, that we may proclaim the healing power of the gospel by acts of love in your name we as this in Jesus name as we join in the prayer he taught us...

### LET THE WORLD MARVEL AT OUR UNITY

A Sending Inspired by Acts 19:1-7

Let us go out into the world with the understanding that we are in the world, but not of the world. We are indeed pilgrims in this barren land, and we come together being baptized both of water and of the Holy Spirit. Let the world marvel at our unity.

### \*Departing Hymn # 539 O Spirit of the Living God

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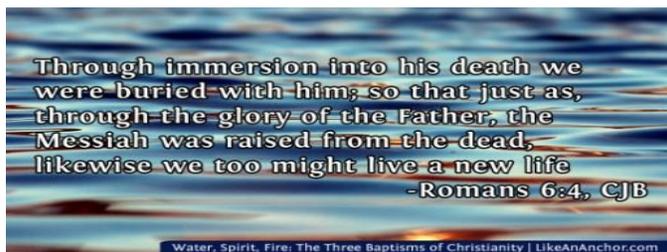
#### Water, spirit, and fire — those are the three baptisms that John tells us

believers in Jesus will go through. I think this is what the writer of Hebrews means when he describes “the doctrine of baptisms” (plural) as a foundation of Christianity (Heb. 6:1-2).

#### Water

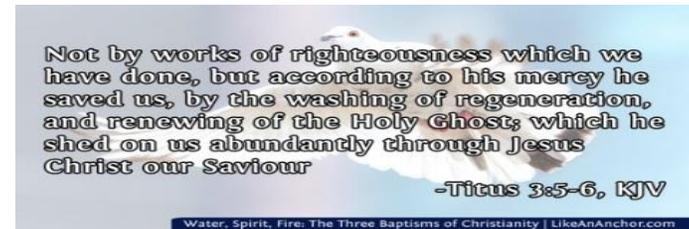
The baptism of water is the easiest to study. We have multiple examples of it in the gospels and throughout Acts. When someone became a believer in Jesus as the Messiah, they were baptized in His name. It was the next step after repentance as part of their commitment to follow His teachings. Baptism in water acts as a sign that we’re committing to Christ and identifying with His people. It also serves a symbolic purpose that Paul talks about in his letter to the Romans. Or don’t you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-4,)

When we’re baptized, we put our “body of sin” into the grave and coming up out of the water aligns us with His resurrection. Now, we’re ready to live a new life as a servant of God.



## Spirit

After Christ’s water baptism, the spirit of God descended on Him in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16). Peter tells us that new believers’ baptisms follow a similar pattern: “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). There are exceptions recorded ([Acts 10:44-48](#)), but for most people water baptism is followed by spirit baptism. The spirit of God is a precious gift. It’s God’s mind connecting with our’s making it possible for us to understand spiritual things ([1 Cor. 2:9-16](#)). Baptism in water prepares us to walk in newness of life, but it’s baptism of the spirit that actually lets us do that.



## Fire

Fire in the Bible is often referred to as a refining force. It heats up metal for purification and it burns off wrong things we’re building in our lives. Paul says that fire will reveal what each of us has been building on the foundation, which is Jesus Christ. Sometimes what we’re building comes through the fire intact, passing the test. Other times “If any man’s work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:10-15). The fire is meant for our good, checking us to make sure we remain in the spirit and building us up to become like Jesus. Right after His water and spirit baptisms, “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. 4:1). Like our Savior, we have to face temptations and trials as part of our walk in faith.

Beloved, don’t be astonished at the fiery trial which has come upon you, to test you, as though a strange thing happened to you. But because you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory you also may rejoice with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:12-13)

