

Defining Moments



Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests.



For Children: Please feel free to attend services with your children. For the safety of the children, staff and volunteers ERUCC will not be providing childcare during services until further notice. Your children are welcome to bring their own quiet activities, no materials will be provided. Please take ALL personal items with you after the service.

We have removed all items from the pew racks for your safety. Music selections will be provided within this bulletin. If you are visiting and did not stop at the welcome desk in the downstairs lobby please stop by after the service they would love to meet you or, please feel free to reach out to someone sitting near you and ask them questions about the service or church. Many of our visitors ask us about the time of offering. This is a time in our service when we respond to God's gifts of love by offering the gifts of our lives. For many of us, this is when we make a financial gift towards the ministries and programs of our church. We also use this time to ask God how we might use the gifts of our hands and hearts in sharing God's love. If you are visiting, there is no obligation to give a financial gift. We are just glad you are worshipping with us. At this time we are taking offering at the end of the service. Plates will be placed at the doors as you exit the sanctuary, Thank you.

We ask that you please silence your cell phones during our worship service. We also ask that you refrain from applause after our choirs sing and allow the music to resonate in the quiet of the sanctuary and in your hearts. Our musicians are playing and singing for the glory of God. They know you appreciate their efforts and their gift.

Rest rooms (equipped with changing stations) are located on the first floor of the church building and outside the Community Room and the Nursery.

There is much information about the church in this bulletin and our website: www.erucc.org.

Donate online by scanning this code:

or you may use our new texting donation system. Send a donation amount to 301-804-2933 . You will receive a text back within minutes with a link. Click the secure link and provide your method of payment and a receipt will be sent to you! Or, download the GivePlus Church application and make your donation via the app.



Thank you.

EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

United Church of Christ

- An Open and Affirming Congregation -

January 10, 2021

Baptism of Christ Sunday

10:30 a.m.

Greetings and Announcements

Prelude

***Call to Worship**

In the beginning...

God gathered us in.

In the beginning...

God prepared our hearts and minds to worship.

In the beginning...

God called us God's beloved.

In the beginning...

the beginning is now. Let us worship God.

***Opening Prayer (in unison)**

The cool water streamed down the face of Christ.

The heavens parted,

and, O God, you announced your love.

Gather us into that love this day

as your beloved children,

touched by the cooling waters,

blessed with your peace. Amen.

Opening Hymn *Morning Has Broken

Morning has broken like the first morning

Blackbird has spoken like the first bird

Praise for the singing

Praise for the morning

Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven

Like the first dewfall on the first grass

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden

Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

**Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning
God's recreation of the new day**

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

**Creating Grace, you birthed a world out of love and called us good.
You shower us with mercy and then pronounce us beloved. But we
sometimes forget your claims upon us.
Send your Spirit to descend upon us this day, O God. Restore us to new
life. Let your peace touch our broken places so that we might offer the
healing power of Christ's baptism to the world and ourselves. Amen.**

***Assurance of Pardon** *(Inspired by Psalm 29 and Mark 1)*

God's voice rings over the mighty waters,
shakes the wilderness, shatters the forests of Lebanon.
God's voice splits the heavens, the Spirit descends like a dove,
an announcement is offered:
"You are the one I love dearly."
"You are the one in whom I delight."
God's voice shakes all of the earth with an eternal love.

Thought For the Day

The Lord's Prayer

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

The Scripture

Genesis 1: 1-5

Mark 1:4-11

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Prayers of the People

This prayer is a responsive setting. The response to each petition will go as follows:

One: ...with a voice of love;

All: come, Lord Jesus, come.

Loving God, we strain to hear your whispers in a world loud with hate. The veils of selfishness and greed shield us from reaching out to others in their plights. Voices of fear strain to reach our ears each passing minute and drive us from one another. Part these veils and walls of division in our world with your loving voice. Whisper to us that we are your beloved. Grant us your reassurances and your vision for your reign as we whisper to you our prayers for this reign to come.

God, for those in this world who are hungry, for those who are without homes, and for those who have lost the faith that tomorrow holds any new promises, with a voice of love;

come, Lord Jesus, come.

For those who are in need of your peace, whose tears mix with the waters of baptism and whose hearts have been poured out in grief, with a voice of love;

come, Lord Jesus, come.

For those who long for the restoration of body, mind, or spirit, who long for a whisper that grace can come into brokenness and does, with a voice of love;

come, Lord Jesus, come.

For people of faith around the world who seek strength to share in Christ's ministry of mercy, who seek hope to carry the words of love that descend with the Spirit, and who wish to be willing servants of a God of compassion, with a voice of love;

come, Lord Jesus, come.

God of the waters, receive these prayers of our hearts. Unite them with the voice that speaks love and not hate, unity and not division, mercy and not cruelty. Send us with that love on our hearts, that unity as our goal in every action, and that mercy as our offering to one another.

Amen.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

Introduction

God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good.

Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist,

became living water for us and embraces all of us.

Jesus embraces also you who are the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and all others who come seeking.

We follow Jesus with our baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being.

We join Jesus in love and service.

Let us prepare our hearts and minds to see, feel, and hear once again the vows of baptism.

Vows of Renewal

Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your baptism?

I do.

Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

I do.

Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

I do

Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

I do.

Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

I do.

In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your baptism as a mark of acceptance and welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life.

Prayer

O God,

we rejoice in your grace, given and received.

We thank you that you claim us,

that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us,

that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling.

In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world.

Establish us to be places of refreshment.

Root us and nurture us in love,

that with all your people, that we may rightly and justly serve you.

Fill us with your fullness

that our lives may overflow in service and love. Amen.

Coming to the Water

As you are called, as you are moved, you may approach the bowl of water to renew your baptism. Remember always that, just as God called out to Jesus, God calls out to us, "You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased."

Offering of Tithes, Gifts and Lives to Christ's Service

Anthem *Wade in the Water*

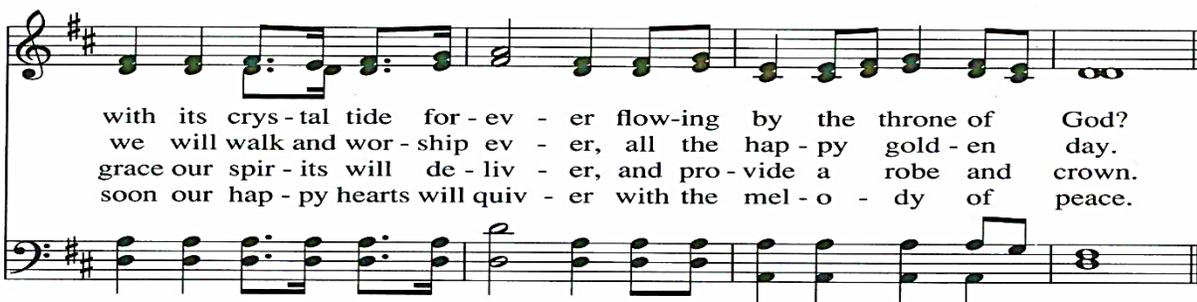
- arr. L. Shackley
ERUCC Singers

Closing Hymn *Shall We Gather at the River*

#597



1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
3 As we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ery bur - den down;
4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

Refrain



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er,



Gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

*Benediction

Go from here marked by the sign of the cross. Remember that Christ strengthens us each day to live as God's beloved, marked to bring peace and justice to the world. Amen.

*Postlude



Every Sunday at 10:30

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/bzloh0xyyacgq5fmjnoi>

Want to listen to the sermon again? Visit our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9_hGBb5tBHeZuvqBvSbX5w

You can get to the link on our homepage at www.erucc.org

The flowers on the altar this morning are in memory of the Rev. Henri L.G. Kieffer, Margaret Roulette Kieffer, and Dr. Robert H. Pilgram and Margaret Kieffer Pilgram, by Penny and Bill George and Barbara & Dwight Reynolds.

The **yellow rose bud** on the stand is in honor of those currently serving in the military by Jack Day and Peter Brehm.

Worship Next Week: Ctrl + Click HERE to join worship Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

In both the gospel lesson (John 1:43-51) and the Hebrew lesson (1 Samuel 3:1-10) we hear stories about God calling disciples. Samuel recounts the classic story of God calling him in the night. Samuel responds in the way most of us would want to respond: “Hear I am, Lord...“Speak, for your servant is listening.” In John’s gospel, the only gospel to mention Nathaniel as a character in Jesus’ gathering up his disciples (note that Nathaniel was not counted as one of the 12 disciples), we hear the question put to Jesus about worth and value. We hear Nathaniel wondering: “Can this guy from Nazareth be worth it?” We might ask the same question: Can anything of worth come out of our lives of faith, lived individually or lived together in the church in 2021?

Stay Connected and Get Informed!

There are many ways to receive information about what is happening at church each week. The weekly bulletin, the weekly informational email, and our monthly newsletter, The Trinity Chimes, Facebook, and Instagram. @eruccfred

Thursday Thoughts-A weekly emailed message that shares updates, highlights the upcoming service’s scripture and focus, and includes announcements about Sunday School. To sign up to receive Thursday Thoughts, contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or aaguilar@erucc.org and share your preferred email address.

Trinity Chimes—ERUCC’s monthly newsletter. A more in-depth look on what’s happening with the congregation. How we’re reaching out, learning and volunteer opportunities, member and social program updates. Receive Trinity Chimes by email! Contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or aaguilar@erucc.org to request to be added. (Paper copies also available upon request.)



Ministers - All the People of Evangelical Reformed Church

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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 10, 2021

Mark 1:4-11

The Baptism of Christ Defining Moments

A rite of passage is a defining moment. Standing in the moment between two ages or phases of life, a rite of passage defines both who we were before the ritual and who we will become after it is completed. Anthropologists and theologians both know that we need rites of passage not only to know who we are individually but also to know who we are as part of our community. Without rites of passage, we cease to have these vital markers of our self and communal definition.

Baptism is a rite of passage for us, as it was for Jesus. Jesus goes to the river Jordan, where his cousin John is baptizing and calling for repentance or turning from sin. In the hundreds of pieces of art depicting this scene, we most often see Jesus alone with John - and sometimes the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. But Jesus was hardly alone. The scripture tells us that *everyone* in Jerusalem was there, along with many from the countryside. There would have been a giant crowd with Jesus, to take part in and witness this important rite of passage.

Many cultures and religions, including the Judaism of John and Jesus' time had a ritual of washing. Jesus' baptism was an evolution of that ancient rite. It was not meant to replace the old ritual, but the meaning shifted to accommodate new understandings about God, society, and individuals.

Think about the rites of passage in your own life. Consider the times when you made a change from one stage or age to another. Who was there to witness and to participate? How did the presence of the wider community help you feel God's presence? In our changing time, how have new rites of passage grown out of old ones?



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