

New Hope Lutheran Church

189 Regent St.
Sudbury, Ontario
P3C 4C4

705-673-2933
email: office@nhlc.ca
website: nhlc.ca

face book: New Hope Lutheran Church
you tube: New Hope Lutheran Church Sudbury

Pastors:

Rev. Charles Nolting
phone: 705-920-3573 email: pcn@nhlc.ca

Rev. Johanna Porkola
phone: 705-688-6284 email: pjp@nhlc.ca

January 9, 2022

The Baptism of Our Lord

Coming Events

Jan 10 1:00 Worship & Music **Zoom**

Jan 12 6:30 Council Meeting **Zoom**

Jan 13 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**

In our prayers Ruth.

Due to the tightening of restrictions brought on by the increase COVID-19 risk, Bishop Pryse has recommended that congregations in the Eastern Synod immediately suspend all in-person worship services and gatherings.

New Hope Lutheran Church council agrees with this recommendation. Therefore, **we are suspending all in-person services and meetings until further notice.**

Opening Hymn – Come Walk with us the Journey is Long
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwR60CmLxko

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God; we pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalms 29

- ¹ Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- ² Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.
- ³ The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.
- ⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.
- ⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
- ⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox.
- ⁷ The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.
- ⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
- ⁹ The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever.
- ¹¹ The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

First Reading "Isaiah 43:1 – 7"

1 But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. **2** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. **3** For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. **4** Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. **5** Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your

children from the east and gather you from the west. **6** I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—**7** everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Second Reading "Acts 8:14 – 17"

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. **15** When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, **16** because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17** Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel "Luke 3:15 – 17, 21 – 22"

Glory to you, O Lord.

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

*The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting
"A Big Deal"

Upon first looking at our gospel text, it may appear that there is nothing very fascinating about it. Jesus is being baptized, one person amongst a large crowd of others. If you take out the part about the dove coming down from heaven, it really doesn't seem to be that big a deal, does it?

Is baptism a big deal? Or do we just make a big deal of it during normal times? It certainly seems to have some "big deal" qualities about it. Special clothes are purchased or

borrowed, a time and date is specially set aside, a large meal is often prepared, and family and friends are invited not only to the baptism itself, but also to someone's house afterwards. So it is a big deal for us when someone in our social circle gets baptized.

So, if a baptism is important to us, perhaps today is a good day to ask; why? Why is a baptism important to us? Maybe for us it is important because it marks our initial acceptance into God's kingdom. It also marks our being washed free from sin. It may be an important point in our life and spiritual journey because it is a beginning, which we can point to and say; *"that's where my faith started"*.

We might also ask today what made Jesus' baptism special? Wasn't Jesus already accepted by God as being pure and sinless? He didn't need to be washed free from sin. We aren't even told about any parents or relatives being present! Although not mentioned in today's gospel, it is recorded in Matthew that even John the Baptist didn't think Jesus baptism should have occurred, and a short argument ensued with Jesus over his baptism. John the Baptist couldn't see a need for it either! What was the big deal?

In order to discover why it was a big deal – in order to understand the significance of Jesus baptism (not to mention our own), we need to see baptism not as a single act, but as the beginning of a continuing action. It is not the end of anything, but rather the beginning.

For Jesus, it signified the beginning of his work in ministry. It was after this point that Jesus began in earnest, first taking time in the wilderness with God, then calling his disciples, preaching to crowds, and performing miracles to show just how loving and caring God is toward us. Before this point, Jesus was simply known as "the carpenter's son" and possibly a carpenter himself. Luke's account of the event focuses not on the why, but rather on what the event means for the future.

For us, our baptism should also be a focus on what the future holds, and not simply an event from the past where photos might have been taken and a family gathering took place. While it's important for us to remember our baptism, and remind ourselves that we are indeed baptized; we also need to think of our baptism as the beginning point to our Christian present and future. Something special happened, and hopefully that has continued to affect us throughout our lifetimes. It's not something that should be considered "one and done", and then we simply move on with nothing more than a nice memory.

You might think of your baptism like you think of a driver's license. I suspect that it was a rather special day for those who were first were able to drive all on their own (and legally) wherever you felt you wanted to go. Over the years you've probably kept up the practice of driving and continually update yourself when it comes time to renew your driver's license. Very few people let it lapse. In fact, as you get older, you may find yourself guarding it more and more. You really don't want to lose it. Getting your drivers license was a special event that has continued to be with you since that time, and you probably want to continue having it well into the future.

That is one way we might view our baptism. It was an important event, but for it to be more than just a moment in the past, it also doesn't hurt to renew it through remembrance and use of the covenant associated with it – a covenant found over and over in the Bible: *"I will be their God, and they will be my people"*. It's an event that should continue to be helpful and useful to us our entire lives, which makes it a big deal.

Another reason baptism is a big deal is seen with the emphasis that Luke puts on this lesson. He doesn't concern himself so much with John the Baptist as other gospel writers have done, but rather on the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. Luke wants to emphasize that it is the Holy Spirit who initiates Jesus mission and ministry, and not John.

In many ways, what this emphasis also points out to us is that while the action of baptism is important, what is more important is the acceptance of the Holy Spirit into our lives, and its presence continuing throughout our lives. This holy presence in our lives is what keeps us driving along on our spiritual journey. Its rules keep us out of the ditches and from hitting trees. You could even say that when we get hit by something else in life, the Holy Spirit provides the insurance so we don't take the brunt all by ourselves. We have backup.

So now what does your baptism mean to you? Is it a big deal for you, or was it only a big deal for you? Does it still affect your life, or was it only an event from the past? Would you consider your baptism to be only a photograph, or is it a continually moving motion picture that is still going today? How we view our own baptism, affects what we do today, and tomorrow. May God be with us to not only remind us of our baptism, but also to rejuvenate us in our baptism. Amen.

Hymn – We Are Baptise in Christ Jesus (451)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKQJJ6xz1K0

Prayers

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

By the Holy Spirit, you gather your church and send it out in mission to share the good news of Jesus. Inspire your faithful people to be fervent in prayer and service, that all people know they are precious in God's sight. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

Establish among the nations the blessings of peace. Raise up leaders who will protect vulnerable people in their care. Strengthen advocates who risk reputation or retaliations for the sake of mercy and justice. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

You protect us through the fires and troubled waters of this life. Assure us that we will not be cut off from you by illness or despair, anxiety or pain, confusion or weakness. Comfort all who are in need. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who are actively **seeking work and jobs**. Be with them in their search and give them comfort and hope for the future. Guide them in their decision making so that they might be led to discover a calling of your will, and that they may find fulfillment and joy in their labors. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

We are joined in baptism to Christ and to one another. Bless those who are newly baptized and those who are preparing for baptism. Help us to be faithful in fellowship, worship, evangelism, service, and justice-seeking. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

You created each of your saints for your glory. We give thanks for those you have called by name into your eternal embrace. Comfort us in grief and release us from fear. God, of grace, **hear our prayer**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn – Christ When for Us You Were Baptized (304)
<https://youtu.be/VkxEGSmGM-4>