

**Sunday 11 January 2026,
Baptism of Christ**

Collect:

Heavenly Father,
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognize him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

We open with a passage from 'Second Isaiah' (chapters 40-55), which provides us with the first of the prophet's Servant Songs. This reading highly influenced the Synoptic Gospels' accounts of the birth of Jesus. The Servant is obedient to God's will, and God confirms that he has been specifically chosen for a divine role of service, to be an extension of God. Which leads us to God's description of how this divinely appointed Servant, who is linked so closely to God, will behave – bringing justice to those in need. The result God intends to achieve is for all members of society to live in a just order and treat each other with respect. Psalm 29 also mentions the voice of God along with the opening of the heavens and water, all aspects we meet again in Jesus' baptism.

Matthew, like Luke, follows Mark's description of Jesus' baptism by John, but adds his own character, pressing on to try and explain why Jesus, as God's Son, would need baptising in the first place. John is offering a baptism for the repentance of sins. Jesus is sinless. Matthew states that Jesus' action to be baptised was intentional, his own conscious choice. He adds that John recognised that Jesus didn't need to repent, but Jesus reassures him that his behaviour is to be seen as showing obedience to God. This takes us back to the obedient Servant in Isaiah and so provides a hint of what form Jesus' ministry will take, opening the eyes of the blind, offering freedom to the imprisoned and bringing justice to all. In Acts, Peter follows in Jesus' footsteps by going outside of the pool of the Jewish righteous to bring the love of the Servant to gentiles and, through baptism, offering them a gateway to God's presence on an equal footing with the chosen people. Jesus' own baptism was the act that opened a new era, one where God's good news was offered to all people of all nations.

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-12; 1 Corinthians 1:19; John 1:29-42

Second Sunday of Epiphany