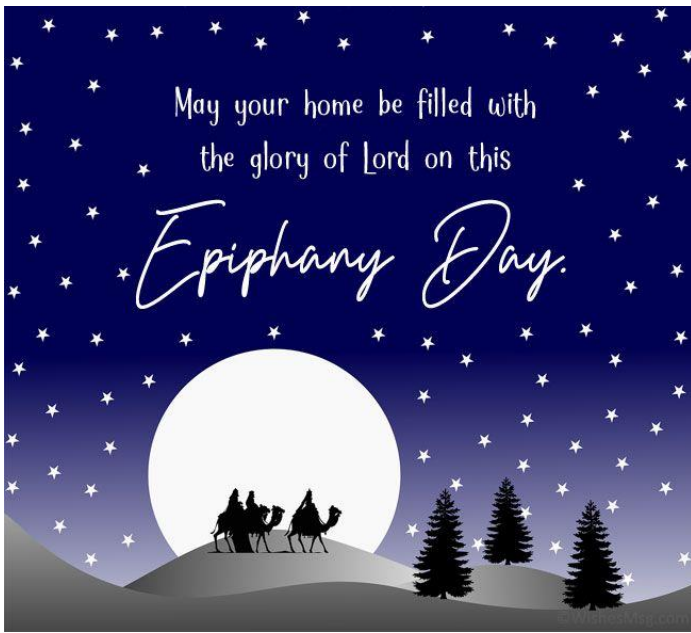


# “Epiphany and The Baptism of our Lord”

Devotional: 7- 13 January 2024

Read: **Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11**

Adapted from: [buildfaith.org](http://buildfaith.org)



Prayer: O Lord of all things bright and beautiful, may we begin this day in your name. Light of all light, our dayspring of hope, may we find warm

reflections of your countenance in the face of each brother, sister, stranger and friend. As we work for your world this day, may our hunger be for justice and our thirst for peace. Feed us with your presence. Strengthen our hearts and steady our hands for the business of loving your creation. As children of the light, may we walk in your radiance this day, who taught us to pray: 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*“And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.” - Matthew 3:26*

**Two Feast Days.** The feast of the Epiphany is January 6th. On the following Sunday we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of our Lord. The first Sunday after Epiphany always commemorates Christ’s baptism. Sometimes these two feast days sneak up on us, especially when there is only one additional Sunday during the 12 days of Christmas.

So, January 6th is Epiphany, and Sunday is Baptism of our Lord. One caveat though: some churches move the feast of the Epiphany to the nearest Sunday. For example, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States often makes this transfer. Either way, having Epiphany and Baptism of our Lord so close together can seem like a challenge for churches, especially when it comes to teaching. Here are some points to keep in mind:

## **Baptism and Epiphany go together.**

There is a good reason for the first Sunday after Epiphany to focus on Baptism. In fact, many churches will baptize children and adults on this Sunday, as it is one of the most appropriate days for baptisms. The key here is that Baptism is all about beginning. Jesus began his ministry with his own baptism, and today Christians see Baptism as beginning a committed journey with Jesus.



The season after Epiphany, as a whole, has much to do with beginnings: the beginning of Jesus' life, the start of his ministry, the calling of the disciples, and his first miracle. All of this helps us see Baptism as an important beginning, both for Jesus, and for us.

### **What about the magi?**

The Revised Common Lectionary is clear that the gospel reading for Sunday January 8th is the story of Jesus being baptized in the river Jordan. So what do we say or do about the magi, who had their gospel reading on the day of Epiphany itself?

Well, both stories carry forward the theme of Jesus' identity taking shape. The magi identify Jesus as a king... and because the magi are from foreign lands, they identify Jesus as a king for all people. In the baptism story, Jesus is also identified, but in this case his identity is the beloved son of God. As a teaching point, we may link the magi story with the baptism story by saying: "These Epiphany stories work together to show us who Jesus is... revealing the fullness of his identity. The magi show us one part of Jesus' identity, the baptism shows us another part."

### **The Trinity.**

One of my favorite teaching points for the Baptism of Christ involves the Trinity. The moment when Jesus is baptized is one of the only times in the Bible that the entire Trinity appears together. Consider the passage: the Son stands in the river, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven. This Epiphany moment reveals yet another aspect of Jesus' identity: his place as the second person of the Trinity.

### **Conclusion.**

As you observe these two feast days, we hope you rejoice in this important season of Epiphany. Jesus Christ has arrived, and there are many beginnings to celebrate.

## **YOU'RE NOT ALONE, LET US PRAY WITH YOU & FOR YOU**

### ***PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED***

- **Mrs. Nancy Whitson** has moved to ARIA of Brookfield. Ms. Nancy is doing well but does have some memory concerns and is still having multiple days of dialysis. Cards and notes of encouragement and support would be greatly appreciated. **Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 18740 West Bluemound Road, Room 103, Brookfield, WI 53045.**
- **Mr. Dennis Liepert** has been on an extensive journey of recovery. These last few months have included several hospitalizations. He is feeling weary and worn. We pray to our Living God - Great Physician, thank You for being with Bro. Dennis through all the ups and downs of his life and for the many blessings that You have given him for which we praise and thank You. Merciful God, you know the illness that Bro. Dennis has been struggling with for a long time now. Your precious love has held Bro. Dennis and kept him through this suffering. Now may our prayers of healing and recovery lead Bro. Dennis quickly to a place of restoration. We believe that he is fearfully and wonderfully made and You know every part of his body. You know exactly why he's have been ill for so long. Your children humbly come as intercessory for Bro. Dennis and Ms. Tammy to ask that You would work a full recovery in Bro. Dennis' body - whatever is causing this persistent problem. We believe and look forward to better times for them. Give Bro. Dennis strength and encouragement; he can endure anything with You by his side. We pray that You would, in Your mercy, give him back the health and strength he needs. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Cards and notes of love and support can be mailed to: **Mr. Dennis and Mrs. Tammy Liepert, 7361 Tower Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.**
- We extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Brett Barnett on the passing of his sister, **Ms. Linda**. Mr. Brett, we all are thinking of you as you remember Ms. Linda's beautiful life. She will live on in your heart. No matter what, you have our sympathy, love, and support. Card and notes of strength and encouragement can be mailed to: **Mr. Brett and Mrs. Mary Barnett, 932 Hillcrest Street, West Bend, WI 53095.**

- Healing and supporting prayers for **Mr. Robert (Bob) and Mrs. Joy Kuhaupt**. Both Mr. Bob and Ms. Joy are experiencing significant health challenges and ask for your caring and supportive prayers. Card and notes can be mailed to: **Mr. Robert and Mrs. Joy Kuhaupt, Sussex Mills Apts., W240 N6345 Maple Ave., #116, Sussex, WI 53089**.
- **Mrs. MaryLou Himes** is recovering from eye surgery. Lord, our Divine Healer and Protector, we approach Your throne of grace with faith, seeking Your restorative power following Ms. MaryLou's eye surgery. As we step into the recovery process, we remember Your promise to us in Isaiah 41:10, where You said: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." We beseech You, Lord, to touch the body and eyes of the Ms. MaryLou recovering from surgery with Your healing hand. Guide the process of recovery, restoring vision and optimal health. Lord, during this period, we ask that you grant us the gift of peace that calms our worries, and the patience to wait for Your perfect timing. Holding on to this faith, we offer up this prayer in the powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Cards and notes of encouragement can be mailed to: **Mrs. MaryLou Himes, 1800 Annie Street, #4, est Bend, WI 53090**.
- **Ms. Mary Rogge** had Rotator cuff surgery on 10 November 2020. She is completing physical therapy. Ms. Mary is appreciative for your cards and notes of encouragement and love. We give God thanks for Mr. Roger and the Family, who are supporting and caring for Ms. Mary. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge, 4436 Magna Vista Drive, Jackson, WI 53037**.
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** is home; thanks be to God. She is going through radiation and chemotherapy treatments. She is grateful for your continued prayers for healing, restoration, and strength. She is very appreciative for your love, prayers, and support. Ms. Sandy is also grateful for prayers for Mr. Pat and the Family as they care and support her through this season of treatments and healing. Cards and notes can be sent to: **Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095**.
- **Bro. Bob Krell** is rooted in our hearts and prayers as we shower him and the Family with our love, care, and support. It was a marvelous blessing to have Bro. Bob with us in worship last Sunday; "I'm doing well and slowly getting my strength back". We continue to pray for Bro. Bob's healing, restoration, and strength. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090**.
- **Mr. Michael Cahoon**, son of Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Mr. Mike has started a second round of chemotherapy. Good and gracious God, the odds were overwhelming; you gave me hope. The opponent was powerful; you gave me strength. I felt alone in the struggle; you gave me a team. I felt like a stranger; you sent cheering supporters. I felt confused; you showed me the game plan. I felt defeated; your words inspired me. I was felt hopeless; you picked me up and put me back into the fight. I feared time was running out; you gave me a new beginning. The cancer cannot win against Your love; against the team of scientists, physicians, and nurses; against the support of my family and friends. Great Physician, you are the guide, you are the motivator, you are the healer; you are Lord. Thank you for helping me to achieve the goal, for leading me to the win. May I now be a champion for others who feel what I felt, who need to know the Power behind every victory. Amen. Cards and notes filled with prayers encouragement can be sent to: **Mr. Michael Cahoon, C/O: Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, 1615 Beverly Lane, WI 53090**.
- **Mr. Tom Damp** has been comfortable and safe in his home for years. This has been possible primarily due to home healthcare services. However, with significant changes in coverage from health insurance, availability of in-home health care personnel, and other life circumstances, Mr. Tom is having to make unexpected decisions; stay in his home or transition to assisted living. He asks for your prayers and care as God reveals, God's plan for his new season. Caring Father, we thank you for the opportunity we have as a church family to pray and care for Mr. Tom Damp. We ask that you bless him with the resources to keep safe from harm. Please surround this whole process with your wisdom and mercy, Lord. We pray for Mr. Tom's health and care in this whole process. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen. Card and noted can be mailed to: **Mr. Tom Damp, 1707 Sunset Ridge Drive, West Bend WI 53095**.
- We give thanks and praise that **Mr. Ben Barth**, now husband of Ms. Heather Wolf, granddaughter of Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge. Mr. Ben has been released from the hospital after the recipient of a new heart and new lungs-to the glory of God. Almighty God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, restored the sick to wholeness of mind and body, bless Mr. Ben on receiving his donated organs. Restore him with the gift of health, that he may continue to serve you

with hope and thanksgiving. We pray, too, for the donor and family, whose courage and compassion has enabled the possibility of this transplant. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Please overwhelm Mr. Ben with cards and notes for continued healing, strength, and restoration. *Also, extend congratulations on their marriage.* Correspondence can be mailed to: **Mr. Ben and Mrs. Heather Barth, 223 South 11<sup>th</sup> Ave., West Bend, WI 53095.**

- We remain in prayer and support for **Mrs. Ann Cording**. Great Physician, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for God's miraculous healing today. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. We're not promised a painless life on this earth, but You do want us to live a happy one. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Sickness and injury can't stop God-placed dreams. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: **Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: **Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: [alankempf33@gmail.com](mailto:alankempf33@gmail.com); or cards and notes to **Mr. Allan and Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073**; phone number: 920.838.1830.

*We continue to celebrate our 175<sup>th</sup> year of service, commitment and Methodism in West Bend, Wisconsin.*

***“Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Anticipating Our Future”***

Prayer: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A blessed and amazing New Year to each of you!

***Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin***

***~THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!~***

No one likes to talk about money. It seems like this is especially true in the church. Even though Christians know and are expected to give to the church, it is never easy to bring up the subject of giving. It certainly isn't easy to bring it up when we ask you to increase your giving.

Your giving will enable us to not only live into our mission but will allow us to vision the possibilities of ministries that will be birthed in 2024. From our partnership with Green Tree Elementary, reconnecting with our schools in India, program to connect with the community (community meals, budget education, invitation to come to church), Break Through Prayer ministry, accessible restrooms, bible and book studies, outreach and welcoming training, and maintenance needs that are outside the scope of the budget.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

***We are grateful for what you have already done.***

*O God, our heavenly Father, who so loved the world that you gave your only Son to die upon the cross: Pour your love into our hearts, we humbly beseech you; that we loving you above all things, may give up ourselves, our time, our money, our talents, to your service; for the sake of him who loved us and gave himself for us, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.*

