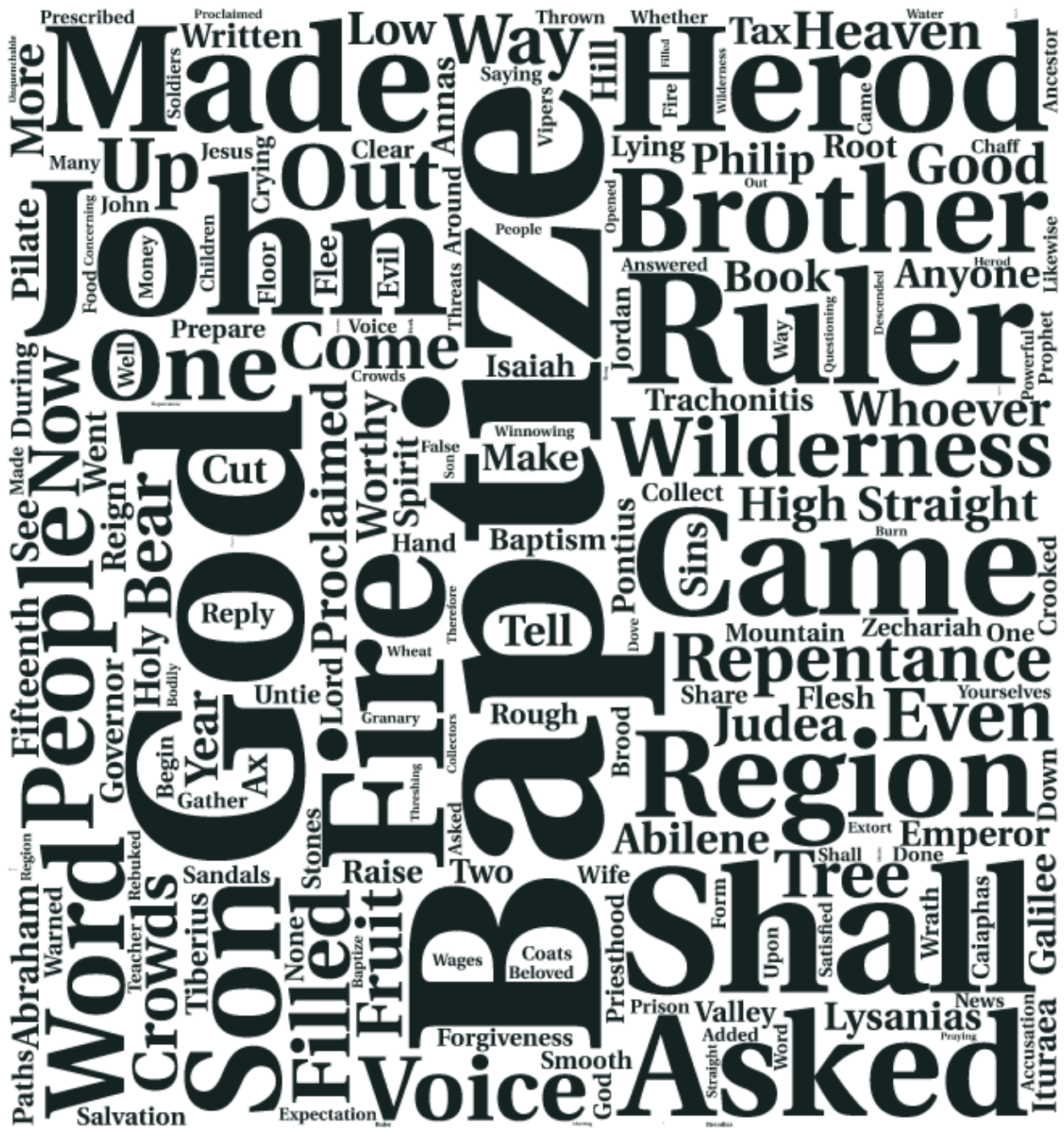


**Hello and welcome to First Lutheran Church!
We are so glad you have chosen to join us today as we worship**



**Sunday, January 10, 2021
Baptism of Our Lord Sunday
www.firstlutheranrw.com**

Introduction to the day

John the Baptist prepared those in the wilderness for Jesus' coming. Once baptized, people would need to decide... were they ready for change or resistant to it? At the time of Jesus' baptism, some people opened their hearts; others closed them.

Gathering
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

God of light,

You light a fire within us and ask us to shine, but we are quick to hide and make excuses. We shrink from challenges, avoid responsibility, and deny the goodness of your creation. We seek hollow praise and then don't believe it. Forgive us for hiding our God-given light and remaining self-absorbed.

Children of God, never fear, for you have always lived in the mercy of your creator. Hear the words of absolution and believe them: you are forgiven, you are made whole, you are restored to God. Hallelujah!

Amen

SONG (249) *On Jordan's Banks the Baptist Cry* VS 1-2

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!

- 2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of truth,

Through John you challenged your people to repent. Move us also to put aside the things that get in the way of truly serving you, for the sake of Jesus our savior. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

LESSON Luke 3:1-22

3In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, 2during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; 6and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” 7John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” 10And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” 12Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” 13He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” 14Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” 15As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” 18So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. 19But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20added to them all by shutting up John in prison. 21Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

MESSAGE

We just celebrated the coming of the new year and the ending, praise the Lord, of the last year. We won't even mention it's name.

When you hear new year what do you think of? Maybe you think of a party. Maybe you think of the ball dropping. Or maybe you think about new years resolutions.

I was listening to this podcast about John the Baptist and his call for the people to repent. "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance."

One of the commentators on the podcast said, it reminded her of the Jewish, Day of Atonement. A day when Jews think about all of the mistakes they have made in the year and how they might have hurt someone else and ask for forgiveness, make amends, they seek atonement — thus the name day of Atonement.

Then in the podcast She then said that we have a similar secular practice every year called new year's resolution. I never thought of new year's resolutions that way but think about it. What does a new year's resolution involve? First you think about areas in your life that aren't what you think they should be. My #1 answer is usually that I am over weight. So I resolve to do what it takes to lose weight.

So what is the problem with new year's resolutions? We break them. Usually before the month is up. You hear lots of people saying that we shouldn't make resolutions because we usually fail. But shouldn't we try to be healthier? Break bad habits, be better people? Shouldn't we try to be the people that God created us to be? Even if we might fail?

John the Baptist called on people to repent to change their ways so that they would be in line with being people of God. He talked about sharing what we have with those who are in need. He talked about treating people fairly. He talked about acting justly without violence.

These are good resolutions as well. As christians we should be sharing with those in need. We should be honest and do something about injustice.

This week we have seen the consequences of a lack of honesty and justice. When we don't tell the truth there are consequences especially if we lie over and over again and we get other people to believe in that lie. Or if we know something is a lie but we treat it as truth out of our loyalty to that person or for our own self benefit. As we have seen in our own country the results can be disastrous. People can get hurt and die and our institutions can suffer.

God doesn't demand things like sharing, honesty, fairness and justice for no reason. The world needs these things to function well. But like new year's resolutions we fail. But does that mean we give up. It doesn't mean we only try to do the things we don't think we will fail at. No!

As people of God, as Christ's church or as a country we should strive to be all that we were created to be. Whether it be sharing, being truthful, treating people fairly, working for justice or taking care of our bodies. That's what people of God do that's how we are to live.

Yet at the end of all that John says we should do, all that we should do but often fail at, we find Jesus. We go through this whole reading and at the end almost as an afterthought there is Jesus. We hear about all the government leaders at the time. We hear all about John the Baptist's message. That takes up 20 of the 22 verses of our reading before we hear oh yeah Jesus was baptized. We hear from heaven God loves him and is well pleased with him.

That's only two verses but maybe that's because those 2 verses are all we need.

Look back at Luke quoting the prophet Isaiah.

*"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

Isaiah says prepare the way of the Lord make his paths straight.

Doesn't that sound like John's call to repent which is what we are to do?

Then in vs. 5&6 Isaiah says the valley shall be filled mountains made low, crooked made straight, rough smooth all flesh see the salvation of the Lord.

That sounds like what God will do.

We are people of God we are about living as Christ calls us to live. As John says we share, we live honestly, we stand up for Justice and yes our body is the temple of the Lord so we take care of it trying to live healthy in body mind and spirit. We love God and neighbor. It's a tall order and there will be times we willLet's say not succeed. But you know what, Jesus is here.

Our country is facing very challenging times and this weeks events don't make it easier. But as hard as it is. Even though we have challenges our country has never seen before, Jesus is here. The beloved of the Father is here. The one who before he even did anything heaven said, "With you I am well pleased". He is here with us. It will not be easy but I say, we are in good hands.

Amen.

SONG (310) *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise Vs 1*

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise;
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar,
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Open our hearts to your message of transformation. Give us courage to take the plunge into a life of service, with all its surprises and challenges. God of power, hear our prayer.

Lead our country into love, justice and truth. Help our leaders to be models of decency and integrity. Help us to be the country you want us to be for the sake of the world. God of power, hear our prayer.

Show us how to serve you as citizens, in our jobs, responsibilities and leisure so that our daily lives reflect the restored relationship which we have with you. God of power, hear our prayer.

Your creative might could raise children from stones. Teach us to regard all that you have made with awe, and likewise to care for it with diligence and love. God of power, hear our prayer.

Not every disease or ailment is visible, nor is sickness always a physical experience. Heal those things which plague our minds and spirits as well as our bodies, and restore us to wholeness in you. Be with those whose names we bring before you today Kaitlynn, Jenny, Bob, Horst, Crystal, Doris, Jim, Cheryl, Michel family, Edla, Leah, Laura, Grosso family, Richard, John, Brooklyn, Gerry, Louise, Joan, Bill, Brooke, Harold, Jeff, Art, Kris, Gerald, Beverly, Kathy, Debra, Tammy, Virginia, Jason, Jeremy and Bernice. God of power, hear our prayer.

We lift up all of your congregations especially: St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Harmony; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Glenville; Faith Lutheran Church, Dodge Center; Lunder Lutheran Church, Albert Lea; Mazoezi Mwankoko Lutheran Church, Tanzania; Solo Por Fe Lutheran Church, Colombia. God of power, hear our prayer.

With all your saints we praise you, in this life and the next, remembering the amazing things you have done for us. God of power, hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers and shed light on our path as we seek to walk in your ways and bring glory to you through your son Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

MEAL

You have baptized us with fire so that our sins could be eradicated by the strength of your mercy. Now bring us with gladness and gratitude around

your table, that we might be fed for our journeys and renewed for whatever challenges lie ahead.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

The Body and Blood of Jesus Is Given and Shed for Us

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Christ Jesus,
at this table we have feasted on your very life
and are strengthened for our journey.
Send us forth from this banquet
nourished in body and in spirit
to proclaim your good news
and serve others in your name.
Amen.

BLESSING

God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter + keep you in peace.
Amen.

SONG (249) On Jordan's Banks the Baptist Cry Vs. 4.5

4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more;
oh, let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.

5 All praise to you, eternal Son,
whose advent has our freedom won,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

SENDING MUSIC