

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025

The Baptism of our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Psalm 29

The Rev'd Margaret Peel-Shakespeare

I speak to you in the name of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, the day that Jesus was baptised. In the gospel accounts this baptism marks the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry.

If we remember the Christmas story from a few weeks ago we began there in Luke, chapters 1 and 2. Today we hear of the Baptism of Jesus in Luke 3. In only three chapters we have gone from hearing about the birth of Jesus to his adulthood and baptism around the age of 30 years old. The baptism of Jesus is important to Luke so he gets there quickly.

Here at the Cathedral, we have a baptism this morning. We will welcome Kiana into the family of Christ as she is both baptised and confirmed today!

Our order of service prepares us for this service; it reads, "We pray that those who are baptised and confirmed will be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry and service to which God shall call them."

Our baptism into the life of Christ, into the community of faith, is intended to be the beginning of our life in Christ. Our lives begin to take shape in a way that only God could bring about. We are named and "marked as Christ's own for ever" and our lives are transformed.

In our Gospel from Luke, we have a slightly different take on the baptismal story; Jesus is baptised with others and not just by himself. It is after Jesus is baptised that he prays. Then immediately we read, "the heaven was opened, and 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'" (Luke 3:21)

It is the moment of prayer (by Jesus) that sets this apart from the other gospel accounts. In fact, in Luke we often hear that Jesus prays during/ before important moments including his temptation in the wilderness and even death on the cross.

The invitation of the Holy Spirit in prayer is what connects us today to the moment of Jesus' baptism! The Holy Spirit is how we continue to connect with God beyond this day. That means as we hear in Luke's gospel that prayer connects Jesus to God, so we are connected through prayer to our own baptism and our baptismal covenant.

In our lesson from the Book of Acts, chapter 8, we hear of Peter and John who are baptising others, and they too are praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon them just as Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

So how does prayer come into your daily life? It is the prayers we pray today that connect us to each other, to the church past, present and future. Today we pray for Kiana and all those who support her here today. I pray that Kiana may know she is upheld by this community through the Holy Spirit on this day and going forward.

Let us remember our baptism and all that we promised, or was promised on our behalf, to live in a way that shows we are marked as Christ's own. That we live in the light of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to reveal God's love in the world.

Amen.