

The Baptism of Jesus

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

- [0 : 0 0] I know a place where we can go to lay the troubles down, eatin' your soul.
I know a place where mercy flows, take the stains, make you whiter than snow. Like a tide, it is rising up deep inside a current that moves and makes you come alive.
In the living water that brings a dead life. We're going down to the river, down to the river, down to the river to pray.
Let's get washed by the water, washed by the water and rise up in amazing grace. Let's go down, down, down to the river.
You will be changed. Let's go down, down, down to the river. Never the same.
- [1 : 0 6] I've seen it move in my own life. Took me from dusty roads into paradise. All of my dirt, all of my shame.
Drowned in the streams that have made me born again. Like a tide, it is rising up deep inside a current that moves and makes you come alive.
Giving water that brings a dead life. We're going down to the river, down to the river, down to the river to pray.
Let's get washed by the water, washed by the water and rise up in amazing grace. Let's go down, down, down to the river.
You will be changed. Let's go down, down, down to the river. Never the same.
- [2 : 0 9] Let's go down, down, down, down. Let's go down. Let's go down.
We're going down, down, down to the river. Down to the river to pray. Let's get washed by the water, washed by the water and rise up in amazing grace.
Let's go down, down, down to the river. You will be changed. Let's go down, down, down, down to the river.
Oh, down. Gotta go, gotta go, gotta go down in amazing grace. Down, down, down to the river.
Gotta go, gotta go, gotta go down in amazing grace. Thank you.
- [3 : 5 0] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
This is yet another one of those seasons where many people find themselves at home waiting, waiting and watching and test results and families who are struggling with this virus that won't give up.
And so we come here both in person and online to celebrate a God who will even more so never give up, a God who is God of all the world.
- [5 : 4 9] And so I'd like to share just a couple of announcements before we officially begin our worship service. You'll notice in the bulletin that there are announcements about two special one church and one charge conference.

I want to say a word about the one that's this Tuesday, which is at Niagara Falls First United Methodist Church. Because people might be wondering, well, what is that about?

We are officially and legally known as the Joshua Connection. It was something that happened several years ago. And legally, that is our overarching title.

Since Pastor Bill Edmister was appointed to Niagara Falls First, and they have their own pastor and really lead much of their own ministry with some of our staff serving.

Mary serves as their treasurer, and we do some administrative support for them. But what we would like to do is have it be Pendleton Center United Methodist Church and Niagara Falls First United Methodist Church.

[6 : 57] Our relationship will be collaborative, and we will continue to do the things that we're doing. We simply will legally have separate names, and that takes a process. And Tuesday's church conference is one of those.

And then our own charge conference comes the next week on the 17th. So those are there for your announcements. We are expected to announce them verbally and in writing for so much time before they actually take place.

I also want to share with you, you might notice the candles over here. And after you receive communion or at some point during the service, if you'd like to light a candle in prayer and love for someone, please feel free to do that.

We are also, in a way, remembering our baptism today. And if any time also you want to come up behind the communion table and just touch the water, that's a little more awkward maybe, but you are more than welcome to do that.

Martin Luther, who was one of the founders of the Protestant faith.

[8 : 19] Whenever he was in trouble or tormented or tempted or afraid, and he was often afraid, he would say these words.

Baptizatus sum. I am baptized. Over and over, he'd remind his troubled heart in this troubled world that he knew who he was, a beloved child of God, whose life was forever entwined with Christ.

And he said it blew all the demons away. Seminary students who came to study to become pastors often didn't even know why they were baptized.

Birthdays they knew, anniversaries, but not the day of voice from heaven called them beloved. And their lives were forever joined to Christ, whether as infants, teenagers, or adults.

And I asked them when I was teaching seminary, whenever it got rough, and they always do, call on the grace of God.

[9 : 33] Remember who they are in Christ, fully known and loved. And I wanted them to remind themselves, remind us, us to remind ourselves, I am baptized, child of God, beloved in his sight.

In the beginning, water cradled us in the womb, holding us in suspension until we burst forth in the waters of birth.

In the desert, a small drop of water causes life to bloom. A tiny drop of water can quench our burning thirst for justice.

God's love flows through the water. In the roots of our being, water provides sustenance. Without water, our lives would shrivel and wither.

God's love flows through the water. In the times when we feel sullied and broken, we long to be reawakened by soaking and forgiving, transforming love.

[10 : 51] God's love flows through the water. All water is holy. A sign that we have passed through troubles. That we have been refreshed by a gift of life, sustained by a love poured over us.

God's love flows through the water. In the aftermath of water. Flowing. Pouring. Falling. Dropping.

Gushing. Spilling. Surging. Tumbling. Showering. Is the rainbow sign of God's continuing love at work within us and through us.

God's love flows through the water. God's love flows through the water. God's love ties.

Good morning, everyone, and good morning to everyone online. I have a scripture for you that I'd like to share.

[12 : 18] There's a lot of talk about water, and there's a passage where Jesus speaks about the Holy Spirit being living water. It's in John 7, verses 37 to 39.

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow within them.

And by this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

And he's speaking of the Holy Spirit that dwells within all of us as believers, and as the Spirit works in us to bring about godliness, we're called to yield to him.

So our song today is called Holy Spirit, and according to the authors, it's about turning our hearts and our affection and our love toward God as an invitation to an already present God to work in us more fully.

[13 : 27] So I invite you to stand as we sing Holy Spirit. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. There's nothing worth more That will ever come close No thing can compare You're our living hope Your presence, Lord I have tasted and seen Of the sweetest of loves Where my heart becomes free

And my shame is undone Your presence, Lord Holy Spirit, you are welcome here Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for To be overcome by your presence, Lord Your presence, Lord There's nothing worth more

There's nothing worth more That will ever come close No thing can compare You're our living hope Your presence, Lord Your presence, Lord I have tasted and seen Of the sweetest of loves Where my heart becomes free And my shame is undone In your presence, Lord Your presence, Lord Holy Spirit, you are welcome here

Your presence, Lord Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere Your glory, Lord Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for To be overcome by your presence, Lord To be overcome by your presence, Lord Your presence, Lord Your presence, Lord Let us experience the glory of your goodness Let us become more aware of your presence Let us experience the glory of your goodness Let us become more aware of your presence

Let us experience the glory of your goodness Let us become more aware of your presence Let us experience the glory of your goodness, Lord Let us become more aware of your goodness, Lord Let us become more aware of your goodness, Lord Let us become more aware of your goodness, Lord Holy Spirit, you are welcome here Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for To be overcome by your presence, Lord

[18 : 44] You may be seated Good morning The offerings that you make each week Empower ministry within our congregation And in response to the needs of our community We support the work of ministries of our local church To reach out to those who need to hear of God's love and redemption And need our loving care and support So today our offerings support community missions I invite you once again to give generously as we worship God Through the sharing of our gifts, tithes, and offerings And we have a video for you today

Community missions began in 1923 And since that time we've provided services for the people that are most in need throughout western New York We have everything from a soup kitchen to a food pantry We have a clothes closet and we have emergency housing Those are just a few things that we do on a daily basis here In all we have 19 different programs that serve Niagara County across 14 different locations And if there's one thing that we've learned over the past 92 years Is that we absolutely cannot do it alone So we thank you for your support that you've given us in the past

And thank you for the support you're giving us now And look forward to having a partnership with Pendleton United Methodist Church far into the future I'm so I'm so we're going to try again He has key Autobahn together I want to treatment, but if I'm happy to be asystem, I want to try to continue editing Maybe a systemic fridge is made that■■■■i, a lot of our disease I want to pass it seriously If you've already testified against me God loves a lullaby And a mother's tears in the dead of night

Better than a hallelujah sometimes God loves a trumpet's cry The soldiers plead not to let him die Better than a hallelujah sometimes We pour out our miseries God just hears a melody Beautiful the mess we are The honest cries of breaking hearts Are better than a hallelujah A woman holding on for life

A dying man giving up the fight Are better than a hallelujah sometimes Tears of shame for what's been done The silence when the words won't come Are better than a hallelujah sometimes We pour out our miseries We pour out our miseries God just hears a melody Beautiful the mess we are The honest cries of breaking hearts A song of the Lord A song of the Lord Better than a hallelujah Better than a hallelujah Better than a church bell ringing Better than a choir singing out Singing out

[23 : 54] Singing out Singing out Singing out Singing out Singing out Singing out Singing out We pour out our miseries God just hears a melody Singing out Beautiful the mess we are Beautiful the mess we are The honest cries of breaking hearts Better than a hallelujah Better than a hallelujah Better than a hallelujah

Better than a hallelujah Better than a hallelujah Better than a hallelujah fucked up Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. You may be seated.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[26 : 45] Amen. Good morning, church. We come now to our time of praying together, and as we open our hearts, we know there are several things that are before us.

We know there are several things that cause us to know joy in which we must give praise to God, several things that weigh us down and challenge us as we continue to move forward. Let's open our hearts and pour out all those things at our Lord's feet and understand how God is moving, understand how God is blessing, understand how God is showing us God's will and God's way.

Let's pray together. Amen. Almighty and eternal God, the one who calls us by name, the one who sees each of us in the midst of all this great and diverse creation, the one who knows each heart, knows each thought, knows each step, knows each moment.

As we walk the path before us, you are with us. We are so happy to have you by our side. We are so happy to have you waiting for us when we arrive.

So happy to have you watching us as we move from behind. Lord God, you surround us with your very love and presence, and we come today grateful that you are with us in all ways.

[28 : 07] As we come today, we are mindful of that great time in our lives, a time when we opened our hearts and said yes to you, and you moved among us in a special way.

Lord, as we think of what it means to know baptism, we are grateful for the ways in which your spirit moves in us, around us, and through us, for the ways in which we can leave behind parts of our lives and step into a great and glorious new time.

So, Lord, we give you thanks. Thanks for this amazing gift. Thanks for the modeling of it by our Lord and Savior, Jesus, to show us what is possible, to show us the way.

And, Lord God, as we come today, we are mindful of those who may be on their way to that moment, maybe those who don't know it or even remember it. But, God, let us continue to speak your truth.

Let us continue to offer our hand. Let us continue to offer our love, that they too may come to know you in this way. And, Lord God, in this moment, when there is so much happening in our world and so much happening in our individual lives, we know there are those who need to know your healing touch today.

[29 : 27] There are those whose bodies are not at their best, those who are struggling in this pandemic and those who are struggling with other health concerns. Lord God, we know that you know all things, and yet we come on their behalf, praying to see you move in ways that will amaze and bring them back to wholeness.

We pray for those whose hearts are broken in grief today, for those who are missing loved ones. We are praying for your spirit to help them as they take their next steps, that they continue to move into their next days and into their next chapters with you holding them and leading them along the way.

And for those who know needs, for those who have questions, for those who need guidance and wisdom, as well as those who need basics like food and shelter, Lord God, we, your people, cry out to say, we are here to be used by you.

We cry out in love for them. So, Lord, put us to doing, put us to whatever you would have us be. Help us to show them by real ways that there is indeed a loving God present with them at all times.

And, Lord God, in these larger problems in our world, ones that are far too big for two individual hands, show us the ways in which you would have us speak truth and be loved to this world.

[30 : 52] Help us to create justice. Help us to help people know truth. Help us as we deal with things that hold some of your children in places where there might not be safety, where there might be disease, where there might be violence and oppression.

Lord God, let us indeed be your people at this time. Let us live the promises we have made to you on that great day. That our baptism might be real.

That our baptism would be what you hope it would be in our lives. And, Lord, in all things, we follow the example of the one who has done all things, who has opened every door, who has answered every question.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Hello, church. Today's reading is from the Gospel according to Luke, chapters 3, verses 15 through 17, and 21 to 22.

[32 : 06] 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. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Baptism is a naming.

That's ultimately baptism is naming someone a child of God. And it's... Who's the child of God? Well, I think we're all children of God, and I think baptism acknowledges that.

[33 : 29] And you don't become a child of God when you cross off a list of things to do, or even when you are baptized. Being baptized is simply a naming, an acknowledgement of someone's existing belovedness.

I mean, when Jesus was baptized, he didn't only begin to be beloved by God when he was baptized. It was an acknowledgement of his eternal belovedness.

He was God, but not everybody else. Right. Yes, but I think it's true for everyone else. Not everybody's creating God's image. I like that you're playing devil's advocate here.

But, well, really, I think baptism is an acknowledgement of people's belovedness. And when we treat it as that, it's... In the Orthodox tradition, it's part of the baptismal service, is a renunciation of Satan and his demons and of evil.

And the way I kind of look at that and apply that is, in baptism, baptism is a renunciation of all those competing voices that try and tell you who you are. The world says, gives you names like screw up, faker, fat, slut, addict.

[34 : 45] In baptism, you're named beloved. And then the world, like demons, beckon with rich, powerful, pretty, right. But in baptism, you're told you're beloved, and that's enough.

I think everyone wants to be told sort of who they are. And in baptism, we're told you are a beloved child of God, and we're told to renounce anything that says otherwise.

And it's a really, it's a defiant thing to do. I look at baptism as defiance, because the world will always try to name us. And in baptism, we say, no, my name is beloved.

So whether that happens when you were an infant, and you are remembering your baptism as God naming you beloved, or whether it happens as an adult. I think when we look at our baptisms, and we think about the significance of our baptisms, it's that we are named by God, and that that's enough.

Good news. It is good news. I'm not sure what it means when I've broken two masks already this morning.

[36 : 11] The fire of baptism breaking through the boundaries that we try to put on it. Why do people get baptized?

Why do people have their children baptized? Why do we have this fountain and this baptismal pool in our church?

Why? Historically, even back way before Jesus showed up, there were rituals of bathing in the Jewish tradition, that if you were going to come before God, that you would cleanse yourself in a sort of a ritual way before you would approach the throne of God, let's say, for us to offer a sacrifice, or to do something.

You would go to a special place and wash yourself, and then you would go. People have often thought they needed to be clean in order to approach God.

Jesus came to throw that out. Not that we shouldn't bathe, if you remember when the disciples, Jesus was washing their feet, and then it came to Peter, and he was like, no, if you're going to wash my feet, wash all of me.

[37 : 40] And Jesus was like, look, I know you've had a bath recently. I don't need to wash all of you. The reality is that water has been symbolic through all of our history, and we think about even in creation, and the earth was covered with water.

And then the earth began to rise out of it and form the earth that we now know, the solid ground on which we stand. Water was how Moses arrived in his destination.

Water was how Moses took the people towards the promised land through the Red Sea. Water was where Jesus found some of the disciples, fishermen, and told them, put down your nets, we're going to be fisher of people.

Jesus used water to wash the disciples' feet. The man who was blind and he put mud on his eyes and then told him, go down into the water to rinse it so that you may see the miracle.

And the miracle was that he could see. Water is a symbolic part of our faith and our faith tradition.

[39 : 14] Baptism has had a different kind of a journey through history, church history. Because when Jesus was baptized, now, this is the beginning of his earthly ministry.

So, we could look at this in a lot of different ways. We could look at this as Jesus' ordination. We could look at this as when he goes down into the water with the other people, not by himself, not up here in front of an audience, when he went for baptism with the people and he prayed.

He heard those words from heaven, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. And as you heard Rachel Held Evans say, it wasn't as though it was just on that day that God was pleased with his son, Jesus.

My husband, when each of our children were born and it just so happened that our first was a boy and he put his hand on our son's head, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

A little different than Jesus. We might think, and I even said last night at the service, did Jesus didn't need to be baptized.

[40 : 43] Jesus didn't need as a savior to be baptized. He didn't need this cleansing water in order to be called the child of God.

He was the child of God. And yet, as divine and human, might he not have needed to hear as he began his earthly ministry which would be troubled and chaotic and joyful and healing and exhausting, might he not have needed to hear you are my beloved son.

With you I delight and I find great joy and happiness, you are my beloved. Who doesn't need to hear that?

Maybe we have heard that in our personal lives. Maybe someone has said some version of that about us to you, to me.

Maybe they did, maybe they didn't. Maybe we don't know or don't remember. But there's an awful lot of people who in their life live as those who do not know that they are beloved.

[42 : 05] We see and we watch in our world how people seek to find their self-worth in so many different ways. And we live in a world that crushes people, that tells them you're not a good enough Christian.

You're not a good enough church member. You're not a good enough citizen. You're not a good enough provider. You're not a good enough mother, father, you name it. TV will tell you if you're ever curious.

If we were to receive our messages of our own belovedness from the world, from what we see, we think, do we think, might we think, that that's not the message of our faith?

that in a world of COVID and injustice and violence and people who find themselves counting days of isolation and quarantine and find themselves once again feeling so anxious even to go out in public, do we want that to define us?

I say no. Do we want that to protect us? Yes, we live in a time when people need to do what's right for them, for their neighbors, but does this era of pandemic, does it get the privilege of telling us you're all alone?

[43 : 50] You have to stay all alone? You don't matter? You're not important? I say no.

I say like Rachel Held Evans, let's be defiant. Let's be defiant in terms of saying to ourselves and looking in the mirror and saying, I am baptized.

I am a beloved child of the most high God. God. And nothing will define or make me be anything else.

Not someone's opinion, not a disagreement, not a dispute, not an argument about who should and who shouldn't. Because when we give those kinds of things permission to tell us that's what we're worth, then we begin buying into it.

Well, well, I did da-da-da-da and I did this and I, have you heard my history? And da-da-da-da and I'm done. I've accomplished. I'm a good person. People defend.

[45 : 08] It's fight or flight. And what God came to show us and what we hear in this story of baptism is that we are given the name Beloved.

There is a place in the baptismal service where often parents are sort of curious, what name is given this child? And often, we're standing here and this child might be a few months old.

This child might be a few years old. Kind of silly to say what name is given this child. This child was named well before this day.

We ask the parents to say the name because the first and middle names of this child being brought for baptism are now this child.

this beloved child. This is a beloved child of God regardless of what their name but when we say their name out loud we are proclaiming to God and to everyone this child.

[46 : 25] We give into your keeping. there's been a fight maybe you don't know throughout the generations for hundreds and hundreds of years about whether babies should be baptized or only should be baptized when they're old enough to say I believe on their own.

We do historically infant baptism and then at confirmation we ask them to proclaim their belief. I know people who were baptized as infants who have their children dedicated which is different.

It's some of the same words but no water and it's just offering the child into God's care and keeping and it's a wonderful thing to do. It's just different.

But people said that since the Bible says that we must say our belief in order to enter the kingdom of God people began to say no way we're not baptizing babies they don't qualify but on the other hand there were the people who were afraid I'm telling you afraid that if their baby should die before they were baptized they would go to purgatory and purgatory was not where you wanted your baby to go uncleansed unclaimed that history of fear has permeated all traditions but there is no main church the catholic church does not preach that teach that or offer that as a reason for you to have your baby baptized having your baby baptized is the giving into the care and the calling of that child's name as publicly out loud this beloved child of God and as you heard in the video they were beloved before that they were beloved before they were baptized they were beloved before they were born and so the argument goes on still today is your baptism good enough is my baptism good enough and I say whoa who gave humans the ability to decide whose baptism is good enough and whose isn't if we're baptized in the name of the father the son and the holy spirit then we are baptized and if we remember that baptism someday by going under the water and all the way under the water we're remembering our baptism as an adult and celebrating it

Carol can I share something you said many if not most of you know that Chet Dombrowski died this past week and Carol shared about Chet wanting to know that he had given enough of himself to her that he had given enough of his love to her to last beyond his time here on this earth friends he did first of all gave her all the love he gave her a lifetime of love and she would love a lifetime more but God gives us this love God gives us this love so that so that we can look in the mirror look at our friends look at our losses look at our tragedies our mistakes our celebrations and all of it and pour over the water of baptism on all of it

[50 : 51] I wish the whole earth could just be dunked wouldn't that be an amazing thing to see the whole world the earth and all of it baptized and recreated in God's will down with COVID and all the things and the world changing and the earth falling apart away with all of it oh I wish and I pray and yet God said I give you choices I give you the ability to choose and so on this Sunday which is often thought of as the first Sunday even though it's not and as we remember our baptism as we remember Jesus baptism may we as we soon will line up to receive communion be like

Jesus who lined up and went into the water and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit may we hear the voice of God saying take this my body broken for you my blood shed for you and may you hold it as you are named and called beloved of God and you can change your name you can go to court and change your name to something new and something different but you cannot change that you can't shake it off wash it off throw it off you can't put it in the trash because it will never ever ever go away you you are beloved you are called beloved you will be beloved always and ever more so let that light shine in you as we go among the people let our eyes above our masks show compassion and kindness and generosity let our eyes that show above our mask demonstrate to the world we will not give up we will not surrender into bitterness and hate and negativity no we are called beloved oh Lord may it be so amen amen

Thank you.

As we consider all of the ways in which we are reminded that we are loved by God, all the ways in which we know we are loved by God, let us prepare to partake in one of the great gifts of God that reminds us of that love, which is the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth.

[54 : 32] You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day when justice would roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, when nation would not lift up sword against nation, and neither would they study war anymore.

And so with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who were oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

[55 : 58] He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

At his ascension, you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand. On the night in which Jesus gave himself for us, he took bread, he gave thanks to you, he broke the bread, and he gave it to his disciples, and said, Take and eat.

This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, he took the cup, and gave thanks to you, and he gave it to his disciples, and he said, Drink from this, all of you.

This is my blood, sign of the new covenant, which is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Every time that you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

[57 : 31] Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread. And cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours. Almighty God, now and forever.

And now let us pray together the prayer that Jesus 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[58 : 41] For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Let us pray. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[60 : 43] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. A gentle reminder by simply partaking in what God has freely given to you. So we ask you to come and experience God's love through this way.

We use the center aisles, come down to the front, receive our elements, and then exit by the side. If you would prefer to receive prepackaged elements, they are available for you. Ask one of the servers, they will give them to you.

[61 : 47] Communion is a gift to you, so we ask that you receive it, not simply take it. There's a gluten-free station here on this side of the sanctuary. Please come as the Spirit moves. Amen.

Amen. glove and Tamara's hand is the room of the gro ■■■ you, so we ask that you, in■■■.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. It says in Ephesians, when you believe, you are marked in him with a seal.

[65 : 27] And it's my understanding that in those days that meant a type of ownership or protection. And the author of our next hymn knew that.

Fanny Crosby, when she was about six weeks old, due to a doctor's failed remedy, became blind. And she did not surrender into resentment. She became a prolific hymn writer, a teacher of the blind.

She worked with the poor, and she was in the parlor of a friend of hers who had written a new melody, who asked her, what does this song want to say? And in prayer on her knees, she came up with, blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

So I hope that for each one of us, another line in the song is, this is my story. I am beloved. You are beloved. So I invite you to stand.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

[66 : 44] Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. Air of salvation, purchase of God.

Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story.

This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission. Perfect delight. Visions of rapture.

[68 : 02] Visions of rapture. Now burst on my sight. Angels descending. Ring the heart.

Echoes of mercy. Whispers of love. This is my story.

This is my song. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission. Perfect submission. All is at rest.

[69 : 10] I and my Savior am happy and blessed. Watching and waiting.

Looking above. Filled with His goodness. Filled with His goodness. Lost in His blood.

This is my story. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story. This is my story. This is my song. This is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.

For the Savior of the day long.

[70 : 25] As you go from this place, may this be your story. I'd like to hear you all say this.

I'm going to say it first. I am baptized. And what do you say? I am baptized. That means you are beloved. I am beloved. Let us go and be in the world as beloved children of God.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.