

# St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church, Kirkcaldy

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Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Epiphany 1

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- Introit Hymn:* Crown him with many crowns
- Welcome:* Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**
- Collect for Purity:* **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**
- Gloria:* **Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**
- Collect:* Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit, keep your children, born of water and the Spirit, faithful to their calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**
- Collect SPB:* O Lord we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know that things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- First reading:* Genesis 1. 1-5 (SPB Romans 12. 1)
- Second reading:* Acts 19. 1-7
- Gradual hymn:* O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

*Gospel acclamation:* **Alleluia! Alleluia! The heavens opened and the Father's voice resounded:  
'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him. Alleluia!**

*Gospel:* Mark 1. 4-11 (SPB St Luke 2. 41)

*Homily:*

Today, we commemorate the baptism of Jesus by his cousin John in the River Jordan. Now, John's that man we've been hearing a lot about lately (since the beginning of Advent), and after today, he will drop into the background.

You see, we no longer need that voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord." For the Lord is here, born on earth to save us. And we no longer have any confusion about who is the Messiah, for the one more powerful than John has come.

Now that babe is born. Incarnate and among us.

John's role as prophet, foretelling the great story of salvation as known in the person of Jesus Christ: well, that role is fulfilled with Jesus' baptism today.

John is sometimes seen as the last of the old order: the last prophet in the line of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the last to baptize with water only and not also the Holy Spirit, and the last to demand repentance before the immanent coming of the kingdom of God.

For Jesus proclaims over and over again that the kingdom of God has drawn near us; it is here, and now. No longer coming, or far off, or even just the other side of a thin divide—but here, very near us.

Among the very first documented acts of his earthly ministry, the twelve-year-old Jesus picks up a scroll and reads from an earlier prophecy of Isaiah: that the spirit of the Lord has anointed him, and that he has been sent to announce good news to the poor—and that this prophecy has been fulfilled. "Today, in your very hearing this text has come true," he says.

So, too, of this baptism of Jesus: it seems to have effected a radical transformation in him. Luke's gospel tells us of his birth, and then nary a word until now—thirty years later. And from this moment—the moment of a simple ritual of living water—Jesus is changed. No longer just the carpenter's son, no longer a refugee in Egypt, no longer just another human being to walk the face of the earth.

He moves on from here to teach in synagogues and have all people sing his praises. He will heal the sick, and make the dead live again. He will preach, and manifest miracles. He will astound people with his teaching, and confound us even today by submitting to a shameful death on a cross.

And he will appear again over forty days until he ascends into heaven, prophesying of his return in glory to judge the earth—a second coming we still anticipate, two millennia later.

One day people know him as that clever boy, Joseph's son. And the next he's revealed as the Christ, the Messiah, the chosen one—God's son, the beloved, with whom God is well pleased.

In his baptism, Jesus seems to have become an entirely different person.

It's as if the waters of his baptism have washed away what was hiding the true Jesus. The running water of a river has somehow changed him, made him manifest as who he truly is, and given him the power and inspiration to begin a mission and ministry that will forever change the world.

So, too, with our baptism:

None of us is the Christ, but each and every one of us is the beloved, with whom God is well pleased. And each and every one of us was forever changed and transformed in our baptism.

And each and every one of us continues to be changed and transformed—in ways big and small—throughout our earthly ministry.

Now filled with the Holy Spirit, we—like Jesus—are commissioned and sent forth to proclaim the good news of God's favor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim that the time of God's favor is here.

That's our job: to live baptismally.

And, living baptismally: what is that all about?

It's about knowing that we have been forever changed by the acknowledgment of God's working in our life; that our true and holy self has been revealed by the washing away of all stain of sin; that we are grafted into the body of Christ's Church; that we have been given an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in all God's works. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever.

Baptism is an amazing gift. By the waters of baptism, we are lead from death to life, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. In it, we are buried with Christ in his death. By it, we share in his resurrection. Through it, we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.[1]

And baptism is also an awesome responsibility. We are also no longer simply to live as ordinary people in the world:

We are to boldly confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour;  
to strive for justice and peace among all people;  
and to seek and serve the Christ in everyone we meet.

Those of us who profess and call ourselves Christians are called to live a different kind of life, a life set apart from the world around us and yet somehow also very much in its midst.

A life of grateful thanksgiving in the face of victory—and defeat.

A life of difficult forgiveness—in the face of bitter betrayal.

A life of ongoing repentance—in the face of our chronic mistakes.

A life forever changed—and forever changing—proceeding from strength to strength, from goodness to perfection, from death to life.

This wet, earthly act, involving people in relation to one another, bodies acting and touching one another, hands, clothing, oil, and light: This emotion-filled rite we call "baptism" is the means by which we declare:

our separation from an old identity,  
our transition from being no longer one of the old order to not yet being fully one of the new, and  
our incorporation into the full life of the community we know and proclaim as Christ's holy church.[2]  
It is now for us—the baptized, those grafted into the life of Christ, those sealed and set apart—to share in an eternal priesthood, to rejoice at our adoption as children of God, and to give thanks for the ineffable mystery of our salvation.

Through baptism, we are forgiven, loved, and free to become more fully who God has created us to be: living members of Christ's body, incarnate examples of divine love, manifestations of God's glory here on earth.

By baptism, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled—in Jesus, and in each one of us. God looks at us—the beloved, with whom God is well pleased—and says, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you." Amen.

*Nicene Creed:*        **We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,**

**maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one substance with the Father. Through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father.  
With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.**

*Intercessions: Composed and prayed on behalf of the congregation by a member of the Intercessors Group*

In the waters of baptism, we were called to be God's children and to minister to one another. Let us therefore pray for ourselves, for one another, and for all those in need of our prayers, saying:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the church, that it may stand fast in the one faith to which it has been called, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the world, that our conflicts may cease and that peace may reign in this New Year, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all Christians who have been baptized into the one family of faith, that our lives reflect the forgiveness and love which was first shown us, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are blind to the injustices of our world, that their eyes may be opened and that they may work for an end to oppression and injustice, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For this community of faith, that we may love and serve one another in the same way that Christ loved and served us, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the sick, especially those listed on our Parish Prayer List, that their sickness may be turned to health and that they may once again join us in our work and worship, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the faithful who have gone before us, that we may follow the example of their lives and be reunited with them in the joy of everlasting life, remembering Christina Orr, Beryl Rogerson, Isabelle Briggs, Jacqueline Calleri Let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

*Confession  
and Absolution:*

God is love and we are his children. There is no room for fear in love.  
We love because he loved us first. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

*Silence*

**God our Father, we confess to you  
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ  
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do.  
We are truly sorry.  
Forgive us our sins,  
and deliver us from the power of evil.  
For the sake of your Son who died for us,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

(May)God, who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Peace:* We meet in Christ's Name let us share his peace.

*Offertory hymn:* O Jesus I have promised

*Communion Prayer:* God of infinite mercy. We thank you for Jesus our Saviour who feeds his people and gives them eternal life. Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the risen and ascended life of our Saviour. Amen.  
(*This prayer is said during the online Provincial service*).

*The Lord's Prayer* 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.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

*Communion hymn:* Make me a channel of your peace

*Prayer after Communion:*

**Gracious God, lover of all, by this sacrament you make us one family in  
Christ your Son, one in the sharing of his body and blood, one in the  
communion of his Spirit. Help us to grow in love for one another and come  
to the full maturity of the Body of Christ. We ask this in his name. Amen.**

*Blessing:* Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Dismissal:* Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
In the name of Christ. Amen.

*Recessional hymn:* Let all the world in every corner sing

## **7pm Candle Prayer**

**Thank you for the extended family  
that is your Church worldwide,  
our brothers and sisters in Christ  
who we shall never know in this life,  
but have an eternity in which to enjoy  
their fellowship in the life to come.  
May the prayer and worship  
that we offer here on earth  
rise as a fragrant offering,  
to enhance the heavenly chorus  
already praising your glorious name.**