



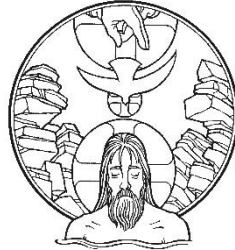
ABOUT THE PROPERS

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



First Sunday after Epiphany Baptism of Our Lord

January 8, 2023



Jesus Appears as the Christ, the Anointed One

The titles “Christ” and “Messiah” both mean “The Anointed One,” and they describe how God prepared Jesus for his mission. At his baptism, God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power and declared this son of Mary to be the Son of God – the one anointed to be the Savior of mankind. Jesus is the chosen One sent from the Father to release us from sin and death. God the Father is well-pleased with his beloved Son and raised him from the dead.

The Propers

The Propers are those portions of the service that change (i.e. are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.

First Lesson¹

Isaiah 42:1-7

This Servant Song foretells the Messiah’s work: he will be God’s own servant sent to accomplish God’s mission. God will choose him, uphold him and delight in him. God will also put his Spirit on him that he might bring justice to the nations. His ministry is characterized by gentleness toward the weak, but also by an inexorable driving toward his goal. He will not falter in the work for which he was anointed until he brings forth the right verdict: the justice that comes from God and declares his people righteous in his sight because of Messiah’s work. Matthew’s account of Jesus’ baptism shows how these prophecies were perfectly fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Second Lesson¹

Acts 10:34-38

The Gentile household of Cornelius had heard the message about the Savior, but then Peter came as an eyewitness of prophesy’s fulfillment. Jesus was the Christ because at his baptism God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. Immediately, the empowerment of the Spirit made itself evident in the works of Jesus as he did the Messiah’s work of healing those under the power of the devil. This anointing as Savior resulted in Peter’s amazing statement in verse 36, “the message proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.” Jesus restored peace between man and God because that’s what he had been anointed to do.

Gospel of the Day¹

Matthew 3:13-17

What kind of God gets baptized? The Baptist’s question confronts every Christian reading this account, and we join in John’s incredulity at Jesus’ intended condescension. Though John objected, Jesus encouraged him to allow this concession in order to fulfill their purpose there together. Their joint purpose was to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus would do that by being the Messiah and standing in the place of sinful man—first at the font and ultimately at the cross. John would play his part by fulfilling his role as forerunner: baptizing with water that the Messiah might be revealed (John 1:31). When John consented and baptized Jesus, the Spirit fulfilled the promises of Isaiah (First Lesson), and Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Second Lesson). In this inauguration into his office as the Christ, God prepared the Messiah for his mission with an unlimited outpouring of the Spirit (John 3:34). In the very next verse, empowered and led by the Spirit, the hero of God immediately goes out to war against Satan on behalf of mankind (Matthew 4:1ff), fulfilling all righteousness and bringing us peace.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 45 B

“Great Are the Works of the LORD.” As Jesus was anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit, the church sings of his glory and majesty that comes to us in the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 3:22

“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” The voice of God the Father from heaven declares Jesus to be his beloved Son. The entire Trinity is revealed at Christ’s Baptism – reminding us that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always work together for our salvation. As the Father’s beloved Son, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, something that children – past, present, and future – fail to do.

Prayer of the Day

Father in heaven, at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Keep us who are baptized into Christ faithful in our calling as your children, and make us heirs with him of everlasting life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

377 “To Jordan’s River Came Our Lord” (James Tiefel, b. 1949)

The hymn reminds us that Jesus Christ, as our substitute, took our place in the waters of baptism to fulfill the Father’s will to save us.

Traditions & Customs

Baptism of Our Lord

Observed on the First Sunday after the Epiphany; the Festival of the Baptism of Our Lord is sometimes called the “Second Epiphany.” Jesus’ baptism marks the beginning of his public ministry and reminds worshippers of the cleansing of our sins in the water of baptism. On this occasion the Father and the Holy Spirit revealed themselves together with the Son. On this day, some chose to renew their baptismal vows, or hold some other tradition in remembrance of their baptism.

Church Year Season ¹

Epiphany

The twelve days of Christmas culminate at the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord on January 6th. The season of Epiphany highlights the appearance of the Son of God as the Savior of the whole world— both Jew and Gentile. God revealed the mystery of his person and his mission through the words and works of the Father, through the anointing and empowering of the Spirit, and through the preaching and miracles of Christ. This season of the Savior’s appearance is bracketed by two white Sundays: The Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration of Our Lord. Since he had come hidden in flesh, recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God required revelation. From John’s Baptism to the Father’s booming voice, God revealed the truth about Jesus to the world: this son of Mary is the Son of God, come as the Christ. The Father’s testimony about Jesus bookends the season. From the glory of his baptism at the beginning of his ministry to the glory of his transfiguration at its culmination, the voice of the Father declares what flesh had hidden from the world: This is my Son!

Colors & Symbolism

Baptism of Our Lord: White

White is the color of our Triune God and heaven. It also symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. We receive these blessings through faith because Christ, our righteousness Savior, has forgiven all our sins.

Nain Paraments

Christmas

Superfrontal: “Immanuel” is Hebrew for “God with us.” This name for Jesus Christ was revealed to God’s people through Isaiah in a prophecy of the Savior’s birth (7:14). The angel Gabriel announced to Joseph in a dream that the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb would be that promised Immanuel – God who had come to be with us (Matthew 1:23) in order to save us. Sometimes the name is spelled *Emmanuel*, which is the Latin alphabet transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of the same name.

The vines next to Immanuel represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: *The Greek Cross*: distinguished by four arms of equal length.

Pulpit antependium: *The Celtic Cross*: similar to the Latin cross (†), but with a circle surrounding the center, which symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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