



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## First Sunday after Epiphany Baptism of Our Lord January 11, 2026



Identity Revealed: Jesus Is the Christ, the Anointed One

“Christ” is not Jesus’ last name. It is a title. The Greek word “Christ” and the Hebrew word “Messiah” both mean the same thing: “The Anointed One.” Anointing was the practice of pouring liquid over the head of someone to signify selection for some special task. When the Lord had someone anointed, he also poured his Spirit over them. It was the fulfillment of promises made over centuries. For centuries people of faith had patiently waited for the promised Messiah, the servant of God who would bring the salvation we so desperately need. The time had come for Jesus to be revealed as the fulfillment of that divine promise. So, Christ our Lord came to the Jordan River to be baptized, that he might be recognized by John and revealed to Israel. At his baptism Jesus was anointed—marked as God’s special servant and empowered by the Spirit of the Lord.

### First Reading <sup>1</sup>

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 Reading <sup>1</sup>

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 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 45 B

“Great Are the Works of the LORD”

The Church sings Psalm 45 in services that honor Christ, the anointed King, as the groom for his Church, the bride. The psalm is quoted in Hebrews 1:8,9. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 45 is a prophecy of the gospel and the kingdom of Christ. It paints the picture of Christ as a king, adorned with a royal splendor. He has a beautiful castle, a grand court, a beautiful queen, and children forever.”

## Gospel Acclamation

Mark 1:11

“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.

## Church Year Season<sup>2</sup>

Epiphany

The readings during the Epiphany season carry forward the emphasis in the readings for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the theme of Jesus revealing himself to us as God and Savior. At the same time the readings present us with a real conundrum. The conundrum is that he hides the manifestations of his deity, so that his glory remains a secret and a mystery, even while he is revealing it. All the riddles are present in the readings for the Feast of the Epiphany. The theme present in all of the Epiphany readings is: He shows his hidden glory to those he calls. You may notice that in many of the Epiphany season readings appropriation is much easier than application. There is a good reason for that: In Christmas and Epiphany our attention is on getting to know Jesus, who he is and how he works; thus there is not so much emphasis on our response beyond the response of faith, which itself is always seen as his work and not ours.

## Colors & Symbolism

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.

## 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.

## 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.

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

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

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

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