



# ABOUT THE PROPERs

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



## First Sunday after the Epiphany The Baptism of Our Lord January 10, 2021



In his baptism, Jesus takes his place with sinners

At his baptism Jesus was formally installed by God into his office as our Prophet, High Priest, and King. Our Lord Jesus is baptized “to fulfill all righteousness,” that he might be our substitute and bear the judgment we deserve. In the water, Jesus trades places with us. Our sin becomes his sin. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. 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. Baptized into Christ, we also become the chosen ones, beloved of the Father. As we share in Christ’s Baptism, we also share in his resurrection unto newness of life.

### The Propers

*The Proper*s are those portions of the service that change (or, 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 Lesson <sup>1</sup>

Isaiah 49:1-6

In one of Isaiah’s servant songs, the Servant of the Lord describes his calling and his work: “to restore the tribes of Jacob” and to be “a light for the Gentiles.” The Epiphany themes are all here: the promise of a servant of the Lord, anointed with the Spirit, who would bring hope to all nations of the world. For a people whose hopes had become so misplaced (Israel) and for people who had no hope (the Gentiles), this had to be good news. And it still is.

#### Second Lesson <sup>1</sup>

Acts 16:25-34

God showed his power in the earthquake. But that display of power created only dread and terror in the heart of the jailor. It was the glory embedded in the gospel, that brought the jailor life and joy in the forgiveness of his sins. Notice the silly question of the jailor: *What must I do to be saved?*—as though anyone could do anything to be saved from the God who has the power displayed in the earthquake. Paul’s answer is *not*: *This is what you must do* ... His answer is: *It has all been done; there is nothing for you to do; receive the benefit in faith and in baptism!* For believing is not a doing; it is a receiving of a wage earned by another. So, do you want to see the power of God? Consider your baptism. The Trinity was there in grace and mercy to forgive you and receive you as a child and heir of eternal life; that display of power, so secret and mysterious, is revealed to you now and its benefits lasts forever.

#### Gospel of the Day <sup>1</sup>

Mark 1:4-11

It’s almost a secret that Jesus was baptized; it appears that no one was there to witness it except for John. But what an amazing announcement! As the lowliest of the low baptized the highest of the high, the Trinity showed itself; the Spirit covered and filled the lowly human nature of the Son, and the Father attested to his favor in all that the Son is and is about to do. But it was all a secret except to John and now to us, to whom God reveals it in his Word and in our baptism. For there, too, is a mystery and secret known only to God and to those he reveals it. In your baptism the Trinity is hidden, but really there: the Spirit covers and comes to dwell in you; the

Son presents you to his Father as one for whom he did all of his work; the Father is well pleased with you because of what his Son has done for you.

## Psalm of the Day                      Psalm 2

The ultimate fulfillment of this psalm is clearly found in Jesus the Messiah. "Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

## Verse of the Day                      Mark 1:11b

"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.

## Hymn of the Day                      89 "To Jordan's River Came Our Lord" (James Tiefel, b. 1949)

## Church Year Season <sup>1</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                      The 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.

## Traditions & Customs                      The 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 B". Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.  
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