

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, January 9th, 2022, Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

There are two parts to the Gospel today and thus two parts to the sermon.
In the first part John the Baptist says: "*I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*"

The baptism of Jesus is with the spirit and with fire. The fire sounds like to fire of Pentecost and a foretaste of the passion and energy which comes from the Spirit. This too is a beginning. That what we do we do not do alone, but the spirit in and around is wisdom and insight and strength for the journey of faith ahead.

Just think of this for a moment.

We have all heard and understand to be here in church there is a certain expectation of action, and something demanded of us. The great commandment comes to mind; Love God with all your heart and mind, strength and soul and love your neighbour as yourself.

We know this in our heart of hearts, and to be honest, don't often respond well to this and thus feel guilty about our lack of care for others.

But what John the Baptist is saying in Luke's Gospel today is; we don't do it alone, but for us to realize the spirit and fire is in and around us to help us.

And the second part; the voice from heaven saying to Jesus today, but the gifts for Jesus are also for all of us. You are my beloved in whom I am well pleased.

That all of us are beloved of God. God's unconditional love comes to us, and is not just for the present, but the future as well.

This is where the two parts come together.

God is not just saying each of us is beloved and then walking away from us but calling us into relationship with God and each other not just now but in the future as well.

Amen

Covid prayer:

We are not people of fear:
we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed:
we are people of generosity.
We are your people God,
giving and loving,
wherever we are,
whatever it costs
For as long as it takes
wherever you call us.

Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference