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BAPTISM OF JESUS A

8th January 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Here I am to pray.

Come into this time, by your Spirit Lord,
That this time of worship may be a time of encounter with you,
And I may leave equipped to follow you more closely,
To love you more dearly, in the days ahead.

The tree is away. Decorations in their boxes. The last of the tinsel has been vacuumed up. The likes of Wizzard, Slade, Band Aid, and Mariah Carey will not be heard on repeat again for another year. No longer will we sing of that Bleak Mid-Winter, we are silent to the Herald Angels sing. The season of Christmas is done. The world carries on.

As I pray, as I come to God in worship, how can I be like Scrooge and resolve to keep Christmas in my hearts all year round?

A year that is filled, right now, with potential. The potential for excitement, joy and love. The potential for worry, fear, the nervous apprehension. The concerns of last year are still here. I just hid them behind the Christmas Tree.

Jesus. Be with me, in this space.

Be with me as I face this world in pain. Aid me and show me how to challenge injustice in my community. To stand up for my neighbours. To support my brothers and sisters and non-binary siblings when they face hardships. To care for a hurting environment.

On this, the day of Jesus' Baptism, may I to proclaim the good news. To surround those I know with a community of love and forgiveness. To be good and faithful in service to others. To pray for them.

May I go from this place today with a thankful heart, and endless joy. May I bring love, hope, and peace with us. And may each day start and night end with a grateful prayer and a thankful heart.

In Jesus' name I bring these, and all my prayers,

Amen.¹

You may now wish to pray the Lord's prayer in a tradition or translation with which you are most comfortable.

Hymn:

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy - [YouTube](#)

Reading: Matthew 3:13-17 – [Click for the reading](#)

¹ Opening prayers written by Tim Annan-Hood

Response to the reading

What is your relationship like with power?

Power is such an important, and yet difficult, thing to talk about. It exists in all our relationships and around our world, but you can rarely actually see it in operation.

Power is at play in the gospel reading today – John the Baptist recognises the ‘power’ of Jesus, but Jesus refuses to Lord-it-over him. And then, at the end of the story, God, the almighty, the all-powerful, speaks from on high: an ultimate power-move! But this voice-from-above offers a blessing, rather than anything more commonly associated with wielding ultimate power.

God and Jesus both choose to give up their power, or to use it to give blessing, rather than for their own gain, or for its own sake.

How does this challenge you to think about the power you have access to? At work, in your church or community, in your family? Do you recognise that power? How do you use it?

Use this week to think and pray about the role of power in your life.

Hymn:

350 STF – I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

You have been blessed,
You are loved,
God is here for you, for all of us.

As you go from this place, go with the Spirit of God in your heart,
Go inspired to share those blessings and that love with the world and with the people you meet,

In Jesus' name

Amen.²

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 9th January

- Go outdoors and find something natural: a stone, leaf, flower, or something else.
- Consider the ways God has made this thing and then reflect on how you too are wonderfully made by God. What does this mean to you?

² Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Tuesday 10th January

- What does the good news of the Gospel feel like to you?
- Can you express it as a prayer of thanks in just a sentence or two?
- Once you have chosen or written your sentences, why not find someone to share that prayer with – as a text, or over the phone, or via email, or by chatting to someone today.

Wednesday 11th January

- God of love,
Today I pray for refugees and exiles all around the world,
Those who are living in fear and have fled the place they call home.
Show me how to show love to those in need,
To be a place of sanctuary to all who encounter me,
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Thursday 12th January

- Go litter picking.
- Each bit of litter you pick up is working to bring God's Kingdom in that place.
- As you pick up the litter pray about what it might mean for God's will for this street, this community, this village / town / city to be done.

Friday 13th January

- Think about how God is at work in the lives of everyone.
- You can see God shining out from all people.
- Remember this with the next person you speak to, and give thanks for the glimpses of God you see in them.

Saturday 14th January

- Do you have a favourite poem or song?
- It doesn't have to be explicitly Christian. Consider the ways the good news of God is communicated through the words.
- If it helps, use these words as a prayer today, perhaps humming or repeating them over and over again during the day.