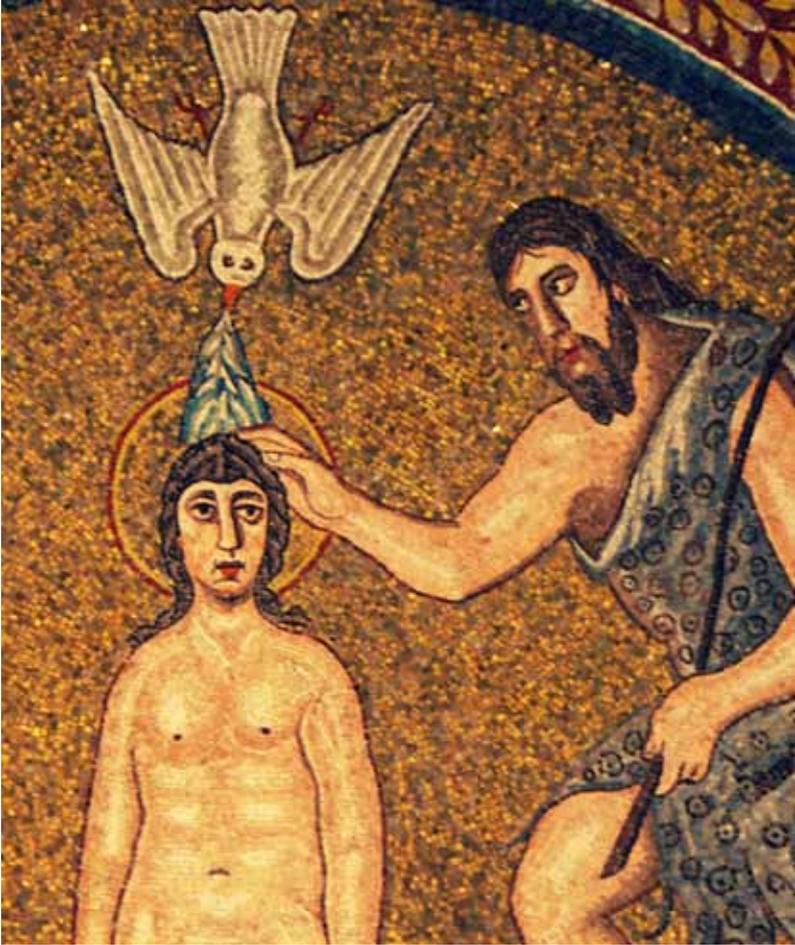


St Luke's Church

A Service of the Word



The Baptism of Christ

The Arian Baptistry at Ravenna, built in the 6th century. This is the central part of a mosaic which covers the ceiling of the Baptistry.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you;

All **and also with you.**

The Call to Worship

This is the day that the Lord has made.

All **We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

We are the family of God.

And are called by God's name.

We are heirs of Christ's kingdom.

And born of the Spirit.

We gather in thanksgiving to worship.

Sentence and introduction

Welcome to this service on the first Sunday of Epiphany, when we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. Today in our readings we hear the opening words of the Bible, describing Creation, and Mark's description of the baptism of Jesus at the beginning of his Gospel.

The opening prayer

Heavenly Father,
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognize him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Hymn Out of the flowing river (no. 335)

Out of the flowing river
Jesus ascends
baptised by John
waiting the sign.

Out of the open heavens
God's Spirit comes
down like a dove
in peace and power.

Out speaks the voice from heaven:
'You are my Son.
chosen and loved,
my own delight.'

Out through the life of Jesus
God's word of love,
calling in grace,
comes to our lives.

Out in the world we live in
we will make known
the love revealed
Through God in Christ.

Leith Fisher (b. 1941)

A prayer of confession

As a new year begins, full of uncertainty, we celebrate Christ the light of the world, who has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness in our hearts:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, unstop our ears to hear your living word:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Assurance of forgiveness

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw us to himself,

and cleanse us from all our sins

that we may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Word

Old Testament Reading Genesis 1.1–5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Hymn The works of the Lord

**1 The works of the Lord are created in wisdom,
we view the earth's wonders and call him to mind;
we hear what he says in the world we discover,**

and God shows his glory in all that we find.

2 Not even the angels have ever been granted
to tell the full story of nature and grace;
but open to God is all human perception,
the mysteries of time and the secrets of space.

3 The sun every morning lights up his creation,
the moon marks the rhythm of months in their turn;
the glittering stars are arrayed in his honour,
adorning the years as they ceaselessly burn.

4 The wind is his breath and the clouds are his signal,
The rain and the snow are the robes of his choice;
the storm and the lightning, his watchmen and heralds,
the crash of the thunder, the sound of his voice.

5 The song is unfinished; how shall we complete it,
and where find the skill to perfect all God's praise?
At work in all places, he cares for all peoples -
how great is the Lord to the end of all days!

A blank canvas

The first day. That is it.
We are left in a rather
enigmatic place. Of
course, we are privileged
to know what follows.
But what if we didn't.
What would we make of
'the first day'? What will
happen now? What next?



Maybe the position is somewhat akin to our current dilemma, at the start of a new year, that everyone is hoping will be better than the last, yet with absolutely no notion of how it is going to unravel. When the first lockdown was underway, people spoke hopefully of 'the new normal' that would come. But I don't really seem to hear that anymore.

But people are saying that things will have to be different. Let's have a look at the picture. As we try to look forward, imagine you are the person in the green tee-shirt. I wonder what you would want to put on the blank canvas? You might write or draw ... What would you put on the blank canvas of 2021?

The Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *M.*

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Mark 1.4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Reflection

The illustrations are mosaics in the 6th century church of San Appolinare in Ravenna, showing the life of Christ. There are two pictures of the story in Luke 5.17 of a paralysed man lowered through a roof who was healed by Jesus.



Another story from the beginning of Jesus' ministry is the meeting with a woman at the well of Samaria, In John 4.



And Jesus' ministry begins with the call of the disciples.



Hymn **Do not be afraid**

*Do not be afraid, For I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name; You are mine.*

**When you walk through the waters I'll be with you,
You will never have to sink beneath the waves.**
Chorus

**When the fire is burning all around you,
You will never be consumed by the flames.**
Chorus

**When the fear of loneliness is looming,
Then remember I am at your side.**
Chorus

**When you dwell in the exile of a stranger,
Remember you are precious in my eyes.**
Chorus

**You are mine, O my child; I am your father,
And I love you with a perfect love.**
Chorus

Prayers of intercession

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to the captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor
and freedom to the oppressed.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here
for you to save your people.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Father, use us, unworthy as we are,
to bring in your kingdom of mercy, justice, love and peace.
Empower us by your Spirit and unite us in your Son,
that all our joy and delight may be to serve you,
now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn Let all the world

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
"My God and King!"
The heav'ns are not too high,
God's praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
God's praises there may grow.
Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
"My God and King!"

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
"My God and King!"
The church with psalms must shout:
no door can keep them out.
But, more than all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
"My God and King!"

Dismissal

Acclamation

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.
All To you be glory and praise for ever.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
your name is proclaimed in all the world.

All To you be glory and praise for ever.

When the time had fully come
you sent the Sun of Righteousness.

**All In him the fullness of your glory dwells.
To you be glory and praise for ever.**

The Blessing

The Father, whose glory fills the heavens,
cleanse you by his holiness
and send you to proclaim his word.

Amen.

The Son, who has ascended to the heights,
pour upon you the riches of his grace.

Amen.

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
equip you and strengthen you in your ministry.
Amen.

And the blessing ...

The Dismissal

The Lord says, 'Go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations.'

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.