

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

January 10, 2021

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

10:45 a.m.

Link to worship videos available at: www.fpcbryan.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP Come, Holy Spirit, Dove Divine arr. Cindy Berry

WELCOME

The writer of Psalm 46 has written:

"There is a river whose waters make glad the City of God.

God, who is Lord of all, is our refuge!

HYMN NO. 482

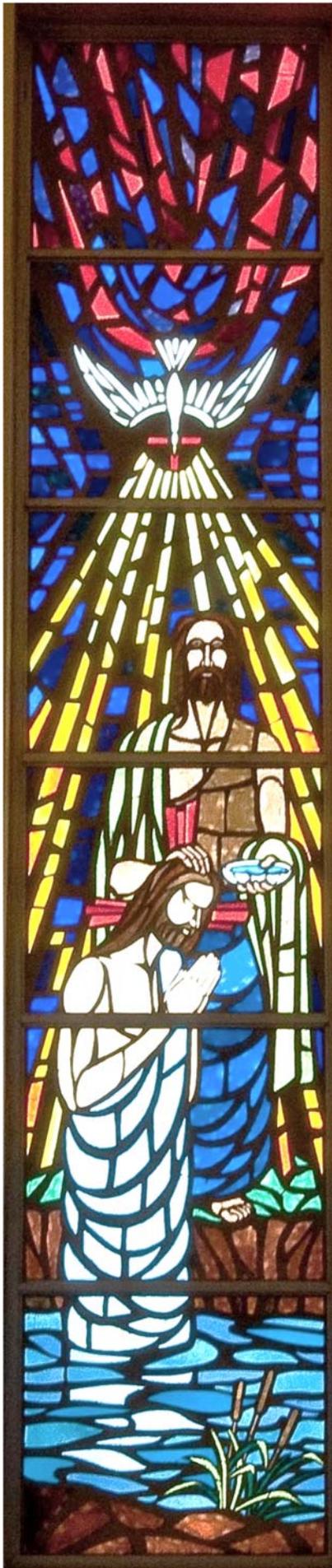
Baptized in Water

BUNESSAN

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting the promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
dead in the tomb with Christ our King;
one with his rising, freed and forgiven,
thankfully now God's praises we sing.**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of the Spirit, we are God's children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.**



PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

Let us pray . . . **If we have not observed by ourselves, O God, the writers of Scripture and poets and authors across the ages have described how water – still or flowing – is a place of life and is life-giving. We praise you that this chemical compound of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen is a primary gift in your universe. And we praise you for water’s essential contribution to hydration and cleansing. We also hold dear its rich symbolism, illustrating your own building, sustaining, cleansing, and renewing of who we are as your people. As we consider again today Jesus’ own baptism, receive our confessions, and forgive us all our sin in failing to follow from his life and ministry with the love and grace you expect and model . . .**

(pausing in silence for prayer)

Make us whole from your mercy, Blessed One. Widen and heighten our awareness to your presence multiple times each day. Share through us your unending faithfulness and sacred kindness for serving you hour by hour in the way and spirit of Jesus Christ . . .

Friends, let us hear and share with gladness the blessed news of the Gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:4-11

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Sacred Venturing Forth – 3: Haunted by Waters and Improving Our Baptism

HYMN NO. 250

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

PROMISE

**In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there’s a spring that waits to be
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

**There’s a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there’s a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

**In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, CONSECRATION, INTERCESSION,
AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Holy Sovereign, we are grateful that your leading brings Jesus under the shadow and umbrella of your call for newness of life in the way of faithful prophets. Truly baptism administered and received calls and leads your people to relationships and service based on compassion, mercy, and vision for your kingdom.

Receive our thanks that you accompany us through every season of worry, loss, anger, and numbness. O Delight of the Cosmos and all who draw breath: As your voice both whispers gently over waters and rushes across their surfaces to raise forceful white caps, exercise your Spirit with individuals and communities to liberate both present and future from past errors, idols, misdirection, and bad judgment. In your Spirit's transformative influence, may we repeatedly recall both the eternal richness of baptism and your holy claim and call for life devoted to serving you in the way of Jesus Christ – who taught communities of faith to pray together:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN

O God of All, Your Love Creates

AMAZING GRACE

**O God of all, your love creates. Your covenant is strong.
Your grace redeems and consecrates. Accept our grateful song!**

**Jesus, baptized, submits his life. In You his trust resides.
He suffers death in this world's strife, and, raised past death, abides.**

**Baptize with water and with fire Christ's Church around the earth.
Cleanse, Holy Spirit, and inspire our growth from this new birth!**

**O God, now present with us here, each one with faith anoint.
From Love lead us past doubt and fear to serve as you appoint!**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

There Is A Fountain

arr. by Cindy Berry

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ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES are available in the narthex.
Please help yourself or ask an usher for assistance.

NEW MEMBERS may be received any Sunday by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer of membership. If you feel led to inquire about becoming a church member or deepening your commitment as a disciple of Jesus Christ, please indicate your desire on the fellowship folder. You may also call the church (979.823.8073) or email Pastor Ted Foote (tfoote@fpcbryan.org) or Associate Pastor Emily Béghin (ebeghin@fpcbryan.org). They will be glad to arrange a mutually convenient Sunday when you can be received by the Elders and introduced to the congregation.

By vote of Session on December 30, First Presbyterian moved to **an altered Sunday morning format for an indefinite time (hopefully not long), beginning January 3rd**. Due to the COVID-19 infection, active case, and hospitalization rates, FPC – to assist the efforts of health providers and public officials – is suspending Sunday morning “full worship” in the sanctuary. **The sanctuary will be open in this calendar period each Sunday, from 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (regular time) for “come-and-go” contemplation, prayer, and receiving the Lord’s Supper. All who choose to participate in this opportunity are encouraged to wear a mask and observe physical distancing.**



A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted that you chose
to worship with us today.*

WORSHIP NOTES

PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

LITURGIST

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *accompanist*
David Kipp,
Director of Music Ministries

AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

Nicole McKinley
Jerry Norris
Bill Watson

COVER ART

"The New Covenant
is Consecrated"

One of 11 faceted windows
in sanctuary of
First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas
created by Gordon William Smith
Smith Stained Glass Studios
Fort Worth, Texas

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Hymns from *Glory to God:*
The Presbyterian Hymnal
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THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BAPTISM OF THE LORD, JANUARY 10, 2021

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

10:45am Sanctuary * open for prayer, meditation, and Lord's Supper;
WORSHIP pre-recorded, viewable via www.fpcbryan.org, with
click on homepage "sentence about worship" or small red
YouTube box in far top right of homepage screen

MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2021

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021

10:00am Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team-P/via Zoom

10:45am Staff Meeting-L

11:00am FPC Foundation Investment Policy-10

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, JANUARY 17, 2021

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

10:45am Sanctuary * open for prayer, meditation, and Lord's Supper;
WORSHIP pre-recorded, viewable via www.fpcbryan.org, with
click on homepage "sentence about worship" or small red
YouTube box in far top right of homepage screen

* *During COVID-19, Room 108 is available for your nursery needs*



LAST CHANCE TO NOMINATE THE 2020 "VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR"

Volunteers are essential to the ministry of FPC-Bryan. They contribute countless hours to the work of this congregation in so many ways—serving on Session/Foundation, leading/coordinating Church School, ushering, singing in the choir, ringing bells, answering telephones, supporting worship, and so more! Each year, the Volunteer of the Year is usually honored for his/her contributions to the church at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. Know of an individual who has served the church well in 2020? Submit your nomination with a brief narrative supporting your nomination to Karen Berg, office@fpcbryan.org, or mail to First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Carter Creek Pkwy, Bryan, 77802, by Sunday, January 10.

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION TODAY!

What's the buzz?



First Presbyterian Youth invite you to join in their mission project benefitting Heifer International. Heifer International works to end hunger and poverty by supporting and training the world's farmers, ranchers, and female business owners.

Here's how you can participate... Jars of honey, donated by registered beekeeper Carolyn Lowry, are available for you to purchase, with 100% of the proceeds being forwarded from FPC-Bryan to Heifer International. Church members have invested time to "dress" the jars with decorative fabric. Ms. Lowry is a Bryan ISD faculty member at Rudder High School. She has family friendship ties to long-time FPC member Mary Alice Hall, whose favorite non-Presbyterian mission endeavor was Heifer International. And . . . Ms. Lowry's beekeeping efforts began with bees from the Hall family ranch at Kurten. **The jars of honey and prices are available on a table in the narthex.**

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN SING SET FOR JANUARY 31

Have you ever thought "I wish we could sing that hymn?" Well now is your chance! Email Director of Music Ministries David Kipp at music@fpcbryan.org or call the church office at 979.823.8073 by Tuesday, January 19, with your request. As many hymns as possible will be incorporated into morning worship. If we don't sing your suggested hymn on the 31st, it will be saved for a future worship time. *Now's your chance!*

Let's sing some of your favorite hymns!

Visit us on the web! www.fpcbryan.org for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, updates, etc.

Check us out on Facebook www.facebook.com/FPCBryan

NEW!!! on Instagram www.instagram.com Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan_youth**

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW when **WORSHIP** and **ACTIVITY** videos are uploaded to our YouTube channel!

Go to www.youtube.com, search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

Share prayer needs and church group news with fellow FPC participants on Church Updates!

is FPC-Bryan's online tool for YOU to post church-related announcements, ways to serve, and your current prayer needs. While users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts, this online tool is "REAL TIME."

Contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or office@fpcbryan.org to set up your account.

Then, login at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login> to create your password-protected account.

The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is Noon, Sunday, January 17. It will be distributed on Wednesday, January 20, 2021. This newsletter will cover news from January 28 thru February 17.

This Sacred Venturing Forth – 3: Haunted by Waters and Improving Our Baptism

Mark 1:4-11

January 10, 2021

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

In 1976, the University of Chicago Press published the first work of fiction in their 86 years of generally publishing philosophical, educational, and scientific works. Authored by a faculty member of the University's English Department, Norman Maclean, it is semi-autobiographical, written when the author was in his early 70s, somewhat fictionalizing the story of Mr. Maclean's father, mother, younger brother, and of himself growing into early adulthood, with a special emphasis on the role of fly-fishing in the rivers of Montana.

I reference Mr. Maclean's story in relation to this Sunday when we read of Jesus' baptism, because Mr. Maclean offers a testimony of perspective that is most helpful – to me, at least – in relating to Jesus's baptism and to life as life unfolds in front of us and claims our participation whether we are interested in being claimed for such participation, or not. In "A River Runs through It," (1) Mr. Maclean writes about the geological origins and nature of mountain rivers (pgs.97-98); (2) he writes about fly-fishermen "reading the water" for what the river creates as perils and possibilities (p.99); and (3) he concludes his story with a five words; "I am haunted by waters" (p.161).

(1) You may find Norman Maclean's "A River Runs through It" narrowly based on a subject in which you have little or no experience and are not very interested. (2) You may find it engaging, even engrossing, as someone else's well-told story. (3) You may find it helpful in the ways it facilitates your evolving sense of life, of close relationships, and of sacred mystery.

The baptism of Jesus can be that way. (1) You or I may find it narrowly based on a subject in which we have little or no experience and are not very interested. (2) You and I may find it engaging as a Bible reader and student since it's the opening scene and the starting point for understanding young adult Jesus's unfolding ministry. (3) You may find the story of Jesus's baptism helpful in the ways it facilitates your evolving sense of life and faith.

Here's where Jesus' baptism is close to Norman Maclean's description of Montana mountain-rivers and fly fishing there. When Mr. Maclean refers to "reading the water," the goal, of course, is catching sizeable trout. Some days that happens, and some days it doesn't. The contest between the one casting the fly-rod standing above the water and the fish that may or may not be beneath the water's surface out beyond the fisherman is an endeavor which can leave the fisherman feeling foolish from the futility of one day's effort, and feeling fulfilled some other day. Yet always there are the building of memories, the experience of love relating to others in shared enjoyment, and a sense of deep loss when beloved others are no longer present in one's life. Mr. Maclean testifies how he is "haunted by waters," because when he is "out there" on a mountain-river, he remembers how life and life-with-others includes effort, failure, disappointment, joy, gratitude, sadness, grief, and renewal. "Haunted by waters means not that he or you and I are scared of water itself. It means we are led time and again to remember what is sacred, and often difficult. God speaks to Jesus when he's standing in the waters of the Jordan River being baptized by John, and Jesus senses that nothing is more important than God's love for him and for all. In fact, that love for all will be communicated through Jesus' life and through his ministries of relational caring, healing, praying, risking, mentoring, giving his all. Jesus's baptism is not an "end," but a beginning of a journey in service, following his realization that God's love is love including him – and everyone.

Sixty years ago, third-graders in my elementary school would tease first graders, asking them: “At your house, is your refrigerator running?” When the first grader said, “Yes,” the third graders replied, “You better run home and catch it before it gets away.” When the same third graders could sneak onto the family telephone, they would call a grocery store and ask about pipe tobacco, saying, “Do you have Sir Walter Raleigh in a can?” If the store employee said, “Yes,” the third grader replied, “You better let him out before he suffocates!” The smarty-pants third graders did not realize it, but they had a certain thematic kinship with Jesus’ baptism. The Gospel narrative of Jesus with John at the Jordan River illustrates the beginning of the lid of the can coming off for the continuing expansion of God’s redeeming love embodied in Jesus throughout God’s world. And the ministries of Jesus beyond that Jordan River baptism indicate how God – like the refrigerator in the teasing joke – (God) is still running. Even when Jesus faces and experiences crucifixion and death due to his ministries of relational caring, healing, praying, risking, mentoring, God is still running – to and beyond Jesus’ burial – for creating a mysterious resurrection beyond death for newness of life all the time. Jesus may have suffocated hanging on a cross, but the lid of the cave-tomb is off, and the breath of God’s Spirit carries on the way and life of Jesus in the lives of others.

Persons have varying personality types and varying spirituality types. Some prefer calm endeavors such as fly-fishing or chess, bridge or dominoes, needle-point or woodwork. Some prefer fast-moving sports such as downhill skiing, roller coaster riding, dirt-bike riding, bronco or bull riding, weight-lifting or triathlon competition. Those are recreational. For every person, though, different as we one from another, faith in life is vocational. It is a matter of God’s calling and leading God’s people by way of the love God is committed to embody in this Jesus.

In 1978, at First Presbyterian-Pasadena, Texas, my pastor/mentor/supervisor George Kluber mentioned something while officiating during a baptism I’d never heard before. He referred to the Westminster Larger Catechism, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1647, question #167: “How is our baptism to be improved by us?” The written answer given is about 180 words in length, but, summarized, the answer is: “Our baptism is improved all our life long: through temptation and sin, failure and vulnerability; through the experiencing of forgiveness; through studying the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus; through serving God’s people with love and mercy shared; through making vows of support at the baptism of others; and through remembering God’s love with faith to you.” Improving one’s baptism occurs through the experiences of human life with others as God is continually venturing forth and drawing near among God’s people.

In a moment, we will sing Natalie Sleeth’s “Song of Promise.” The note in the “Glory to God” hymnal says that she wrote the words and music in 1986, inspired by a line of poetry by Englishman T.S. Eliot, “In my end is my beginning.” Only a few years later, the anthem version of the hymn was first sung at her husband’s memorial service following his death from cancer.

One interpretation of the salvation which baptism symbolizes is the assurance of eternal security. That means that in life we may lose our way, we may lose love, we may lose faith, but God will never lose us! You don’t have to be a fly-fisherman to be haunted by waters, to be numb in agony, to be influenced from grace. Through all challenges experienced – even the most grievous, the God who ventures forth and draws near from Love is improving baptism, and we share as the beneficiaries, serving while following Jesus Christ. – All honor and praise be to God.