



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 12 JANUARY 2025 – Baptism of Christ**

**COLLECT**

Eternal Father,  
who at the baptism of Jesus  
revealed him to be your Son,  
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:  
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,  
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Psalm 29**

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven, ♦  
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; ♦  
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;  
the God of glory thunders; ♦  
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation; ♦  
the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; ♦  
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf ♦  
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning;  
the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; ♦  
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe  
and strips the forests bare; ♦  
in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'
- 9 The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood; ♦  
the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore.
- 10 The Lord shall give strength to his people; ♦  
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

**A reading from the book of Acts, chapter 8, verses 14-17.**

**Acts 8.14-17**

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 3, verses 15-17 and 21-22.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):***

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

**Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, Chapter 3, verses 15-17 and 21-22.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Luke 3.15-17, 21, 22**

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

## **The Baptism of Jesus**

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

## ***A Reflection from Hannah...***

There is a sense of foreboding as we regard the world this week- terrible weather and wildfires in the US, worrying assertions over Greenland, and wars of words here- a winnowing fork to weed out the mess sometimes feels like a good idea! The temptation to start again or 'wipe the slate clean' is a real one for many of us, and baptism enacts much of what we might feel about the need to wash away so much of the rubbish that gathers around and within us.

The problem with baptism though, is that it can only happen once, for all eternity. That's both the joy and the challenge. I often get enquiries from people asking about their own baptism- do we have a record of it, do we know where they can find 'proof'- because there are situations (like converting to Catholicism or going forward for confirmation) when proof is required. And it's required because (much as we might like to) we can't baptise people twice. I carry the scars from a verbal battering on this subject- two of my children would have loved baptism by full immersion in the repurposed birthing pool that gets set up in the courtyard at Meole Church each year, but sadly they were already 'done' when babies!

Whenever, and however we were 'done', we can never undo the moment. As baptised people, we share in the baptism of Christ who, in that moment was made ready for his ministry. Who, in that moment, was gifted a reminder of the love in which he, and all of us are held unconditionally- the delight of God descending and proclaiming it loud and clear. It reminds me of Zephaniah 3.17 (which I write on all baptism cards):

*'The Lord your God is with you,*

*He is mighty to save*

*He will take great delight in you,*

*He will quiet you with His love,*

*He will rejoice over you with singing.'*

As we remember the baptism of Jesus, we remember the sacrament of baptism in which we all share- that it is a visible sign of God's invisible grace, and by God's Spirit it continues to be the energy out of which we live and love. Much as we might want the outward rituals of rebirth and fresh starts all over again when life gets tough, we instead can remind ourselves of our baptism, recommit to the faith that we proclaimed (or was proclaimed on our behalf), and turn- turn as we are invited to turn each week when we come to confess our sins- turn to the good things of love. We don't get a second dunking, but we can always start again.