



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 11 JANUARY 2026 – 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.

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 10, verses 34-43.

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

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 Matthew, chapter 3, verses 13-17

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.**

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, Chapter 3, verses 13-17.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

A Reflection from Hannah

What imagery do you associate with Baptism? Perhaps our most common experience is that of what we more often refer to as a Christening. A baby- angled over the font, head splashed three times and then the collective holding of breath whilst we all wait to see if s/he cries or ignores it. People are smiling, dressed-up, proud. For good reasons, our fonts around Severn Loop are often not full- instead there is a (holy!) trifle bowl or similar sitting in the bottom, containing a small amount of water from the kettle, just to make sure it's not too cold.

It's a far cry from the image we have of Jesus' baptism. When John the Baptist baptised Christ, no container was involved at all. The water wasn't in a bowl, and it wasn't even in a birthing pool (the vessel of choice for adult full-submersion baptisms!). It wasn't clean and it wasn't preheated. It was free-flowing, full of life and risk- it was the water of the River Jordan. Jesus stood in its current and was dunked right in it.

In trying to 'contain' the sacrament of Baptism, we've perhaps lost something of its flow. When we baptise a baby, the rather embarrassingly uncompromising language of renouncing evil and dying with Christ is often downplayed- it feels somewhat jarring and so is rather drowned-out by the easier narrative of welcoming new life into the world with joy.

But Baptism is radical, it is weird and it is wild. In baptism we declare that sin and death do not have the final word. In baptism we unite ourselves with Christ, who stood in the free-flow of an un-sanitised river alongside a prophet from the wilderness, as a voice from heaven declared 'this is my son, with whom I am well-pleased.' The identity of Jesus was affirmed in that moment- and in the same way in our own baptism we receive our identity with confidence. The world may try to give us other names, but in the murky, boundless flow of life we, like Jesus, know who we truly are and to whom we truly belong. More than that, we are made ready to let that radical love flow out from us in a world which is likewise uncontained. In baptism we die to ourselves, and we live to Christ.