

Baptism of Christ
January 12, 2025
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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RINGING OF THE CARILLON

PRELUDE *‘Walking in the Air’ from “The Snowman”*
Arr. Sheldon Curry Karen Mohr

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Our God is a God of power and strength!
God has created each of us with tender care.
Our God is a God of majesty and awe!
God walks with each of us every step of the way.
Our God is a God of glory and wonder!
God loves each of us with tenderness and passion.
Our God calls us each by name.
God calls each of us to unite in worship together!

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God of glory and majesty, you have called us by name. We pray for the courage and the strength to answer your call. As we open our ears to hear the story of your Son’s baptism, open our hearts also, that we may experience again the renewing power of rebirth in the Holy Spirit. Inspire us in this time of worship, that we may claim our own identity as your beloved children. Amen.

HYMN *“Down By the Jordan”*

Text: Copyright © 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette
Tune: LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.4.7.8 (“Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty”)

**1 Down by the Jordan,
a prophet named John was baptizing,
Preaching a message
the people found bold and surprising:
"God will forgive!
Show that you'll change how you live!
Surely God's new day is rising!"**

**2 There by the river,
the crowd came with great expectation:
"Are you God's Chosen One,
sent here to rescue our nation?"
"No!" John replied.
"He who is mightier than I
Judges and offers salvation."**

**3 Jesus, you went to
be baptized along with the others,
Taking your place among sinners,
God's lost sons and daughters.
Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove!
Your work began in those waters.**

**4 Here in the Church,
we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.
Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy!
Can you hear it?
This is God's sign!
This is how God says, "You're mine!"
Let's take the good news and share it!**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Creator of the universe, we stand amazed at your power and glory. We are eager to worship you and offer our praise, but we are often reluctant to answer when we hear you calling our name. We sing our songs of tribute in the sanctuary, but shy away from the river, lest we be baptized with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Forgive us when we forget your promise to be with us always, O God. Renew us with the power of your ever-present love, and strengthen us to proclaim your justice throughout the world. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.
Many: And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such as *"The peace of Christ be with you,"* and the response: *"And also with you".*

RESPONSE: "Arise, Your Light is Come"

#164 NCH verse 1

**Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today!**

CHILDREN'S TIME

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Down to the River to Pray" arr. Sheldon Curry

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 43:1-7 (NIV)

¹But now, this is what the Lord says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
³For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush and Seba in your stead.
⁴Since you are precious and honored in my sight,
and because I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—
⁷everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

NEW TESTAMENT Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (NIV)

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

²¹When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

SERMON "Beloved" Pastor Julie

HYMN "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry"

#351 NCH John Ylvisaker

**1 I was there to hear your borne cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.
I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
I'll be there in case you wander off
to find where demons dwell.**

**2 "When you found the wonder of the Word,
I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living God,
to whom you now belong.
Should you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk till rising sun."**

**3 "In the middle ages of your life,
Not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been,
with just one more surprise."**

**4 "I was there to hear your borne cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized
to see your life unfold."**

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) from Messiah
G.F. Handel

Doxology:

Praise God, the Source of life and birth;
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth;
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame;
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, we come today with joy for your baptism; we come with praise for your glory; we come with gratitude for your love. As we offer these gifts to you, send your Spirit upon us, that our hands and our hearts may do your work in the world. As we offer our lives to you, bless us with your strength, that we may join with you to work for the blessing of peace throughout the world. Amen.

HYMN *Go, My Children, with My Blessing*
#719 W&R vs. 1-3 (alternate #82 NCH) Jaroslav J. Vajda

1 Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river
I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing
- you are my own.

2 Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you,
what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story;
here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

3 Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you;
here with tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished,
joyful and free.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN *"Go, My Children, With My Blessing"*
#719 W&R verse 4

4 I, the Lord, will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I, the Lord, will smile upon you and give you peace:
I, the Lord, will be your Parent, Savior, Comforter,
and Brother.
Go, my children, I will keep you and give you peace.

BENEDICTION

You are each precious in God's sight.

**We go from this place,
claiming our identity as children of God.**

God has called you by name.

**We go into the world to answer God's call.
Alleluia!**

In Jesus' Name, go in peace.

AMEN.

POSTLUDE

Karen Mohr



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored
anonymously with the message
"May his word be heard by All".

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, January 12, 2025

<https://youtube.com/live/fuDNULQlvQo>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 12th –

- **10 AM** Deacon Host – Janice Miller
Greeter(s) – Pat Acheson, Herman Seebandt
Usher(s) – Don Quicker, Jerry Quicker
PowerPoint – Bonnie Weyer

Tuesday, January 7th –

- **1 PM** Bible Study

Wednesday, January 15th -

- **5:30 PM** Council Meeting

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Jan 12 – Mathis'

Jan 19 –

Jan 26 –

Feb 2 -

We need people to sign up



*Meal
Giveaway*

January 19, 2025

UCC - Neillsville

515 West Second Street

10:45-11:00 AM



We will once again be collecting
soup for the local food pantry.
We are challenged by the Calvary
Lutheran Church and St. Mary's
Catholic Church to see who can
bring in the most cans. Please
bring in before Super Bowl
Sunday – February 9th