

**Service of Worship**  
**Sunday, January 12, 2014**  
**"Baptism of Jesus Sunday:**  
**Is Baptism an Initiation or Imitation"**

For reflection

1. Jesus' baptism was, for him and all humanity, a "hinge event" - a moment when the nature of things changed forever.

*- what have been some hinge events in your life, times when you crossed lines in the sand, and life felt changed forever?*

*- on Baptism of Christ Sunday, we remember our own baptisms, and also think of our own lives shaped by being called God's child and faithful servant. How might we help one another to recall our beloved natures?*

2. Water is an archetype, a universal symbol easily associated with birth and rebirth, purification, the mystery of creation, and the unseen "beneath" parts of our spiritual lives. Water shows up across cultures, eras, and artistic mediums. In 2012, *water.org* reported that 884 million people lacked access to water; 3.575 million die each year from a water-related disease; every 20 seconds, a child dies from a water-related illness; 10% of our waste is treated, the rest goes into our rivers, lakes, and oceans; women spend 200 million hours a day collecting water. Studies show that, when sanitary water is available, 11% more girls are able to attend school.

*- given its universal meaning for Christianity (and humanity), what does it mean, symbolically and literally, that humans pollute exactly what we see as a vehicle to our blessing from God?*

*\* an invitation to rise in body or spirit, as you are comfortable*

## **Welcome & Announcements**

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

*(light Christ candle)*

L: The light in all of life!

**ALL: Thanks be!**

## **North Derby - lighting memorial candle in memory of Rob Gill**

### **Call to Worship**

**\*Opening Hymn - 274 "Your Hand, O God, has Guided" vs 1-4**

### **Opening Prayer (all)**

God, who spoke words of love for Jesus at his baptism, and who yet speaks words of love for us at the font, be present. Speak to us anew this day, that we may speak boldly of you in a world that desperately longs to be re-created in your love. Amen.

**Children's Hymn - 444 "Child of Blessing" vs. 1, 2**

### **Time with the Children & Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn - "Child of Blessing" vs. 3, 4**

### **Prayer of Confession (all) (based on Psalm 29)**

The voice of God is powerful; the God of glory thunders; the voice of God flashes forth flames of fire: before this God, we humbly bow and confess that we have not lived in the freedom of our baptism. We have not loved God as God loves us; we have not loved our neighbours as we are bidden. As you ordered the chaos of creation, so order the chaos of our lives. Speak to us tender words of love and forgiveness.

***Silence is kept for personal prayer.***

### **Assurance of Grace**

L: God speaks again and again words of love and forgiveness, "You are my son - my daughter - my beloved ones; with you I am well pleased." Hear these words and go in peace. Our sins are forgiven. Live in the freedom God offers you. Thanks be to God!

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:13-17**

**Music for Meditation**

## **Sermon - "*Baptism: an Initiation or Imitation?*"**

### **Offering & \*Offertory - 542 "We give you.."**

#### **\*Prayer of Dedication (all)**

God of glory, in baptism we dedicate our lives to you and pledge to become your voice of love in the world. Hold us close to our baptismal vows as we bring ourselves, our time, our talents and possessions to you, that they may be signs of your love in our community and world. Use us and all we have to your glory. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

#### **Affirmation of Faith & Time of Meditation**

*(an invitation to those who wish, to come to the font and receive a blessing from a church elder)*

*Blessing: "Remember, you are a beloved son/daughter of God."*

### **\*Closing Hymn - 442 "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters"**

#### **\*Sending Forth**

L: Tradition holds that whenever the 16th century Martin Luther felt himself wading in murky waters, when he felt his fear rising, his doubt growing, or his energy fading, he would cry out: "I am baptized!" In this cry he would find renewed energy and strength. Let's make this our rallying cry.

L: You are baptized!

**All: I am baptized!**

L: Go, and live into your baptism.

#### **\*Tri-fold Amen**

Sources: "SpiritFUSION - Seasons of the Spirit, Epiphany 2014", Wood Lake Publishing