

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Almighty and Gracious God, Creator and Judge of all people, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for Your concern to establish justice on the Earth. We thank You for sending Your Son as a servant, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world, to bring justice to all the people of the world. We thank You for identifying Him as Your beloved Son by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit and power at His Baptism. For revealing Yourself as the Triune God at the Baptism of our Lord, we give You humble and hearty thanks. Now we know for certain that He is Your Son Whom You sent to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of Satan. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE ADVENT WREATH IS GONE, BUT ONE CANDLE REMAINS.

This is the single Christ Candle from the center of the wreath. Jesus is the light of the world and we will keep the Christ Candle through the season of Epiphany to remind ourselves to live by His light. When John began to preach in the wilderness the crowds came to hear. After John baptized Jesus, the crowds were a witness to the anointing of Jesus into His threefold office as Prophet, Priest and King. We come today in the crowds that follow the light of Jesus,. He comes to speak of our future in His kingdom, accomplished in His sacrifice. As we ponder this great work through all the lessons in the Epiphany Season, we begin first with the Baptism of Jesus. This first event in the ministry of Jesus was done with us in mind and for our benefit. Jesus was the perfect man. He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness for us.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Servant Is God

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Isaiah 42:1a;) Psalm 2:7-11, 12c
Isaiah 42:1 is from the Old Testament Lesson. Psalm 2 was written by Ezra to introduce us to the Son of God, the King of kings. We sang the first part of this Psalm on Christmas Eve.

COLLECT

The Baptism and anointing of Jesus was done for our favor and benefit. Jesus as the innocent and sinless one needed neither. In accepting the Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christ made it possible for our flesh to receive them. His faithfulness imparted to us as faith.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 42:1-9

There are four "Servant Songs," in Isaiah. This is the first. The One to be born into the world is shown as the One who will suffer for His people. Things are done to Him that are an insult to the Servant. These were necessary to show that He was able to defeat sin and Satan in our flesh. The people at the time of Christ expected the Messiah to be a military leader. This is surprising because Isaiah presented Him as never even raising His voice. Isaiah is a commentary on faithfulness to God and the will of God that will be shown and proven by the Servant. What we never accomplished the Servant made real for our life. We receive His suffering and death; as a gift of faith, in the water and Word of our Baptism.

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

Psalm 117 (a two verse Psalm) is a general song of praise for all God has done. Psalm 96 was sung as the Ark was moved into Jerusalem. It looked beyond that event to the reign of the Christ and especially to the time when the Gentiles would join in the celebration of the kingdom.

EPISTLE LESSON—Romans 6:1-11

Paul brought the truth of both Law and Gospel to bear on the daily life of believers. He addressed the practical problems of daily life. The Law makes us a prisoner of the law. If we sin we prove to whom we belong. If we continue sinning after we have understood the wonder of the payment; the atonement made for us by Christ, given to us in the water and the Word of our Baptism, we show ourselves not to be children of God but still slaves of sin; the world, Satan and our sinful flesh. We are in a relationship with God, we are Baptized, Christ died to make us clean, we have been raised above sin, so just stop it.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 3:13-17

In Medieval art, our Lord's Baptism often has a hand reaching down from Heaven to bless and to equip Jesus. For Him it was just a helping hand,