

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Almighty and Gracious God, creator and judge of all people, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for Your decision to establish justice on the Earth. We thank You for sending Your Servant, our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring justice to all nations. We thank You for identifying Him as Your beloved Son by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit and power at His Baptism. For revealing in Him Your true self 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, our expectations are secure. 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. Today we hear of Jesus' Epiphany/appearance at the Jordan River to be Baptized by John. Jesus calls us to Himself with His Baptism, making it the light by which we are able to see Heaven. In the water and the Word of our Baptism, which has been given its power because and through the Baptism of Jesus, we are given our epiphany (our appearance) before God. In our epiphany before God, we are made to appear as if we are perfect and Holy because Jesus puts His work and His person on us. The Epiphany of Jesus at the Jordan River to be Baptized by John has become for us the wonder and the blessing of faith.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Baptism Of Our Lord

INTROIT—(Isaiah 42:1a;) Psalm 2:7-11, 12a
(Isaiah 42 is the historic Old Testament Lesson for today. We changed it in the 2006 Hymnal.) There are four Servant Songs in Isaiah. This is the first. In it, the One to be born into the world is shown as the One Who will suffer for His people. 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 were done for our benefit. Jesus as the innocent and sinless one needed neither. In accepting both the Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christ made it possible for our flesh to receive both the Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which imparts into us (personally) His work of faithfulness. In the water and Word of our Baptism His faithfulness becomes our faith

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Genesis 1:1-5

It is important to your salvation that you accept that God created the world in six, twenty-four hour days. Here is Jeffrey Kloha, to explain: "In the science vs faith controversy...If God is not powerful enough to create the world, then neither is He powerful enough to redeem. If no Creator, then no Savior, and no Spirit...But with the Creator comes salvation, wholeness, restoration, new creation. Genesis 1 puts us in our place. And what a 'good' place it is."

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

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

EPISTLE LESSON—Romans 6:1-11

Paul brings the truth of both Law and Gospel to bear on the daily life of the believer. He addresses the practical problems of daily life with the question of following in the footsteps of Christ. The Law makes us a prisoner of the law. If we sin we prove to whom we belong. If we go on sinning after we have understood the wonder of the payment, the atonement made for us by Christ, (and given to us in the water and the Word of our Baptism,) then 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, and our sin shows that we are putting others in the place of God. We are Baptized, Christ died to make us clean, we have been raised above sin, so just stop it.