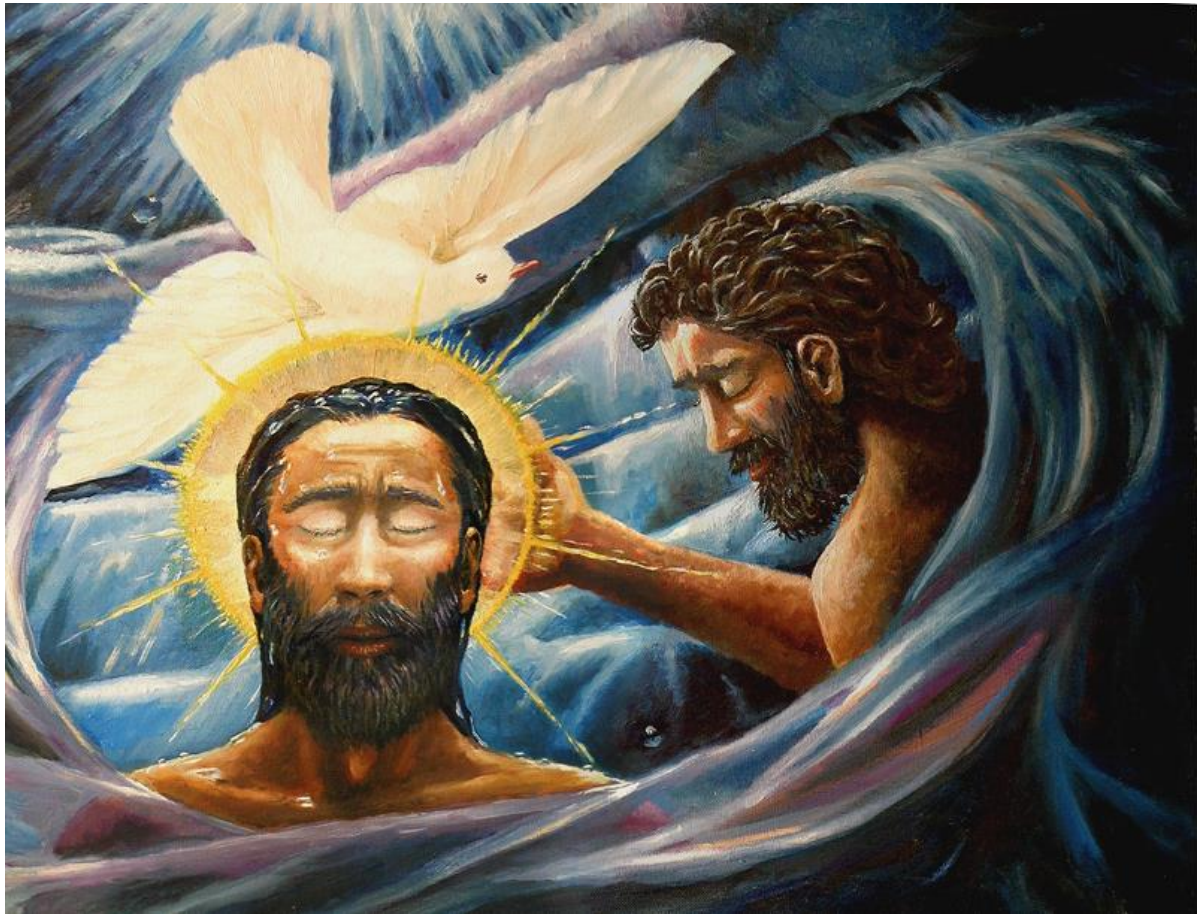


Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church-E.L.C.A.



We trust our Belovedness: We began our series by acknowledging our weariness and we conclude with trusting our belovedness; ultimately, our joy is rooted in the fact that we belong to God. In the story of Jesus' baptism, the heavens part open and the voice of God wraps Jesus in joy and loving care. Some translations of *Luke 3:22* read, "in you, I find happiness and delight." Therefore, we can conclude that we are also the source of God's joy. When we trust our belovedness, we live and give fully—we are compelled to treat all of creation with tenderness and care. When we trust our belovedness, we have endless reasons to rejoice.

Baptism of The Lord
Sunday, January 14th, 2024

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church—E.L.C.A.

Ministers:

You, All Members of G.A.

Pastor:

Jaime Decker

Prelude Music

Welcome/Announcements

Gathering

Call to Worship

L: There are some days when I need the reminder that I belong to God. Do you ever feel that way?

C: Yes. We do. The world can be a harsh place; we often need that reminder.

L: Well then, let us care for one another. Let us speak the truth we each need to hear. Church, you belong to God. You are God's beloved.

C: Friend, you belong to God. You are God's beloved.

L: Let us worship the God who knows our names.

C: Let us worship the God who calls us beloved. Amen.

Call to Confession

L: Our scripture passage for today tells the story of Jesus being baptized. The Gospel of Luke tells us that the sky opened up and the voice of God was heard saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well-pleased" (Luke 3:22). Friends, I don't think that's the only time God has said words like that. If I understand the promise of scripture, then I believe God delights in you. God created you. God loves you with the same passion that we hear God express in today's scripture. So trusting that good news, trusting that we are beloved, let us go to God in prayer. For we know that the one who listens, listens with love. What greater gift exists than that? Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

L: Loving God, **C: From the very beginning, you breathed life into us and called us good. However, somewhere along the way we replaced "good" with "not enough." Somewhere along the way we turned the volume up on that phrase and began to doubt our own self-worth. Forgive us, for this is not what you have taught us. For when the world tells us we are not enough, you call us beloved. Show us how to return to that truth. Show us how to let go of our weariness and rest in that good news. Amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

L: Family of faith, God's grace and understanding is deeper and wider than we could possibly imagine. So say these words of grace with me:

C: Our story begins with belovedness. Even when we lose our way, even if we stumble and fall, God never stops breaking through the clouds to claim us. We are known. We are forgiven. We are beloved. Thanks be to God! Amen.

***Gathering Hymn**

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW #715 (Verse 1)

***Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***Prayer For Illumination**

L: Beloved God, Through the pages of scripture, you have sprinkled your love for us like an echoed refrain. Despite its repeated truth, we too often allow that good news to roll off of us like water, barely allowing it to touch us. Make today different. As we read your Word aloud, let the truth of your love for creation seep into our bones.

C: May we hear your echoes of “beloved” deep within us and respond with overflowing joy. We are here. We are listening. Amen.

Word

Psalm

29

Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God’s name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice; the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD bursts forth in lightning flashes.

The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, “Glory!”

The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king for evermore.

O LORD, give strength to your people; give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

R: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word

Gospel Acclamation

pg. 205

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:21-22

P: The Holy Gospel according to _____

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

P: The Gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

Hymn of the Day

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW #715 (Verse 2&3)

Affirmation of Faith

I believe that the God I see in scripture is a God of love. I believe that God created me and delights in that creation. I believe the psalmist who says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” I believe that, just as God

called Jesus “beloved,” God extends this same term of endearment to us. I believe that no matter our earthly challenges, nothing could strip me of that sacred title. I could fail every test, miss every goal, drop every ball, and I would still be God’s beloved. Therefore, I cling to this promise like a rock in the storm. I anchor myself with this good news, allowing the anxiety of the day to roll over me as best I can, because I know where I belong. I am a child of God. I am beloved. I strive to live this way. Amen.

Prayer of the People

L: God of baptismal waters, There are a million other places we could be right now, but we chose to be here. We needed to be here.

C: We needed to hear, once more, that we are created in your image— fiercely loved and uniquely called.

L: We needed to hear your words of affirmation because the world is an exhausting place. Over and over again we are surrounded with reminders that we should be doing more, we should be doing better, we should be working harder. The list of “coulds” and “shoulds” is so long that we can lose ourselves in them.

C: But then we come to your sanctuary and we hear you say that you delight in us. And all of the sudden, things fall into place once again.

L: Loving and claiming God, help us to see ourselves the way you see us. Give us the grace and the tenderness to love ourselves as you love us. Remind us that we are worthy of Sabbath, worthy of grace, worthy of love and belonging. In silence, we lift up the prayers that we carry for ourselves in this moment. May you hear these words and draw near to us, O God. *Pause for a moment of silent prayer.*

L: Gracious God, we are not the only ones who need your care and affirmation.

C: So today we also ask for the wisdom to give compassion to our neighbors—friends and strangers alike. Teach us how to be advocates for others so that all might know that they are a beloved child of God.

L: In particular, today we pray forBe with them. Renew their spirits. Remind them, just as you remind us, that they all are loved by you. And until your promised day when joy outweighs weariness, we will return to the water’s edge.

C: We will continue to look for you in our midst, and we will continue to affirm belovedness in one another. Amen.

Offering and Make-A-Change Offering

Children’s Message

Offering Prayer

L: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **C: Amen.**

***Lord’s Prayer**

Sending

*Benediction

Family of faith, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world— so speak tenderly. Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God’s beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it. Amen.

*Sending Hymn

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW #715 (Verse 4&5)

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. You are God’s beloved.

C: Share the Good News of God’s Word and serve the community and the world. Thanks be to God.

*Postlude

Bulletin Donated:

Mission Statement of Gustaf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God’s Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

++++
We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord’s real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ’s name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and live streamed by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35904. CCLI# 3138595 and #21256999

*Words for Worship for Advent–Baptism of the Lord Sunday Written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed
Liturgy adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
Images copyright A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*