

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
January 8, 2023 – 10 am BAPTISM OF JESUS SUNDAY

*Indicates stand as able

* *The live service will be broadcasted and recorded on YouTube, check your email for the link.*

***Opening Hymn: Jesus Came to Be Baptized - Voices United #100**

1 When Jesus comes to be baptized,
he leaves the hidden years behind,
the years of safety and of peace.
to bear the sins of humankind.

2 The Spirit of the Lord comes down,
anoints the Christ to suffering,
to preach the word, to free the bound,
and to the mourner, comfort bring.

3 He will not quench the dying flame,
and what is bruised he will not break,
but heal the wound injustice dealt,
and out of death his triumph make.

4 O Spirit help us be like Christ:
to live in love and charity,
to walk in truth and justice now,
and grow in Christian dignity.

5 We praise you, God, source of all life,
we praise you, Christ, eternal Word,
we praise you, Spirit, gracious gift,
your triune presence fills our world.

*Words v 1-3, Stanbrook Abbey, 1974, 1995; v4-5 Concacan Inc., 1989; Music Musikalisches Handbuch, 1690
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Acknowledgement of Territory

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

As we begin our worship today, we remember that in this congregation, we live and work on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin and Anishinaabe Peoples. We give thanks for their stewardship of the land and the water, the plants and the animals, through many generations. We also acknowledge their story, and our place in it, with sorrow. As we continue to live on this land with respect for it and for its people, may we commit to working toward truth, justice and reconciliation. All my relations. Meegwetch.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Acolytes: Sue Morrison

We light this Christ Candle to remember that day when Jesus was baptized by John at the Jordan River. This light invites us to listen to God's voice calling us God's beloved. This light urges us to follow Jesus' way of love and justice. This light calls us to be immersed in the Holy Spirit's power so we may offer the light of Christ as hope and peace for the world.

Welcome & Announcements

Rev. Kim Vidal

Good morning! Happy New Year! May this year bring you many blessings, good health and opportunities to love and serve others. On behalf of BCUC, I welcome and greet you on this Baptism of Jesus Sunday as we remember Jesus' baptism at the Jordan River. Today, we are also reminded of the vows that we have professed at our baptism. Join us for coffee and fellowship after the service in the main hall. (*some announcements.*)

Friends, as we welcome a New Year in our midst, let us take a moment to reflect and remember what the season of Epiphany means for us: to make way for God's light to shine in our lives. Let us now gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) **Rev. Lorrie Lowes** (Inspired by
the words of Rt. Rev. Richard Bott, The Gathering ACE 2012-2013, Year C. Used with permission.)

Water... **to quench our thirst.**

Water... **to cleanse our bodies.**

Water... **to refresh our souls.**

Water... **to remind us of new life!**

Come, come and see Jesus being baptized,

who offers us the water of life,

the spring that will never run dry,

the one who quenches our thirst,

and invites us to be who we can even imagine!

Come to the water.

We come to remember.

Come to relive.

We come to worship God. Alleluia!

Prayer of Approach: (Unison)

(Kate Crawford, The Gathering ACE 2012-2013, Year C. Used with permission.)

Just as Jesus went down under the water to be baptized,

so may we immerse ourselves in worship and praise.

Just as Jesus did this to fulfill all righteousness,

so may we seek to be righteous all our days.

Just as the Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove,

may we know the blessing of the Spirit's presence

settling gently on us now and making our intentions holy. Amen.

Special Music:

Time for the Young at Heart: **Rev. Lorrie**

Prayer of Jesus /The Lord's Prayer: (Unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory,

Forever and ever, Amen.

***Hymn: Behold, I Make All Things New – More Voices #115**

sing twice

Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold,)
I make all things new,
beginning with you and starting from today.
Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold,)
I make all things new, my promises true,
for I am Christ the way.

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Prayer for Illumination:

Reader: Neil Lowes

As the blessing of the Holy Spirit is given to Jesus at his baptism, may the blessing of the same Spirit be given to us as we hear and reflect on this Gospel story. Amen.

The Reading: Matthew 3: 13-17 (NRSV) The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

May God’s wisdom dwell where the word is spoken. **Thanks be to God!**

Ministry of Music: Child of God – Ken Dosso

BCUC Choir

Sermon: “Immersed in the Waters of Love” Rev. Kim

Prayers of the People:¹ Rev. Kim

Let us gather our hearts in prayer through these words inspired by a prayer written by Rev. Gord Dunbar:

The sparkling lights of Christmas are gone
and the guiding light of the Magi-followed star has moved on,
so we feel left in the darkness of wintry nights.

It seems the special quality of wonder and awe has left us.

Yet, when we wander down the river’s edge, following the crowd,

We don’t expect much to change – though we seek entertainment.

Along the way we notice a world in conflict,

striving for supremacy,

eager to force the weak to submit,

the powerless to keep silent.

We see it in Ukraine where the Russian-instigated war is still very much present claiming human lives and ecological disaster.

¹ Gord Dunbar, the Gathering, ACE 2009-2010, Used with permission.

We see it through the ongoing human rights violations in Afghanistan.
We see it written on the faces of political leaders in the midst of global economic turndowns.
We see it etched in the worried faces of teachers and students fearful of another pandemic year.
We see it carved by the tears of the indigenous communities mourning the loss of loved ones.
We pause along the way,
hoping for the light of grace,
to pray for the world.
We continue along the way,
finally stopping at the river,
noticing faces in the crowd,
faces from our community,
faces showing the struggle with loneliness and isolation,
faces wearied by the ongoing strain of dealing with the COVID pandemic
and other health issues,
faces painted over with masks to hide the difficult wrestling with grief and death.
We pause once more,
Feeling our connection and our interweaving,
praying for healing and hope.
We gaze at the ordinary river –
where John and Jesus engaged in a water ritual,
but nothing out of the ordinary,
yet we see grace and hope written in baptism shared,
justice practised, love profoundly proclaimed.
A leap of faith!
In Jesus' baptism is our wholeness and we give joyful thanks!
In our journey to the river, O God,
we come to take risks,
offering ourselves, our love, our prayers.
All these we ask in the name of Jesus Christ,
baptized in the waters of Jordan. Amen.

Musical Offering:

Invitation to Offer:

Rev. Lorrie

The Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus on his baptism is with us in amazing and powerful ways, bringing shining new hope into the world. As we remember our own baptism, may we participate in the ministry of our church with that great hope, trusting in the promises of God. In our offering today, our love overflows in generosity.

We are not passing the offering plates this morning as we continue to follow health protocols, but you will find those plates on the table in the narthex. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or using the mail slot by the kitchen door, or by e-transfer. Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

Offertory Hymn: We Give Our Thanks - More Voices #187

1. We give our thanks to God, (4X)

5. We give our hearts to you, (3X)
because you first loved us.

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Offertory Prayer: (Unison) (Fern Gibbard, The Gathering, ACE 2016-2017, Used with permission.)
**In baptism, we have received the gift of the Spirit;
in return we offer these gifts of gratitude
that they may become a source of hope to those in need. Amen.**

Hymn: River – More Voices #3

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 River, rush-a-down to the ocean blue,
River from a mountain high.
River, as you do what rivers do,
River, draw the Spirit nigh. | 3 Water, let me drink of your healing pow'r,
Water, strength and life you give.
Water, as I travel with each hour,
Water, help my body live. |
| 2 Spirit, come-a-down to the river-side,
Spirit, spark of wondrous thought.
Spirit, I am free for you to guide,
Spirit, pray that I be taught! | 4 River, flow-a-down where you ran before,
River, source of clearer view.
River, as I walk your rocky shore,
River, see my journey through.
See my journey through... |

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Sending Forth: (responsively) Rev. Kim

(Inspired by the prayers of Rev. Dawn Hutchings and Beth W. Johnson)

Let the waters of baptism sooth you, nourish you,
and sustain you for all the possibilities yet to come!

We are the beloved children of a Creator who rejoices with us!

Listen closely.

**We hear the flapping of the wings of a dove
as the Holy Spirit alights upon us.**

Go forth as God's beloved children, knowing that the refreshing waters
will sustain you in your journey, now and always. **Amen.**

Sung Blessing: Peace Be With You – More Voices #215 *sing twice*

Peace be with you, peace forever,
Peace be with you, my friends.
Till we meet again, may God be with you.
Peace, peace, peace.