

**Epiphany 1C**  
**Saint James and Good Shepherd, Laconia, NH**  
**The Rev. Dr. Janet Lombardo**  
**January 9, 2022**

### **Living Into Our Baptism**

Today, as we welcome and celebrate the newest members of our community, we also remember the Baptism of Jesus. Jesus' baptism by John is the beginning of his gospel ministry. It is interesting to note that Jesus' baptism is celebrated right after Christmas, when we still think of him as the babe in the manger. But make no mistake! In his Baptism, Jesus is a grown man about to embark on a difficult ministry, one that will ultimately lead to his death on the cross. Also, John the Baptist, that fiery character crying out in the wilderness, baptizing Jesus this day, ends up with his head on a platter. I think we forget the sacrifices that have been made, and are still being made, on behalf of God's work in our world. Walking a life in faith is not without risks and rewards.

How are you living into your Baptism? What risks have you taken for the Gospel. What sacrifices have you been willing to make to further God's work in this world? All of you have made sacrifices for the Gospel. Just starting your Sunday morning with worship is a sacrifice of a sort. You could argue that worship is a gift, but still you chose to be here, against all the other places that you could be.

Choice is the bedrock of our culture, we don't like to be told what to do. In fact, you could argue that the American dream is all about choice. We all make choices every day on how we want to be in the world. We all make choices of how we live into our Baptism.

Sometimes we have too many choices, too many distractions that take us away from what is most important to us. So how do we keep our focus on our priorities, to keep our lives centered on God? One way to do that is to focus on awe. When we live our lives with awe, we remember how small we really are, how big the world is, and how awesome God is. When we live our lives with awe, we remember that we are not the center of the universe, and that our needs and wants are not really that important in the grand scheme of things.

Awe can lead to prayer, and to gratitude. Prayer of thanksgiving, for this world that God has created and for the beauty of all things and all people. Prayer reminds us that we belong to God and that the powers of the universe are part of us. Prayer brings us humility to know that we are one small piece of a much larger community. Prayer and awe help us to remember that the world does not revolve around our needs or wants. In fact, prayer and awe help us to respond to the wants and needs of others.

In Youth formation this morning we talked about prayer and the different kinds of prayers. We made prayer beads, something to hold, something to remember that we are part of a faith community, part of a bigger picture. Too often we forget. We forget that we are more than our concerns for the moment. We are more than our things or our stuff. That all of us are interconnected, one to another. That together we work to bring about God's kingdom in this place. Each of us is important, each of us has a role to play.

When Jesus is Baptized this morning by John, as he comes up out of the water, a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." We are God's beloved and that is an awesome thing! Let us live our lives knowing that we are God's beloved, and with that we are called to be God's hands in this world. We are called to set things right, to bring justice and peace. We are called to take risks to try new things, to be open to the spirit's nudges. We are called to be people of faith, people of awe, and to offer hope, justice, and peace to this weary world. We are called to be people of prayer, that our prayers may offer comfort and strength, that our prayers may hold all that are in need.

Thanks be to God! Amen