

JANUARY 10th : THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

DIGITAL PRINT SERVICE: FIRST SACKVILLE PRESBYTERIAN

Call to Worship

Leader: You are God's precious people!

People: With thanks and praise, we honour our Creator.

Leader: You are Christ's followers.

People: With awe and joy, we journey the way of faithfulness.

Leader: Let us worship God!

Prayer of Adoration

O God, at the dawn of creation, your Spirit danced upon the waters. At the baptism of Jesus, your Spirit revealed him to be the One through whom your love would move through the world. Teach us, we pray, to lean upon that love and the abundance of your Spirit, so we may follow Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Spirit. Amen.

Hymn 291 Thou whose almighty Word

Prayer of Confession

God of majesty and mercy, forgive our wrongdoing: things we have done knowingly, things we have left undone, hurts we have inflicted unintentionally, and hurts we have tried to disguise. Forgive our acts of selfishness, harmful things we have done to please others, and those done to please ourselves. In the days ahead, help us to follow a better way. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

L: Friends, hear the Good News! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us.

P: Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us.

L: Friends, believe the Good News!

P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Hymn 476 Amigos de Cristo/Friends of the Lord

First Sackville Presbyterian Church – January 10, 2021

“Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy, and love others as well as you love yourself.” Mark 12: 29-31

Mission Capsule – PCCWeb Presence for Congregations and Ministries

A website extends the ministry and mission of a congregation beyond the church walls, giving members the ability to make the most of their church experience, and allowing visitors the opportunity to learn more about a congregation. A great church website should share details about your congregation's ministry, highlight news and events, offer online worship services, and let people know about upcoming activities, mission projects and fundraisers. Your gifts to Presbyterians Sharing equip congregations and groups of the PCC with simple and easily maintained websites through PCCWeb – a free web hosting and technical support service provided by the Communications Office. To learn more, visit presbyterian.ca/pccweb

READINGS for January 10 – God speaks through the Scriptures

READING	VERSE	REFLECTION
<i>Old Testament</i>	Genesis 1: 1-5	
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 29	
<i>Epistle</i>	Acts 19: 1-7	
<i>Gospel</i>	Mark 1: 4-11	

Hymn 183 *Christ, When for Us you were Baptized*

SERMON: To Whom do you Belong?

As Mark tells the story of Jesus' baptism in a few words, we learn from him the significance of baptism for all Christians. Baptism is the moment when God announces a claim on us through water and the word. God announces that we are citizens in a new dominion.

God gathers us in a love that precedes all human relationships, a love that comes before every family tie. Baptism announces that we belong to God.

“You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.”

John was in the Jordan river baptizing people as a sign of repentance when Jesus comes upon the scene. We are not told why he was there but he must have stood there with the crowds. The people are receiving baptism from John in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

First Sackville Presbyterian Church – January 10, 2021

“Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy, and love others as well as you love yourself.” Mark 12: 29-31

As Jesus comes out of the river he sees the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove, there is no question according to Mark this is a sign that God has broken into human history in a significant way.

The evidence of baptism is found in what we do with our lives. It's an event that guides the way we live. What matters most is how we live after baptism. As Mark tells us about the baptism of Jesus, he sees it as the moment when Jesus first walks in to the picture. We first see Jesus in the Jordan. In Mark there are no shepherds, no wise men, no angels, no mention of Mary and Joseph. There is no manger, no temple dedication, no Christmas carols by Simeon and Anna. There is only a baptism, as if to say, Here is the way it began.

This is when Jesus began to make a difference in people's lives. This is where heaven touched down on earth. Jesus' ministry began when he was baptized. When Jesus comes up from the river he is sent into the wilderness. How long was he there alone with God in the desert? We shall never know. Forty days is simply a symbolic number meaning a long time.

From there he goes to a synagogue and begins to preach. Then a man screams at Jesus and Jesus tells him to be silent. Suddenly the man was calm. The man is fine and the people say,

“What is this? A new teaching – with authority.”

From there he goes to the house of Simon and Andrew where Simon's mother-in-law lies in bed with a fever. Jesus takes her hand and lifts her up and the fever leaves her. She is feeling so good that she now makes them lunch. The word spreads and though it was the evening of the Sabbath when people were expected to sit back and do nothing, they are suddenly getting busy. They bring to Jesus their friends and neighbors and he heals them.

Baptism is the moment when God says, 'you belong to me and I am sending you into the world to make a difference.' For Mark, John the Baptist marks the end of an old order while Jesus was the beginning of a new order.

The good news in our text is that God does not abandon the world to its own inclinations. God does not ignore a world that is prone to its own selfishness, God does not walk away from a world that is enamored with its own destruction. The promise of Christ's baptism and ours is that heaven touches earth, and as a result earth is changed. By our baptism we belong to Christ, his

First Sackville Presbyterian Church – January 10, 2021

“Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy, and love others as well as you love yourself.” Mark 12: 29-31

mission of establishing justice, healing the sick, freeing the confined and calling all to be servants of the servant. Amen.

Prayers:

God of grace, who calls us to pray with open hearts we come before you now. We thank you for the work and ministry of your church and the ministry of service. We pray for churches that are struggling financially, for churches involved in conflict, for those tired and in need of renewal; and for congregations that have found a new sense of purpose.

We thank you for the healing we have known in our lives: for the experience of being loved and for mended relationships. We pray, O God, for comfort in this time when a pandemic still hurts so many people.

We pray now for brothers and sisters across the world who are striving for unity in places of division; for justice in the face of oppression; for peace where violence has broken out; and for daily bread in the midst of poverty and famine. Give them hope and courage to face this new year.

O God, strengthen us to serve you with our words and our actions. Help us to see others with your eyes, and reach out with your compassion, especially where differences divide. Teach us how to work together and show what it means to follow you. We pray now, O God, in the words Jesus taught us, saying...

Hymn 401 *O Spirit of the Living God*

COMMISSIONING/BENEDICTION

A voice is heard in heaven saying,
"I am with you always."

A voice is heard in heaven saying,
"With you I am well pleased."

Let us go, go with God as beloved children,
And do that which is pleasing to God.

First Sackville Presbyterian Church – January 10, 2021

“Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy, and love others as well as you love yourself.” Mark 12: 29-31