



## Sunday Worship in the Clarendon Churches 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 The Baptism of Christ

This Service can be found with sound  
and video at  
<https://ClarendonCofE.org/210110>

### Welcome

By Revd Simon

### The Collect

Eternal Father,  
who at the baptism of Jesus  
revealed him to be your Son,  
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:  
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,  
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### New Testament Reading

*Mark 1.4-11 – read by Debbie Mclsaac*

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

### Reflection

By Revd Simon

How the world seems to have changed for us in such a short time. Last Sunday we were having services in all our churches and music and now, now we're protecting ourselves and others in lockdown.

As we start Lockdown, I recognise it comes at a difficult time of the year normally, in the first full week of the year it's a time to get back into the swing of normality: For our minds to move from Christmas and New Year, and start to plan for the forthcoming year. What are our big events ... and if you're like me, maybe where and when are our holidays going to be. It is if we have started something in this Lockdown and we're not quite sure where it is leading us, nor how long it will be.

Today as we celebrate the baptism of our Lord. I have to confess that for this biblical event I have the nagging question. Why? Why did Jesus have to get Baptised? He was God so what was going on theologically and practically.

Well the answer, some would say, is that it's because baptism is the entry into faith and as Jesus is human it is therefore significant that Jesus was baptised ... to be with us, and leave it at that!

However, that for me is just too neat an answer. I'm afraid in my mind I try to imagine just what was his motivation. I can picture him standing in line, waiting with all the others; those many who had come from the Judean countryside and the people of Jerusalem to be baptised by John. I picture lots of people, lots of bustle and possible confusion, for some it would have been a great effort and a long journey just to have got there.

What was Jesus thinking when he was waiting to be baptised? What was His motivation? Maybe he recognised he was the Son of God and so maybe he had that 'what on earth am I doing this for?' feeling. Did he have to have his divinity confirmed to himself by God, before he started his ministry? Or Maybe he was just drawn to John by an inexplicable desire. Did he know what he was getting into, or was it a bit like us now as we go into lockdown: not quite sure where it will lead him.

Unfortunately for us, the writer of Mark's Gospel does not answer these question – but rather gives lots of details about John the Baptist. And We can recognise in John that he was in-the-mould of the Old Testament prophets – preaching a message of repentance for sins – preparing for the day of Lord – He recognised that the Baptism that he was performing was nothing in comparison to that of the Baptism from God through the Spirit. And as Jesus is baptised, He sees the heavens are opened and he sees the spirit of God descending upon him as a dove and a voice from heaven saying 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' It's happening!

Interestingly in Mark's Gospel, it is only Jesus who sees the heavens opened. This is not a public declaration by God for all the people, It's a personal religious experience for Jesus. And that is not out of place - Quite often the voice of God comes to us as a personal message. And that raises the question: Are we in our lives today expecting to hear the voice of God? Do we even listen for the voice of God? Listen for answers to our prayers? Do we feel that inner spirit of God within us? or do we burden ourselves so much worry or busyness, that we don't let it develop!

It is in times of quiet, times of prayer, when we still our own passions and desires – those moments of revelation: when we can feel and know the power of God in our lives. Part of our challenge is to recognise that spirit of God is within us – to nurture it, and constantly ask for an in-pouring of that spirit from God.

Lockdown may give you the opportunity to do this. Maybe commit yourselves to reading your bible: did you know you can read the whole of the Gospel of Mark in about 2hrs – Do it reflectively; you may discover bits that you've never heard before. You may have time to listen to music – you can find great recordings of Handel's messiah (for example) on YouTube listen and reflect on the words and music.

Commit yourself to engage daily in prayer; some great resources from the church of England website and others.

By doing this you may discover moments of revelation when you recognise afresh the spirit of God within you. Brining you Comfort and Joy. in these uncertain times.

I recon, that Jesus got baptised by John because he, like us, we need these points of revelation in our lives – for these are the starting points that enable us to live-out a life of faith.

And to just to let his spirit freely descend upon us that we may know Christ, live that life of faith, and be Christ in our world. Amen.

## Prayers

*Led by Lisa Rodrigues*

In the power of the Spirit and in Union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Loving God, Come to us in our discouragement as the world remains captive to the pandemic. Grant wholeness and healing to the sick and suffering of our world, our nation and our community. Bring peace to those who live in fear. Protect and sustain our healthcare and essential services workers. Pour your blessing on the vaccination process, that we might regain our freedom, and our lament turn to joy.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Merciful God, Bring peace between nations, stability to governments, and righteous rule by all leaders. Help us to proclaim that *you* are Lord of all.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Guide and sustain bishops Nicholas, Karen and Andrew as they steward your church during lockdown and into the future. Bless church and online worship, that it will bring fresh hope and the knowledge of your love to all people. Fortify and guide your clergy, lay ministers and volunteers as they seek to join in your mission.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Redeeming God, Renew us through your Holy Spirit as we remember our journey through the holy waters of baptism. Help us to live in the light of Christ and watch for your kingdom. Guide and protect our families and friends. Set us free to serve those in need, that by our reaching out, others may come to know Christian love.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Sustaining God, Pour your blessing on all those who are challenged by the current restrictions on their businesses and employment. Bless those involved in education as they seek to maintain standards of teaching for the sake of our young people. Fortify parents as they engage in home schooling.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Comforting God, Come to the lonely, the isolated, the marginalized. Come to the bereaved, that they may find solace in your promises of heaven and your compassionate and generous love. Come to those who are remembering the anniversary of the loss of a loved one.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

## Blessing.

*Given by Revd Simon*

May Christ who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly  
fill you with all joy and peace;  
and the blessing of God almighty  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you this day and remain with you always.  
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**