

Baptism of our Lord
For Group Meetings from January 6 through January 12

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:

Share: How did last week's scripture (Matthew 2:1-12) work in your life?

Mission: What was most satisfying about your ministry last week? Where do you see God at work? How did you participate in God's missional activity? ***How did inviting go last Saturday and Sunday? How many new people did you talk to?***

Hear: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What catches your attention or raises questions in this passage? Any surprises?
2. The people were confused wondering if John was the Messiah. How did he reset and frame their expectations?
3. How did John differentiate between the meaning of his baptism and Jesus' baptism? What do we learn about Jesus? What do we learn about the Holy Spirit?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What kinds of expectations and questions do you have for your life in 2019? How does faith shape those expectations and questions?
2. Is it easy to get confused or distracted from Jesus these days? Who has been like John the Baptist in your life guiding you, answering questions, shaping expectations, or challenging you?
3. We also are the beloved of God. What makes you feel beloved these days? How can you or we as a community make others feel like the beloved in 2019?

Prepare: Memorize this verse: *"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."* (Luke 3:22). How do you hear God calling you?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Read Isaiah 43:1-7. How does this speak into your life

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

OUR MISSION TOGETHER: As a missional congregation we celebrate Christ's presence, invite people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and equip them to serve in a broken world.

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

The people were filled with expectation that John would fulfill their hopes for a Messiah and they wondered if he was the one. But John made it clear that he was preparing the way for Jesus the Messiah. His message was full of good news and hope but that also came with a warning that Jesus would also bring fire to purify us. Even though the change Jesus brings is good news of love for us, it is not always easy to change and if we embrace that love our lives are going to change. As we repent and turn toward God, we must let things we value go or reprioritize our lives to align with Jesus' call to be humble, merciful, and loving. The reality is that the gift is free but change is sometimes painful. Yet, the changes we make and that God makes in our lives because of faith result in new life, new chances and opportunities and growth in lots of exciting and surprising ways. Baptism begins our life of faith and it is a death of the old, a washing away of sin and death, and rebirth into new life of faith, hope, and love. The Spirit guides us and leads us and always we are the beloved of God. No matter what we are facing that will never change. We can show others that kind of love through forgiveness, acceptance, and hospitality. What a great call and challenge for us both personally and as a community of faith to find ways to make being beloved a reality in 2019!

Thanks be to God,
Pastor Andrea acain@desertcross.org

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those
Who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified died and was buried;
He descended to the dead,
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
He will come to judge the living and the
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen