**12th January 2020 Baptism of our Lord**

**A short but structured service**

*(other suggestions and alternatives are below)*

**Gathering**

**Call to worship**

Today we celebrate a special baptism;

the baptism of Jesus of Nazareth.

God says:

Look! See my chosen servant,

the One in whom I utterly delight;

***I have placed my Spirit on him,***

***he will bring true justice to the nations.***

When Jesus was baptised, the heavens opened up,

and Spirit came down like a dove;

and there was a voice from heaven saying:

***“This is my dearly loved Son,***

***with whom I am delighted.”***

The joy of the Lord be with you all.

***And also with you.***

**Prayer of Approach**

Please fully baptise us, loving God, not just once with water but continually with your Holy Spirit. Saturate every congregation with your buoyant grace, that worship may be a time of liberty and joy. Immerse our daily lives in the love of Christ Jesus, that our deeds, words and attitudes may declare your praise. Through this same Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit are to be loved and enjoyed forever!

***Amen!***

**Hymn**

**Prayer of confession**

Let us be honest to God in our prayers of confession. Let us pray.

God our Saviour, we bring to you, as honestly as we can, our mixed record as people of faith. Some of us feel ashamed of particular sins that have marred the quality of life for others and for ourselves.

***Others of us are not so much ashamed of sins but frustrated by our ineptitude as ambassadors for Christ in the busy world around us.***

Yet others among us are exasperated by the choices we have been forced to make, not between light and darkness but between shades of grey.

***All of us feel compromised and sullied to some degree, knowing that we have fallen short of the high quality of love shown by Jesus.***

We pray for your absolution and cleansing, your rehabilitation, encouragement, your peace and for a renewed enthusiasm for the Gospel and its works of light and love.

***By your grace, liberate us from all that holds as back, and assist us to go forward with a debonair trust in your wisdom and goodness. In the name of Christ our Redeemer,***

***Amen!***

**Word of Assurance**

My sisters and brothers, forgiveness is for real! You are a baptised people. In Christ Jesus you were washed clean, and are being washed clean, and will forever be washed clean. Those who are washed by Christ need no other cleansing.

***Thanks be to God.***

**Sing the Doxology.**

*(often the Psalm may be used for the prayer and/or the word of grace)*

**Service of the Word**

**Psalm for the day – Psalm 29**

See “Australian Prayers” Bruce Prewer, page 45 © *B D Prewer & Open Book Publishers*

**Epistle or Old Testament/alternate reading:** **Isaiah 42:1-9 or Acts 10: 34-43**

**Gospel reading: Matthew 3: 13-17**

**Short reflection and discussion** *(see links below)*

(Hymn)

**Prayers for others**

**Sharing of concerns**

**Sharing of notices**

**Prayers**

Most compassionate God, give us sufficient love and commitment to reach out with prayer and compassionate action to people both in and beyond the church.

For those of many races who on this Lord’s Day are being baptised into the faith and family of Christ Jesus. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

For Christians baptised long ago, but whose first faith has been eroded by the secular acids of greed and cynicism. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

For the unbaptised whose first, urgent need is not words and rites, but food, medicine, employment and housing. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

For young people who are being are being drawn away from Christ by the glitter and dazzle of cunningly marketed pop culture. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

For embittered older folk who live so much in the past, and in church culture of earlier times, that they cannot see any good in the faith and practice of younger Christians. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

For all the insecure and wistful souls, who go looking for a better way of life but are exploited by false messiahs. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

Loving Friend, our prayers also reach out to those among us this day, who through sickness, grief, severe setback or cruel disappointment, are feeling the anguish and the tiredness of the bruised reed and flickering lamp. Lord of love, light and peace,

***Hear and use our prayer.***

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Sending forth the people of God**

**Offering** (a sharing of our gifts and the call to bless others as we have been blessed)

**Hymn**

**Blessing and commissioning**

Let the flickering lamp not languish,

let the bruised reed never despair;

God’s chosen Servant is among you,

full of grace and truth.

***Thanks be to God.***

Go on your way celebrating.

***The love of Christ inspires us.***

The love of God will bathe you body, mind and soul.

the joy of Christ will uplift you,

the peace of the Spirit will indwell you,

today and evermore.

***Amen!***

\*Note: all prayers and litanies above, are courtesy ©B D Prewer. It was Bruce’s intention that the prayers and litanies be adapted by each user to their own situation. This material can only be used for worship with acknowledgement and not otherwise reproduced without permission. Thank you to the estate of Bruce Prewer for allow us to publish his material here. Contact <http://www.bruceprewer.com> for details.

**A shorter prayer service**

*(may include some of the above material in the following format. Hymns may be included if desired and music is available)*

Greet each other

Prayer (may include invocation, adoration, confession and recognition of grace)

Reading: Psalm 29

Gospel reading: Matthew 3:13 – 17

Sharing and discussion of the readings

Sharing of concerns

Prayers for others (see above, may involve one or several people praying; may involve the use of symbolic actions as part of the prayers)

(Conclude with the Lord’s Prayer)

Blessing

***Howard Wallace suggests for using the Psalm in worship*** *(see****:*** [*http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/*](http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/)*):*

The beginning of this psalm (Ps 29:1-2), which is repeated with some changes in Ps 96:7-9 (see the comment on the psalms for Christmas Day), would serve well as a **call to worship** for the congregation.

The main body of the psalm (29:3-10) is essentially a hymn of praise and could serve as a **prayer of adoration**, although the strength of the language and the imagery which depends so much on ancient mythic material, would need some comment either in the sermon or briefly before the prayer.

The last two verses of the psalm could be used as a fitting refrain during the **prayers for the people**. After each petition the response could be:

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
    The Lord sits enthroned as king forever.
***May the Lord give strength to his people!***
***May the Lord bless his people with peace!***

Finally, the end of the psalm, v. 11, makes an ideal introduction to the **blessing** at the end of the service leading into the blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Howard often uses the NRSV but other versions can be used such as Nathan Nettleton’s paraphrase (found at <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>), The Message, Bruce Prewer’s adaptations (both paraphrases) or the New Living Translation. The Message and New Living Translation are accessible via [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

**For sermon and/or reflection preparation**

Pilgrim Theological College has launched a new web site with podcasts starting with reflections on Advent and preaching in the Year of Matthew. The podcasts continue for Epiphany and are planned to be published into the coming year. Go to <http://bythewell.com.au/>. There is a new one each week and are produced about 2 weeks before the particular Sunday being addressed. These are a great resources, are easy to understand and access. You could easily play them in your service and then invite discussion afterwards. Be aware though that each one goes for over 20 minutes and are geared for those preparing to preach or lead a reflection.

**Songs which may bring deeper reflection are** – lots to consider:

TIS 275/AHB 203 Hail to the Lord's anointed

TIS 207/AHB 136 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

TIS 274/AHB 202 The people that in darkness walked

TIS 454/AHB 382 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

TIS 457/AHB 385 The church's one foundation

TIS 320 Never in all human story

TIS 270/AHB 199 On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry

TIS 252 When Jesus was baptised in Jordan

TIS 457/AHB 385 The church's one foundation

TIS 655 Spirit song

TIS 153/AHB 93 God is love

TIS 253 O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr

TIS 609/AHB 537 May the mind of Christ my Saviour

David MacGregor has a range of contemporary songs. You may like to select one to learn. He often provides a downloadable mp3 file, music and lyrics for songs that are his own. His site is at: <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>

**Other Creative suggestions:**

* Visuals are very appropriate for most services. Art works can be used to draw people into the stories. <http://www.textweek.com/yeara/baptisma.htm> has links to artworks and movie suggestions related to the themes arising from the Bible readings. Some of these are by some of the greats and others by world class contemporary artists. This web site is highly recommended for wider worship resources but is going through a time of transition at the moment.
* Ann suggests two Listening songs: **Go Light Your World,** by Kathy Troccoli on her albums *Greatest Hits* and *Sounds of Heaven*. This song goes well with the Isaiah reading. **The 2nd is, Flowing Over Me**, by Derri Daugherty on *Flap Your Wings*, Resolve Records, 2000. This song goes well with the Acts reading and the gospel reading.
* Ann suggests 3 film clips from the movies, **City Slickers**, **Forrest Gump** and **Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring**.For each clip, she has several discussion suggestions you can use. Go to her site link listed below.
* Ann suggests a number of creative ideas including a poem and 3 different response activities. Have a look at her site for these and other great ideas.
* Jeff Shrowder suggests where you are using Matthew 3:13-17:
*The worship space could feature the main thematic symbol from the Sundays of Advent - a good length of blue cloth (mid- to dark blue). It could be hung as a large plain banner or draped in a manner appropriate for your worship space. You might want to add a white dove to it, or some other simple representation of the Spirit descending. In addition, a large glass jug of water and perhaps some stones/rocks.* Geoff also suggests adapting his creative moment suggestion for Year C. Go to <http://thebillabong.info/lectionary-2/year-c-luke/09c-baptism-of-jesus/> for details.
* Seasons of the Spirit is a resource package available through Media Com. They have weekly resources available that can be purchased. They have great resources for all ages, creative ideas and thoughtful suggestions for reflection and sermon development. If you want to check it out, speak to Rev Peter or contact our Romsey congregation who use the material often*.*

**Other resources**

* See the Resources page of our web site, <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/resources-and-event-diary> for an extensive list of links and other resources.
* Our Romsey congregation has access to Seasons of the Spirit materials. Contact Jay for details as to what is available.
* Bruce Prewer’s web site has sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>.
* Nathan Nettleton’s site has paraphrase versions of the readings, sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>.
* Ann Scull has some great suggestions for creative worship. Go to <http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/>.
* Sacredise is a great web site that has a huge range of resources. Go to <http://sacredise.com/>.
* David McGregor has some great suggestions for contemporary music and songs. Go to <http://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>
* Geoff Shrowder has suggestions for the use of the Psalm, often a thoughtful piece and suggestions for hymns. Go to <http://thebillabong.info/>.