



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY January 8 & BEYOND



The site on the Jordan river where Jesus was baptized
Photo by The Rev. Steven L. Schuneman

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17)

The Feast of the Baptism of Jesus is kept on the Sunday following the Epiphany, January 6. This is because the baptism is a powerful sign of the epiphany, the revealing of Jesus and his identity as God’s beloved Son. It is one of my favorite Sundays because it highlights the importance of Jesus’ baptism and our own. The 1979 Book of Common Prayer greatly revised the service of baptism to reflect the connection between baptism and ministry, and incorporation into the Body of Christ. As I like to say, baptism is not something to get done, but it is something that has begun.

In 2011, I was so blessed to visit the Holy Land, seeing the place where Jesus walked and our faith was born. There were so many highlights on my two week tour, but seeing the traditional site of Jesus’ baptism was especially moving. It is a place filled with vegetation and life, birds flying everywhere, and water streaming abundantly. Hundreds of people travel there every day to experience the place where Jesus was baptized.

Jesus’ baptism is important for many reasons. John didn’t want to baptize Jesus, he felt most unworthy in his presence. But, Jesus insisted, saying it was “to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matt. 3:15) Jesus’ baptism and our own unites us together in a spiritual bond that is never broken. We are His, and we are the Body of Christ.

That is why we believe in one baptism, not to be repeated, because it need not. Once is for all.

At the place of Jesus' baptism, we renewed our baptismal vows according to the Prayer Book. We stood in the water, as high as we were willing to go. Cold, clear water that caused us all to smile with each other and sing songs of God's praise. My thanks to Bishop Edward L. Little (Northern Indiana) for leading us.

It was a moving time, but something was missing. Renewing our vows just wasn't enough for me. That's when we noticed about a dozen adults, dressed in white garments, entering the water to be submerged and baptized. We immediately joined them and celebrated their new life in Christ. Their smiles and laughter meant everything to me.

I came away with a renewed sense of what it means to be baptized. I remember this every time I celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. "This is my child, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Father Steven L. Schuneman

Readings for this Sunday – The Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 89:20-29 Acts 10:34-38 Matthew 3:13-17

Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)
10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—*

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)
9:30a Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

AA Meeting

6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)
8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)