

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

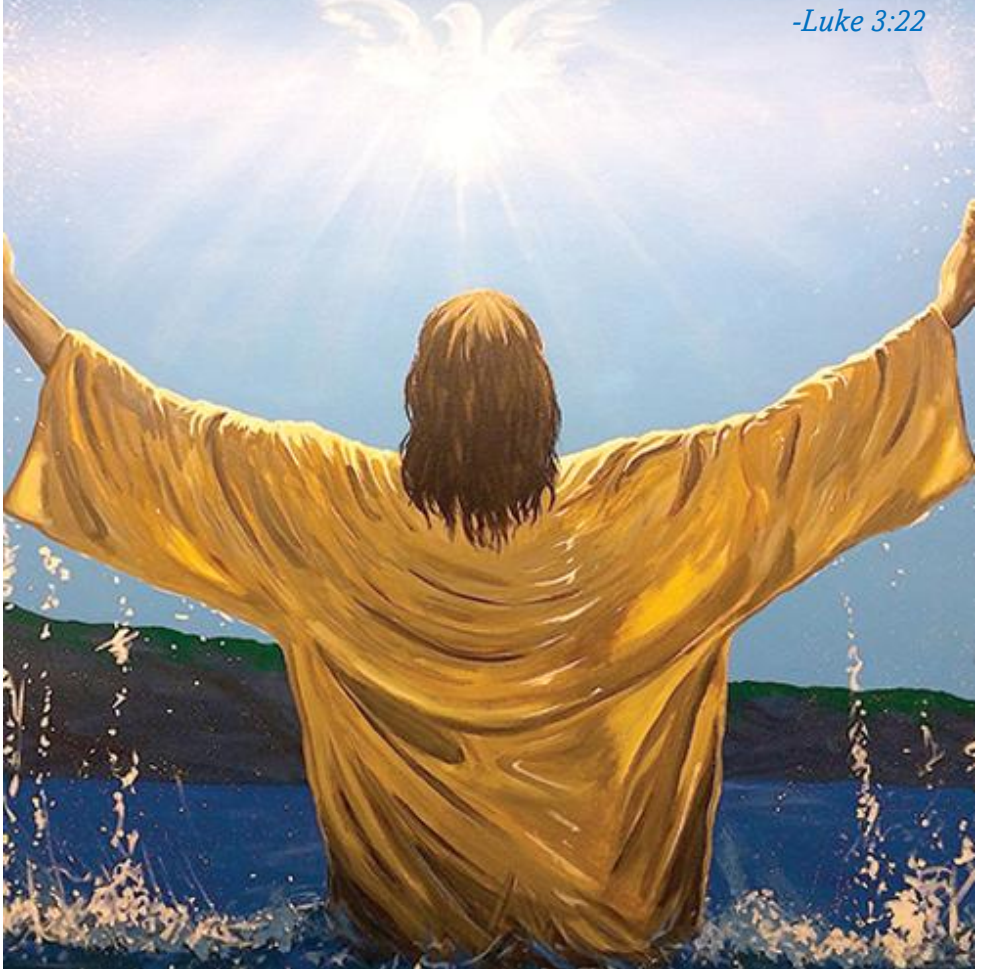
Sunday, January 12th, 2025 ~ 10:00 AM

“The Holy Spirit came down on Jesus like a real dove.

Then a Voice came from heaven, saying,

‘You are My Son and I love You! You make Me very happy!’”

-Luke 3:22



The Rev. Caleb McGregor, Pastor



Leo Thomasgard, *Lay Leader*

Sue Mitchell, *Accompanist*

Colby Grunden, *Media Technician*

Kathy McGrath, *Liturgist*

John & Diane Sweat, *Greeters*

Pat McGrath, *Usher*

Kathy McGrath, *Guest Relations*

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

"Baptism itself doesn't save you. It is a sign that Christ *is saving you.*" –Colin Smith, adapt.

"Living in the present moment is the recurring baptism of the soul;
it forever purifies every new day with a new you." –*Alaric Hutchinson*

"Scrub away my guilt. Wash me clean from my sin." –*Psalms 51:2*

Please silence your mobile devices. Thank you!

L – Liturgist / M – Minister / **P – People** / † - words are on the TVs / * – stand in body or spirit
UMH – *The United Methodist Hymnal* TFWS – *The Faith We Sing*

(1) *The Body of Christ gathers to worship God!*

WORDS OF WELCOME
FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

†*HYMN OF PRAISE:

Wash, O God



UMH 605

(2) *We listen to what God is saying to us!*

OPENING PRAYER (ADORATION & ILLUMINATION)

YOUNG-AT-HEART

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 51 (sung) / *Luke 3:1-22* ("*Jesus the Light*")

SERMON **Baptism and God's Story**

(3) *We respond to what God is saying to us!*

Reception Into Membership: Sean Mansavage

You are invited forward to remember your baptisms.

(4) *We prepare to leave and be doers of God's Word!*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF JOYS & GOD-SIGHTINGS

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING, ends with †The Lord's Prayer

†*HYMNS OF MISSION: *The Bindings Medley* 557 / 2226

*CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

*A BLESSING AND GOING FORTH

(You are invited to place any offerings in the **Offering Box** as you leave the sanctuary;
you may also give online at **peumc.org/donate** or use the **QR Code** in this bulletin.)

Prayer List:

Pray for these members throughout January:

Sandy & Helmuth Mable

116 4th Street
N., WI 54457

1175 Blue Iris Ct, #307
W.R., WI 54494

Rose

531 Griffith, Lot Z
W.R., WI 54494

Jef & Tom

3121 11th St. S.
W.R., WI 54494

Our Shut-Ins: Mabel J.; Jim H.; Mary & Ed H.; Chris L.; Lynn R.; Barbara T.

Our Children: Addisyn, Brynlee, Eliza, Ella, Gabriel, Gabrielle, Gracie, Sawyer, and Symphony.

Our College Students: Michaela W.; Ethan B.; Danial H.; Carson P.;
Melanie & Lilyann S.

From 12/15: Prayers for the **family of Roger Cole** who passed away this past week; Roger & Jan were former members here (Kathy Mc.);

JOY: Praise to the Lord for **Collin B.** return to health!

From 12/23: Prayers for the **family of Gerold Lampman** who passed away this past week (Pastor); prayers for **Jim H.**, he is in the hospital and will be transferred to another facility for rehabilitation.

From 12/29: Prayers for **Jeff** who underwent emergency surgery yesterday (Dec. 28th) (Nina). JOY: Having our son & youngest daughter home for Christmas week, as well as all 5 of our grandsons! (Thomasgards). My cousin, **Debora Katz**, has completed all 33 of her radiation treatments and is well enough to visit her son and his family in February (Candy).

From 1/5: Prayers for the **family of Barbara Taylor** who passed away yesterday (Becky & Jeff T.); for the **people of New Orleans** after the New Years attack. JOY: Thanks & praise for the life, good works, and personhood of **President Jimmy Carter** (Leo).

Daily Scripture Readings (based on Sunday's Scripture)

Monday (1/13): Malachi 3:1-4

Tuesday (1/14): Acts 19:1-7

Wednesday (1/15): Ephesians 4:1-7

Thursday (1/16): Luke 3:23-38

Friday (1/17): Luke 4:1-4

Saturday (1/18): Luke 4:4-13

Sunday (1/19): Psalm 146 / Luke 4:14-30

Sermon Notes & Prayers from Today:

Our denomination's Council of Bishops has asked that every clergy read an open letter to their congregations this Sunday. To read this letter, please use this QR Code:

Jean & Blair Mansavage
366 Setting Sun Trail
Nekoosa, WI 54457



January-February Mission Project:

1. Collect money for Reconciling Ministries Network.
2. Collected cans of soup for FOCUS food pantry.



A Call to Discipleship:

(refer to this list throughout the week to keep you accountable!)

- Prayer theme:** for those unsure about being baptized;
for those baptized but struggle to live within its covenant.
- Consider:** What does it take to make baptism invalid?
If I believe that nothing makes it invalid, then what does
that say about my belief about baptism in relation
to God's faithfulness and our brokenness?
- Action:** Remember your baptism every time you drink water this week.
- I will invite these person(s) to church: _____
- I will visit/call these person(s) this week: _____
- Donate \$ _____ to a mission/charity/cause this week.
- Set aside \$ _____ for my church offering next week.
- Volunteer at Neighborhood Meals; food pantry; Meals on Wheels.
- Sign up as a greeter / usher / liturgist for a future service.
- Pray over the prayer list in this bulletin.
- Read a daily devotional, like the *Upper Room* (take a copy; it's free!)

SUNDAY SERVICES – 10A

TODAY - January 12th

BAPTISM OF THE LORD SUNDAY

UNHANGING OF THE GREENS

(after the service)

(Scripture: Jesus is Baptized)

Second Sunday Refreshments:

Leo & Sue Thomasgard

January 19th

ECUMENICAL SUNDAY

Human Relations Special Offering

(Scripture: Jesus Brings Good News)

January 26th

WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE

(Scripture: Jesus Fishes for People)

February 2nd

"CANDLEMAS"

Communion

(Scripture: Jesus & Sabbath Rules)

February 9th

'Souperbowl Sunday'

G.R.A.C.E. Pulpit Exchange –

another local pastor

will be preaching

(Scripture: Jesus Heals & Brings Life)

EVENTS & MEETINGS

No meetings coming up.

Baptism and Membership

A Conundrum
by Pastor Caleb

Churches throughout the centuries have had to struggle with the relationship between baptism and church membership. These two are inseparably tied together yet somehow different. We see baptism as primarily *spiritual* and membership as mostly *institutional*. But where does one begin and the other end?

How does one support the other?

This has led to much confusion among pastors and lay folk alike.

In the past, when a child or infant was baptized in the Methodist tradition (and in many other denominations), they became a **Preparatory Member**. When they were Confirmed, they become a **Full Member**. If they turned 18 without being Confirmed, they simply “rolled off” the records entirely.

But a problem arose: this two-step process seems like we’re making membership as something *more* important than baptism. Also, when we are born on U.S. soil, we are *full* citizens of the U.S.; when we are born into our families, we are *full* members of the family. *So why does baptism (being born again) only make us preparatory members? Shouldn’t baptism make us full members of Jesus’ own Body? And . . . who gets to serve and vote on the local, conference, and global levels of the Church? And how do we keep track of our statistics?*

At the 2004 General Conference, pressured by the changes in other mainline denominations, The United

Methodist Church updated its process and language regarding its understanding of baptism and membership.

Now, when an infant or child (under the age of reason) is baptized, they become **Baptized Members [first checkmark ✓]**. (*NOTE: clergy are not authorized to baptize ANYONE without bringing them into the congregation. Everyone *baptized* in the context of PEUMC must become a *baptized member* of PEUMC.) Every individual baptized (including infants) is to be treated as full members in the care of the congregation (though still without vote – like being a U.S. citizen but not yet 18 years old). The right to vote and serve is really asking the question “*Has this individual claimed the faith for themselves? Can they represent us faithfully?*”

That is why we still have the process of Confirmation for those baptized before the age of consent. This is the moment when an individual publicly claims the faith for themselves and is now held personally responsible for the nurture of their own faith.

At Confirmation, youth are baptized (if not before), and they now become **Professing (Voting/Serving) Members [second checkmark ✓ ✓]**. (Each church must decide if adults must go through an adult version of Confirmation or a Membership Class.) Institutionally, Confirmands become voting and serving members: no longer just *recipients* of the church’s mission, but *responsible* for it, too. Statistically, though, only Professing Members are counted in our total membership when reporting to the denomination.

Thus, anyone who is listed in our membership as **Baptized (✓)**, means they have been baptized (and are to be

treated as members of the congregation) but have *not* yet been Confirmed.

This brings up many issues for us. For instance, when a child is baptized but not confirmed, it means they got disconnected with the congregation at some point. When they age, they often don't realize that the church is still holding on to their baptismal status. Most of the time, if they later join another church, they do not think about returning to get their records, because they never realized that we still hold on to their records. **So, we must remind all of ourselves, and our adult children, that we actually “join the church” at baptism, not Confirmation.**

When youth or adults are baptized, they become Baptized/Professing Members all at once (✓✓). In the same way, adult members who transfer their membership, become Baptized/Professing (✓✓) members, too. Unconfirmed-but-baptized children can have their statuses transfer with the parents' if transferring as a family unit.

Graphically, we show this by whether there is one checkmark (✓) or two checkmarks (✓✓) after a name.

What about the *removal* of membership?

This is when it gets extra tricky.

When a member wishes to withdraw their membership, the church can only remove them as *Professing* members but must retain them as *Baptized* members.

Neither the member themselves, the clergy, nor Charge Conference can remove a *Baptized* status via withdrawal request. Only *Professing* statuses.

Even when Charge Conference is removing members due to inactivity, it can only be the *Professing* status, not *Baptized*.

Why? Because we are each Baptized Members – for life!

Q: So how **does Baptized Membership get removed?**

A: By death or by transfer to another congregation.

It is this way because it seeks to align our treatment of our membership (rolls) with our beliefs in Holy Baptism: we can never “delete” a person’s baptismal status because we are each baptized – *for life!* (And a local church – somewhere, anywhere – must retain the records.) We can remove an individual’s status from our rolls *completely* ONLY when they have a new church home to which they can transfer. By doing this, the new church becomes the new custodian of their records and status. When members *withdraw*, we must retain their records until they *transfer*; if they do not transfer, we retain their records *indefinitely* (until death). (*Technically, we retain copies of everybody’s records indefinitely.*)

This starts to make better sense when considering occasions when a person returns and wishes to restore their membership (after withdrawal). Because they were never removed as a Baptized Member, they do not need to be re-baptized, but simply to profess the faith again and be restored to Professing status.

If we deleted people’s Baptismal Status because of inactivity or by request, then it is like we are saying: we have the power to declare you are no longer baptized. And if we do not retain their records & status, what happens to it? Where does it go? In our tradition, to be baptized means to be under the care of some congregation—somewhere—*for life*. Baptism is a permanent seal upon us. Pastorally, it reminds us that, even when members wish to withdraw, we must still be in ministry with them, urging them to find a church where they feel at home, or letting them know that the doors to our church are also open for their return.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the family of Jesus Christ. “*Can I be baptized without become a member?*” Not possible. If you love Jesus, then you must put up with the family whom He must put up with (even if we act like a bunch of in-laws). When we profess our faith publicly, we become a member of the Body of Christ, which is expressed on the local, regional, national, and global levels. We are members of P.E.U.M.C., The United Methodist Church, *and* the Universal Church that spans all traditions and cultures.