



Traditional
January 7



BELIEVED
Taken
Blessed
Broken
Given

Prayer Concerns: David Sensenbrenner, Faith Black-Wynne, David Snodgrass

Today's Sanctuary flowers provided by the Flower Committee to the glory of God.

Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Joan Nevill. Organist: Barbara Waite. Special music provided by Joan Nevill.

Ushers January 7: Kathy Zelle, captain, Chuck Taylor, Warren Heinsohn, Jack Buttrum, Ed Ancona

Ushers January 14: Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jaque Hardin

Greeters January 7: Sue Anderson, Patricia Helm, Janet Kissel, Harvey Hughes

Greeters January 14: Marty Van Stone, Betty Schoefield, Wanda Erwin, Carla Bolin

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Congregational Hymns & Carols

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"On This Day Earth Shall Ring" R. Hobby

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Like the people who found hope in a manger,

People: Christmas Spirit, Holy Spirit, rest on us.

Leader: Like Wise Men traveling to see a new star,

People: Christmas Spirit, Holy Spirit, reveal to us.

Leader: Spirit of Love,

People: Fill us with hope and compassion.

CHORAL INTROIT

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #224

"Good Christian Friends Rejoice"

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray as one.

PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Eternal God, when Christ had been baptized and the Holy Spirit descended upon him, You declared him Your beloved Son. Grant that we, who have been reborn in that same water and Spirit, may be renewed this day by Your grace. And now, O God, hear us as we pray each in our own hearts and our own ways...

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13 "Pray then like this: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'"

GIVING TITHES & OFFERING

"Christ Is The World's Light" R Hobby

*DOXOLOGY *The congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#95 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"Mary Did You Know?" Lowdry/Greene/Schrader

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mark 1:4-11

4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 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. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 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. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism of Jesus

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 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. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

HYMN #204

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

"Beloved"

Beloved January 7, 2018

Our scripture today is from the Book of Mark; and as the tradition of the United Methodist Church, if you're able, would you please stand for the reading of the Gospel. John the Baptist 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. John was clothed with camels 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 then tied 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 and 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. This is the word of God for the people of God. You may be seated.

I trust that you all had a merry Christmas and I hope that you are having and had a Happy New Year. As we get started though, I'm going to invite you to do something with me. Every time I go see my family for the holidays -every time- before I leave my dad inevitably will say to me, "Andy I'm glad you got to see me." We're humble the Paytons are very humble. So I want you to look at your neighbor and say I'm glad you got to see me.

It feels good. It feels good. Yeah. It's okay. it's okay. So I'm glad you got to see me right. I'm glad you've got see me today we're going to begin our sermon series titled The Beloved. It's based on my one of my favorite all time books written by Henry Nouwen. It's called Life of the bBeloved. And in that book he talks about what does it mean to live our lives as beloved children of God. And essentially he says that we are taken glass broken and given by God. That's what it means to be beloved. And so the next four or five weeks we're going to be talking about that unpacking that discussing what it means to be children of the Living God as we just started today.

Let's pray. Would you pray with me. Oh god I do ask that you would help us to be present to you today even as you are here present with us. I pray that you would take the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts that you would make them to be acceptable in your sight. I ask this through Christ.

So it all started Thursday morning. A friend of mine gave me a call and said Andy I have a favor I was wondering if you could do for me. I was like sure. Meet me over at the office and so my friend showed up Thursday morning over the office and she was there with her family who was out of town for the holidays- had come into town for the holidays -and she said Andy this is the newest member of our family. We're going to be leaving they're going to be leaving soon. Would you do us a favor and either dedicate or baptized this child? And I said sure absolutely. So I went in the chapel and I said so which is it you want a dedication or you want a baptism which is it? And she said I don't know what's the difference? Well I said well dedication is a lot about what we say and do. I think baptism is more about something God says and does for us. Without even skipping a beat, the mom of the child says, I want baptism. She said it in such a way that you could tell that she was like a mother who wanted what's absolutely best for her child. And she said "I want baptism." From there, I read the scripture you just heard -not the part of John the Baptist and the Wild Honey in the locust and all that stuff because I'd be kind of creepy -but I read the part I read the part where it talks about Jesus' baptism and how he was baptized in the water. When came up, and he heard and he saw a voice from heaven who said You are my beloved and you are well pleased. It was then I looked at the family and I said, in our baptism the labels of the world are washed away. And we are claim for who we truly are. Just as Jesus was claimed as God's beloved in that moment, this child has claimed that is that the world is. Then the grandma was crying and the mom was crying. It's like this is a solid baptism performance. Awesome. So here's my question. Do you hear that voice?

Did you hear that voice that says your beloved God is well pleased with you?! have often thought that the spiritual journey is like a present that's given to us. I hope during this holiday season you were given some presents. I hope I was given some presents. One of my first presents this year was Leslie gave me two large bags of charcoal. She was so happy to give it to me. She's like Andy this is everything I think of you. And she handed me these two bags of charcoal and I'm like you literally gave me like 40 pounds of coal for my Christmas. Thank you honey. Thank you. So thoughtful. But but one of the things I talked about leading up to Christmas this year was how I was the first one who had the present under the tree. I was the first one who had the first wrapped present under the tree for Leslie. I was so proud because it's never been the first one. I can't really wrap and so I had to recruit people to help me. But I was the first one to get the present wrapped in the tree. And when I brought it home, the story I told was Leslie was all nervous that I had bought her the same thing that she had bought me for Christmas. And so, for like three weeks, I kept saying I'm like "Oh honey I can't wait to get my coffee maker for Christmas. I can't wait to get that." And so finally the moment the trees came on Christmas day I opened my present and sure enough I got a coffee maker. It was a Mr. Coffee not a Keurig. In case you're thinking of gift ideas I don't want cake cups. I just want like bags of coffee. So I very humbly throw that out to you. And so I got my programmable coffee maker and then I was like "Now Leslie you can open yours." So she opened her first present and lo and behold there was another present so she opened her second present- and lo and behold the brick and another present and then she opened her third present and then she got her series three Rose Gold Peak Apple Watch that I got for her at Target and I was like "You had no clue did you?".

The Spiritual journey is kind of like that. We have to unpack all of these layers to get to the present, and the present is the voice of God saying to us that we are in deep love with God and in us God is well pleased. But to get to that voice, to get to that place, we have to unwrap a lot of stuff, and the unwrapping we have to do -in my opinion- are the labels that the world has put on us. Remember, baptism is about washing away the labels of the world and our true identity being revealed. That's much easier said than done because friends the world in which we live and puts all kinds of labels on us, and they keep us from hearing that voice. So here are three things I would suggest we need to unwrap from our lives. If we're going to hear the voice of the beloved within us.

Here's the first: to hear the voice of the beloved, we must understand that we are more than what we do. We are more than what we do. We live in a consumeristic culture that puts a premium on production. We live in a consumeristic culture who says that what makes us valuable is our place in the world, our place in the hierarchy system. How much power we have in terms of our ability to tell people what to do. This is the premium that our culture puts upon us. This is the label that our culture puts upon us, and many times we think that what makes us valuable and what makes us loved is what we do. But to hear the voice that calls us beloved we have to realize we are more than what we do. We're more than that. In fact, I would say that as children of God that's who you and I are. As children of God, really ministry has nothing to do with what we do at all. It has to do with who we are.

One of the big epiphanies I had this past year was a line that I read that said that ministry is not something we do, it's just something that happens to us -happens through us. The simplest way I can describe it is this, as children of the living God all we must be willing to do is trust. That because the presence of God lives within us, there is a healing capacity within our hearts. And the only thing we have to really do is allow that healing presence to flow through us. In fact, maybe ministry- if you really want to get simple about it -maybe ministry is as simple as giving our attention to our neighbors. And in that moment, trusting that because the presence of God lives within us, healing presence flows from us and to that person. And from that person, we're more. We are beloved children of God, and the human presence of the Living God lives within us. All we have to do is trust in him.

Second, if if we are going to hear the voice that calls us beloved, we have to realize that we are more than what we have done. We are more than what we had done. A lot of times when we make mistakes or we have sins in our lives from our past that makes us feel like we are less than beloved. And certainly we talk a lot about forgiveness and mercy within the Christian tradition and what we're doing when we are talking about forgiveness of mercy is we're basically saying that you are more than what you have done- that God's love and God's grace are more than all of the mistakes and all of the sins alike. We get that, but another subtle thing that I think happens to us- especially as as a middle class kind of educated people- one of the things that begins to creep in that happens is not the mistakes, it's not the sins in our lives, but it's the successes. It's the successes that keep us from hearing the voice of the beloved. What I mean by that is this, when we have lived a successful life by the way our culture defines success, when that is what we have done, one day we retire from that. One day we walk away from that, we're no longer doing that anymore. And if we're not careful we don't feel like we're valuable anymore because we've allowed ourselves to be defined by what we have done. We can know that we have been defined by what we have done when we are seeking power or seeking authority or seeking popularity. We're seeking all those things that we lost when we lost our identity. If you want to hear the voice of the beloved, you have to realize you're more than what you have done- whether those are mistakes or successes.

Finally, to hear the voice of the beloved, you have to realize you're more than what people have said about you. More than that. I think that's the deep meaning of a verse in the gospel. It is one of the most challenging things Jesus ever said. You said if you want to be one of my followers you have to walk away from mom dad brothers and sisters. Now in a literal way that verse is quite challenging. I mean are you saying that to be Jesus life we have to sever all ties their family? I don't think that's what he's saying. In fact if you look at Jesus's example he doesn't really do that. I mean Jesus's mom is still with him at the crucifixion. Jesus we know has a relationship with his brother James because James becomes a leader within the early church. We know that Jesus literally did not sever ties with his family. So what does he mean by that verse? Well I think a deeper meaning of that verse is we have to walk away from the baggage of the past. We have to walk away from those things that mom said about us, what, dad said about us, what brother sister said about us, whoever. All those things that people said about us that we believed within our hearts that convinced us that we are less than the beloved of God. A professor once said you have to walk away from the pain of the past and it's got to stop controlling your present actions. You gotta walk away from the pain of the past and stop letting it control your present decisions.

This is probably the hardest thing of all. In fact, in my own life probably the biggest challenge was to walk away from some of the beliefs that I grew up with. Things that I was taught from an early age. As I got older and I started wrestling with my faith. I had to come to a place where I had to say you know what, these things I were told they just don't reflect the voice of a loving God. And walking away from those things and trusting that voice, it is hard. It can feel isolating. People can look at you and treat you different just because you said you know what I don't believe anymore. I trust the voice that calls me beloved. The way we know we can hear that voice that we're hearing that voice, I suppose in the end there's a sense of peace and joy and hope within our hearts. Because we have a sense that the love of God goes with us no matter what. There's a story told about Martin Luther, and Martin Luther of course is one of the big church reformers. Kind of a big deal in Protestantism. If you haven't heard of Google or Wikipedia wherever you do, he's important. But there's a story about him and it says Martin Luther, he dealt with a lot of depression. So he struggled with those voices and he searched for a lot within his life and the stories told that when he really got low and it really got dark, he would put his hand on his head and he said Martin Luther, you're baptized, and that's my challenge to this week. When the labels of the world start getting you down this next week, remember who you are- or maybe another way to say it, whose you are- you are the beloved. Amen

COMMUNION

Taize Music

*HYMN #400

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"How Brightly Shines The Morning Star" J. Walthers