

January 12, 2025

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Affirmed by Love

The teen waded into the cold lake. With words of being joined with Christ and the community of believers through the waters of baptism, under she went — emerging seconds later with the most radiant smile anyone had ever seen.

Her father captured that smile, memorializing the day with a photo in a frame that was inscribed with the words God spoke at Jesus' baptism, "This is my beloved."

Now, in a shoebox apartment with a toddler getting into mischief and overdue bills piling up on the kitchen counter, the girl with the once radiant smile, wondered where it all went wrong.

Tired and defeated, she sat on the couch, staring at the wall of pictures before her. It was then she spotted her younger self staring back at her with a smile that time had forgotten.

She shifted her gaze to the words on the frame. Only this time what she heard in her heart was a whisper, "You are STILL my beloved." Just then she did something strange. She smiled — radiantly — remembering who was still holding her.

Today is the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. It is a day that follows the celebration of Epiphany, underscoring the season of Christ appearing to us, revealing the love he has for us and the hope that is found when we clasp our hand in his.

Here, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is recognized as God's beloved, emerging from his baptism in the Jordan River to God's voice thundering praises and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. It is a new beginning for Jesus. The start of his earthly ministry.

Baptism is an invitation to new life. But as we know, life's newness — its bright prospects, endless possibilities and hopeful promises — can fade with time.

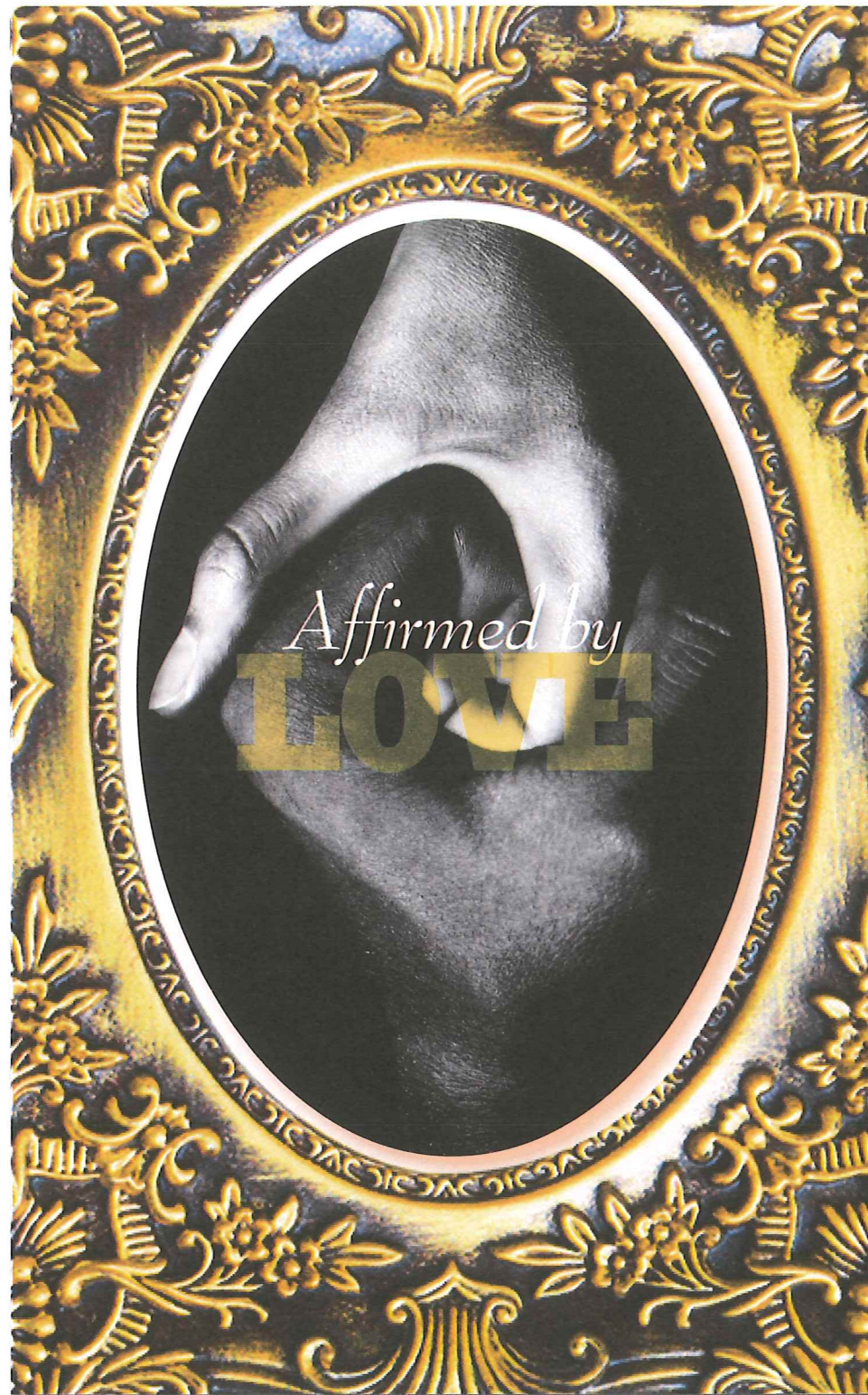
That is why on this day we remember not only Jesus' baptism, but our own. For the very act of remembering that we have been claimed as God's beloveds has the power to revive us once again.

It is said that on his most difficult days and times of great trials, 16th-century German Reformer, Martin Luther, would repeat these words: "I am baptized." It was Luther's way of reminding himself that no matter how off course life got, he was still held by a loving God who was always making all things new.

We all need that baptismal reminder.

So today, fill up a sink or a bowl with water. Dip, submerge, splash your hands in it. Then close your eyes and hear God whisper to you, "You are my child, the beloved, with you I am well pleased." And as you do, may you find a radiant smile sweeping across your face.

All-knowing and All-Loving God, may the cleansing waters of baptism wash over our lives, reviving hope for our tomorrows. May we hear Your voice this day reminding us that we are Your beloveds. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



Bismarck-Mandan Area
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



1200 E Highland Acres Rd, Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915 www.uccbismarck.org

January 12, 2025 at 10 AM Worship

Baptism of Christ

Pastor: Rev. Gretchen Deeg | Liturgist: Pat Grossman

Music: Jeanne Kolberg | Video: Dave Archer

*Rise in body or in spirit.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

*NO MATTER

Sing! 35

No matter who, no matter what
No matter where you are on the journey of life;
You're welcome, welcome in this place.
Accepted and welcomed by God's grace.

*CALL TO WORSHIP¹

All: God's voice liberates our hearts!

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION²

*HYMN Wonder of Wonders NCH 328 v. 1, 2, 4

SCRIPTURE Psalm 29

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Children are invited to remain in worship or attend Sunday School in the church basement after the Offering.

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, our heavenly host;
Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Blessings, we confess our forgetfulness of the baptismal promises and our tendency to live in fear instead of faith. When we encounter the waters of chaos and confusion, we don't easily pass through them, instead we obsess about the height of the water and lose sight of the other side. You promised to walk through the rivers with us. Help us believe. **And help our unbelief. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

*GLORIA

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen

SCRIPTURE Acts 8:14-17

CHOIR ANTHEM Follow Me to Jordan

SCRIPTURE Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

SERMON Rev. Gretchen Deeg

HYMN Empty Jar Sing! 92

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

**I am God's beloved!
By your Spirit, Almighty God, grant us
Love for others,
Joy in serving you,
Peace in disagreement,
Patience in suffering,
Kindness toward all people,
Goodness in evil times,
Faithfulness in temptation,
Gentleness in the face of opposition,
Self-control in all things.
Strengthen us for ministry in your name as we pray the
prayer Christ taught to us...**

LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN Child of Blessing, Child of Promise NCH 325

*CARRY GOD'S LOVE

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from [ONE LICENSE](http://ONELICENSE.com), License #732302-A.

¹ Based on Psalm 29. Adapted from Ray Jordan, UCC Witness & Worship Artists' Group.

² Adapted from "Invocation to the Christ of the Four Directions" Suzanne Fageol.



Thank You for Worshiping with Us!

Your offerings are essential for the ongoing ministry of this congregation. Donations can be made using this QR code, online at www.uccbismarck.org/donate, mailed to the church, or placed in the offering box.

Sponsor a Sunday in 2025

Now would be a great time to select a Sunday to sponsor this year. Jan. 19, Jan. 26, Feb. 9, and Feb. 16 are coming soon and available for sponsorship! If you would like to sponsor a Sunday, contact the church office at 223-2915 or uccbismarck.org/donate. Sponsorships are \$500.

Committee Openings

Serving on a church committee is a great way to build relationships and make a difference within and beyond our church. Prayerfully consider serving on one of these committees and contact Pastor Gretchen or the church office in January with your interest.



Christian Education – plans Sunday School events and generates ideas for educational events for all ages.

Stewardship & Mission – gathers volunteers for serving the Banquet and other all-church service projects and leads fun fundraising events.

HayCreek Lodge Ministry – leads occasional worship services at a local retirement community.



MLK Event - Jan. 20

This annual event will be held on January 20 at 6:30pm in the Veterans Memorial Public Library lower level. The program will include a showing of the documentary “February One.”

New Member Sunday - Feb. 23

Have you been enjoying this church family? Are you interested in membership? Contact Pastor Gretchen to learn more.



THIS WEEK'S OPPORTUNITIES: January 12 - 19

- Sunday:** 11 AM Fellowship
11:30 Christian Education at Ruby Tuesday
Noon [Online](#) Fellowship
 - Tuesday:** 1:00 PM Quilting/Knitting
6 PM Girl Scouts
 - Wednesday:** 6 PM Youth Group
7 PM Choir Practice
 - Thursday:** 6 PM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
 - Friday:** 8:30 AM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
 - Sunday:** 10 AM Worship (in-person & [online](#))
11 AM Fellowship & Noon [Online](#) Fellowship
- *Jan. 14-24, Pastor Gretchen will be out of the office, please contact the church office with emergency pastoral care or Darcy Avery.



Bismarck UCC Annual Meeting - Feb. 2 @ 11 AM

A groundhog's day Annual Meeting! Dress your prediction – will we have at least 6 more weeks of winter or is spring nearly here? Annual Reports will be available for pickup and online starting on Jan. 19.

OUR PRAYER LIST

Family of Irene Roth, Gene Weekes, Family of Sr Gerard Wald, Family of George Doll (JoAnn Kruger's father), Janet Halvorson (Carrie Mandigo's mother), Holly B, Wade Rosene (Joyce Rosene's son), Chad Gent (Joyce Rosene's nephew), Family of Bill Eisenbraun (Kyle Eisenbraun's grandpa), Scott Waters (Tamara Waters-Wheeler's brother), Robin Kress (Mike & Kathy Rudolph's daughter), Lewis Schema (Kerri Kraft's father), Macey Franks (Jane Thomson's grandson), Judi Allen, Jasten Bearstail (Cheryl Dank's family friend), Preston Danks (Cheryl Danks' nephew), Robyn Richter (Kyle Eisenbraun's aunt), Amy Thomson (Jane Thomson's daughter-in-law), Beryl Dinkins (Kyle Eisenbraun's grandma), Maggie Demaree, Doretta Reule, Bruning family, Perry Weekes, Howard Etson, Camille Grothier, East Timor, Refugees

*Contact the church office to be added to our weekly prayer list.

Wonder of Wonders, Here Revealed

Jane Parker Huber, 1980

1 Won - der of won - ders, here re - vealed;
 2 Here in this sac - ra - ment we see
 3 This child of God, though young or old,
 4 Now we our vow of faith re - new,

God's cov - e - nant with us is sealed.
 God's grace un - bound, for all, for me!
 we wel - come now in - to Christ's fold,
 stretch wide our sights to glob - al view,

And long be - fore we know or pray,
 May we re - spond with joy - ful praise
 To know with us God's lov - ing care;
 And claim with Chris - tians far and near

God's love en - folds us ev - ery day.
 in lov - ing ser - vice all our days.
 here all our joys and sor - rows share.
 a larg - er fam - i - ly held dear.

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

325

Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

1 Child of bless-ing, child of prom-ise, bap - tized with the Spir-it's sign;
 2 Child of love, our love's ex - pres-sion, love's cre - a - tion, loved in - deed!
 3 Child of joy, our dear - est trea-sure, God's you are, from God you came.
 4 Child of God your lov - ing Par - ent, learn to know whose child you are.

With this wa - ter God has sealed you un - to love and grace di - vine.
 Fresh from God, re - fresh our spir - its, in - to joy and laugh - ter lead.
 Back to God we hum-bly give you; live as one who bears Christ's name.
 Grow to laugh and sing and wor - ship, trust and love God more than all.

92

Empty Jar

$\text{♩} = 72$

Am G F G Am

1. Emp - ty jar, _____ clear and clean,
 2. Base shears off on stone be - low,
 3. Liv - ing God, _____ rush - ing free,

Dm Em⁷ G/A Am

dropped in - to _____ moun - tain stream.
 o - pen now to ri - ver flow.
 let your Spir - it flow through me.