



A WORD
FROM
PASTOR
JILL

As a way to remain connected during this time apart, I will be putting together a weekly newsletter with a reflection based on the upcoming Sunday scripture passage. I hope that by taking a few moments to reflect on the Word of God and pray, we can feel grounded and connected to God and to one another during this uncertain time. *-Pastor Jill*



The scripture for this week is Mark 1:4-12, which is Mark's description of Jesus' baptism. During Advent, we explored the beginning of this passage which revolves around John the Baptist and preparing for Jesus' arrival and ministry. Now, we turn our focus to Jesus' baptism and the promise Jesus hears from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Mark 1:4-12

John the baptizer 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. Now John was clothed with camel's 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 untie 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 in 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." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.



Reflect:

1. What does baptism mean to you?
2. How often do you think about your own baptism? When you do, do you imagine yourself as beloved?
3. How would you see baptism differently if it meant being baptized into a renewal movement like it was for John and Jesus?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters and thunders from the heavens, yet we struggle to hear. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit. Amen.



January 6 is Epiphany when the church celebrates the Magi visiting Jesus. This image and poem by artist and Methodist minister, Jan Richardson, imagines who else might have visited infant Jesus.

Wise women also came.
 The fire burned in their wombs long before they saw the
 flaming star in the sky.
 They walked in shadows, trusting the path would open
 under the light of the moon.
 Wise women also came, seeking no directions, no
 permission from any king.
 They came by their own authority, their own desire, their
 own longing.
 They came in quiet, spreading no rumors, sparking no
 fears to lead to innocents' slaughter, to their sister
 Rachel's inconsolable lamentations.
 Wise women also came, and they brought useful gifts:
 water for labor's washing, fire for warm illumination, a
 blanket for swaddling.
 Wise women also came, at least three of them, holding
 Mary in the labor, crying out with her in the birth pangs,
 breathing ancient blessings into her ear. Wise women
 also came, and they went, as wise women always do,
 home a different way.

What Pastor Jill is still
reading:
This is Where you Belong
 by Melody Warnick

What Pastor Jill is
watching:
 Season 6 of *Madam
 Secretary*

What Pastor Jill is
listening to:
Revolutionary Love
 by Ani DiFranco

**Please reach out to
 a staff member if
 you need financial,
 emotional or
 spiritual assistance.
 As always, we are
 here to help!**

**First Church of
 Lombard
 220 S. Main Street
 Lombard, IL 60148
 630-629-2630**

info@firstchurchoflombard.org