



Seward United Methodist Church  
January 8, 2023

**Gathering Music/Prelude**

**Nathan Pennington**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Special Music**

**We Three Kings**

**Handbell Choir**

**Call to Worship**

L: God's Spirit hovered over the waters of creation.

**P: God's Spirit hovers in our midst this day.**

L: Through the ages, God has led people to new life through the waters.

**P: In this day, God remains a leading and guiding presence in the lives of the faithful.**

L: When Jesus was baptized, God claimed Jesus as child and beloved.

**P: When we are baptized, God claims us as beloved children.**

L: Thanks be to God.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**

**God of Grace and God of Glory**

**UMH 577**

1 God of grace and God of glory,  
on the people pour thy power;  
crown thine ancient church's story,  
bring her bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour,  
for the facing of this hour.

2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us  
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!  
Fears and doubts too long have bound us;  
free our hearts to work and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the living of these days,  
for the living of these days.

3 Cure thy children's warring madness,  
bend our pride to thy control;  
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,  
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

4 Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
let the search for thy salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
serving thee whom we adore,  
serving thee whom we adore.

**Common Prayer** (in unison)

God of Water and Ritual, touch our souls this day. Renew our commitments to faithfully follow Jesus. Grant that the waters of baptism, either remembered or anticipated, shape us into vessels in order to carry your love and compassion to those closest to us and to the wide world beyond. Amen.

**Children's Time**

**Pastor Jo Ellen Axthelm**

**Contemporary Lesson** --- a reading about baptism excerpted from "The United Methodist Book of Worship" (pp. 81-84)

"The Baptismal Covenant is God's word to us, proclaiming our adoption by grace, and our word to God, promising our response of faith and love. Those within the covenant constitute the community we call the Church...

... Baptism is an act that looks back with gratitude on what God's grace has already accomplished, it is here and now an act of God's grace, and it looks forward to what God's grace will accomplish in the future. While baptism signifies the whole working of God's grace, much that it signifies, from the washing away of sin to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, will need to happen during the course of a lifetime...

... whatever further steps in faith and life the baptized may take, baptism is not administered to any person more than once, for while our baptismal vows are less than reliable, God's promise to us in the sacrament is steadfast. Once baptized, we have been initiated into Christ's body the Church and are members of Christ's family...

... Christians are encouraged to reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant at significant moments.

### **Scripture Lesson Mark 1:1-11**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way,

<sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord;

make his paths straight,' "

<sup>4</sup> so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." <sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.

### **Hymn**

### **When Jesus Came to Jordan**

**UMH 252**

1 When Jesus came to Jordan  
to be baptized by John,  
he did not come for pardon  
but as the sinless one.  
He came to share repentance  
with all who mourn their sins,  
to speak the vital sentence  
with which good news begins.

3 Come, Holy Spirit, aid us  
to keep the vows we make;  
this very day invade us,  
and every bondage break.  
Come, give our lives direction,

2 He came to share temptation,  
our utmost woe and loss,  
for us and our salvation  
to die upon the cross.  
So when the dove descended  
on him, the Son of Man,  
the hidden years had ended,  
the age of grace began.

the gift we covet most:  
to share the resurrection  
that leads to Pentecost.

**Sermon**

**“Baptism Expectations”**

**Rev. Dr. Mary Kay Totty**

**Remembrance or Anticipation of Baptism** (during this time we sing "Water, River, Spirit, Grace" over and over and over and over, etc. until all have had the opportunity to remember or anticipate their baptism.

**Hymn**

**Water, River, Spirit, Grace**

**TFWS 2253**

Water, River, Spirit, Grace,  
sweep over me, sweep over me!  
Recarve the depths your fingers traced  
in sculpting me in sculpting me.

**Prayers of the People**

**Prayer Hymn**

**Lord, I Want to Be a Christian**

**UMH 402, v. 4**

4 Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

Sharing Joys and Concerns  
Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

**Offering**

Offertory  
Doxology

**Prayer of Dedication**

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, teach us to offer to you all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise you, not with our lips only, but with our whole lives, turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our days into a living sacrifice for you; through our Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

**Hymn**

**Sent Out in Jesus' Name**

**TFWS 2184**

|: Sent out in Jesus' name, our hands are ready now  
to make the earth the place in which the kingdom comes. :|  
The angels cannot change a world of hurt and pain  
into a world of love, of justice and of peace.  
The task is ours to do, to set it really free.  
O help us to obey and carry out your will.

**Benediction**

**Passing of the Peace**

**Postlude**

**Nathan Pennington**