



The Messenger

International Lutheran Church

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A NOTE FROM PASTOR CARL

IN EXPECTATION

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22 ESV)

Today at International Lutheran Church we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord. This is the season of Epiphany - the ever-increasing light and revelation of Jesus the Son of God. The baptism of Jesus is the beginning of His public ministry. This is the moment and the reason that John came baptizing. All our expectations are redefined in this Epiphany. As the clouds give way, the Spirit descends, and the voice booms; the focus is on Jesus - the Son of God standing in the water.

This year we will be reading through the Gospel of Luke and enjoying his perspective on Jesus, both Jesus' historical humanity, as well as His eternal divinity. This gospel is more than just a chronological repetition of the events of Jesus' life. Luke's gospel is a beautiful and theological reflection on these historic events as they took place in time and space with universal and profound purpose. Perhaps this unique aspect is first reflected in Paul's letters and ministry when he writes in Galatians 4:4 "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law." Jesus' historical appearance was and remains the fulfillment of time, as God stepped into time and space.

From Luke's perspective, the significance of Jesus' baptism is just this, the fulfillment of all of God's promises and actions. We actually begin with the expectations of the people and their wonderings if John could be the One to come. We often have expectations. This is part of our human nature. Perhaps this is even a part of that God-created identity that sees into events or people a significance that requires understanding and wisdom to see. That our expectations are often misplaced or remain unfulfilled is also a significant signal to us that we live a broken reality. "All the people were baptized." They all heard the call of John and recognized that there was something happening even in the desert. While it was the tax collectors and sinners that responded, even the self-righteous people could not ignore the message. Herod even had to find a way to stop it by putting John in jail.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM	<i>Bible Class</i>
10:00 AM	<i>Divine Worship Service</i> (in-person and live stream)
7:00 PM	<i>Bible Study</i> (live stream)

OTHER EVENTS

Go to ilcseoul.org > Upcoming for other events

This is one of the unique aspects of Luke's gospel - while historically we know that it was John who baptized Jesus, Jesus is the sole focus here. Jesus stands in solidarity with the people and associates with all who will come into the water. His presence in the water makes of this water a life-giving flood, a spring that wells up to eternal life, and a new identity in the name that is now attached to us. Paul talks about it as being "in Christ" both His death but also His life (Romans 6:1-11). Jesus gathers us to Himself even to the point where we hear and experience what He heard and experienced as He stood in the water. We receive the Spirit as the Spirit descended on Him. We hear the voice, even as the voice was heard by Him, "You are my beloved Son! In you I am well pleased." These words are the words we now hear "in Christ." You and I are "beloved." We are no longer outsiders, but sons and daughters of God. We have been brought near and incorporated - in-fleshed - through the bodily presence of the Son into God Himself.

Luke notes that this is the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry, and that Jesus was about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). What follows then brings us to Luke's second major theological interpretation of Jesus standing in the water, the voice booming from the clouds, and the Spirit's descent. Jesus is the Son of God. But this sonship is not detached from the same humanity that you and I share, but one and the same. As much as you and I are God's creation - Jesus shared in our humanity that our identity would be restored to God and that His expectations would then be fully met in Jesus. Our restoration becomes part of God's eternal Epiphany - the Light that has shone into our darkness and brought us to His perfect Light. In this Epiphany, we now shine and reflect that light. In earthly and ordinary ways God has transformed our expectations with His own Son, so that all people can know His love for them in and through you and me.

Pastor Carl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, you may direct inquiries for any announcement to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Links to online or live stream events will be included in either the electronic version of *The Messenger* or will be sent out on Sunday morning.

PROTESTS AND PRAYERS

As South Korea deals with the current political situation, we continue to pray for our host country. Though ILC appears as the backdrop of many gatherings and protests, our church will never make a political statement on one side or the other. The white fence in front of our church has displayed various banners and flags that promote opposing sides of the political spectrum. Political propaganda of any kind does not represent in any manner our church. We are a church and do not take any political stand. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. We pray for wisdom for all elected leaders and those entrusted with political authority. We pray for those who guard and protect our physical and social well-being, and we pray for a peaceful resolution to the current situation.

POTENTIAL CHANGE OF PLANS

Due to the large protests occurring outside of our church building, we are monitoring the situation and may find it prudent to alter worship plans at the last minute. Please be watching for any alerts or updates from ILC that will come through the email and our social media accounts. The electronic version of *The Messenger* will lay out some guidelines that we can expect to be following until the disruption caused by the protests decreases.

END OF YEAR GIVING RECORDS

If you would like a record of your giving for the year for tax purposes, please contact the church at seoulilc.church@gmail.com. As we transition to our new software, now is the best time to request this information.

CHURCH360

As announced in our Congregational Meeting in September, we will be transitioning to a new church management system called Church360. We hope to connect in more efficient ways to each other through a more detailed and organized record of who we are as a body of believers. Be looking out for additional announcements as to how you can help us in this process.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NOTICE

We will continue to fill in the volunteer duties with the names on our January volunteer list, recognizing that it will be difficult to know who will be in physical attendance due to the protests. If your name appears on the 'Worship Assistants' table and you are not planning to attend church in-person, please do not worry: we will be able to find another to take your place when the service begins.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE GIVING

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY MAKING USE OF ONLINE GIVING.

If you are unable to attend in-person church, we encourage you to make use of offering your tithes and gifts via online giving. Giving in this way will be recorded for your personal end-of-year giving statement.

CITIBANK 260-00497-243-01

READINGS

January 12: The Baptism of Our Lord

OT	Isaiah 43:1-7
NT	Romans 6:1-11
Gospel	Luke 3:15-22

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant, or need to make a scheduling adjustment, please write to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Thank you!

JANUARY 12	10:00 AM
ACOLYTE	Sun & Yul
GREETER	Kris
USHERS	Eric & Christian
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Chuck
LIVE STREAM	Richard
KITCHEN HELPERS	Dee Dee & Joey
OFFERING COUNTERS	Michelle & Eric