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BAPTISM OF THE LORD SUNDAY A

11th January 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

When all around is noisy and busy, help me in this moment to be still with you

Silence

When my mind is chaotic and full of wondering, help me in this moment to be sure of you

Silence

When my soul is troubled, help me in this moment to be calmed by you

Silence

If you feel able speak these words aloud

Still, calm and sure I come to worship you.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: Matthew 3:13-17 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

At first glance, Jesus' baptism might seem unnecessary. John the Baptist himself is confused: "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" Why would the one we call the Christ, the sinless one, join a long line of sinners at the Jordan River?

But Jesus insists: "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness."

This isn't about appearances. It's about solidarity.

In choosing baptism, Jesus aligns himself fully with humanity: not just in spirit, but in body. He steps into the muddy waters, shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people, in all their struggle and longing. This is what righteousness looks like: not superiority or separateness, but connection. Compassion. Identification with the vulnerable.

And then, something sacred happens. The heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice speaks:

"This is my Child, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Before Jesus has preached a sermon, healed a soul, or called a disciple, He is named Beloved. Not because of what he has done, but because of who he is.

This moment invites all of us into a radical reimagining of discipleship.

We live in a world that constantly demands proof of our worth: performance, productivity, perfection. But here, at the river, we see that our belovedness is not earned. It is spoken over us by a God who meets us as we are and calls us into transformation rooted in grace.

For those on a liberal Christian path, this passage is rich with meaning. It tells us:

- God's justice is not about punishment, but presence.
- God's calling isn't reserved for the pure or powerful, but offered to the willing.

- Our spiritual path begins not with self-improvement, but with receiving the truth that we are loved.

And yet, this belovedness also sends us out. Jesus doesn't stay at the river. His baptism launches Him into a ministry of compassion, truth-telling, boundary-breaking love.

So today, ask yourself:

- Where do I need to be reminded of my belovedness?
- How might I, like Jesus, choose to stand in solidarity with those on the margins?
- What waters am I being called to step into—not to escape the world, but to serve it more fully?

May we remember that we are beloved: not because we are perfect, but because we are God's. And may that truth shape how we live, love, and follow.

Hymn:

109 STF – In the darkness of the still night – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

May the God who called creation out of the waters
speak peace into your heart.

May the Christ who stood in the Jordan
stand with you in every river you cross.

May the Spirit who descended like a dove
rest upon you in gentleness and power.

And may you go from here knowing deep within you, the truth God speaks over every life:
“You are my beloved and with you I am well pleased.”

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 12th January

- On this day in 2010, a tragic earthquake struck in Haiti, killing over 200,000 people and causing a huge amount of devastation.
- Today, 16 years later, let us pray for all those affected by humanitarian crises – recent, or still carrying the trauma and the rebuilding many years later.
- Come, Holy God, Prince of Peace, and bring light in the darkness, we pray. Amen.

Tuesday 13th January

- Breathe in slowly. As you do so, picture that you are breathing in God's love for you, your local community and for the wider world.
- Now breathe out slowly. As you do so, imagine sending that love back out into the world.
- Repeat this at least 5 times.

Wednesday 14th January

- As you prepare food today to provide sustenance for your body, reflect on the sustenance God's love for you provides for your heart, mind and soul too. Thank God for this love and channel this into your food preparation. Eat it slowly and steadily, reflecting on this too.

Thursday 15th January

- On Thursday 15th January 1759, The British Museum opened to the public. It has a chequered and complicated history, and has been involved in a number of colonial scandals and debates over the centuries since its founding, but has also been a space of much learning and vital research.
- Perhaps it is a kind of metaphor for each of us – troubled, conflicted, broken, but vital. How is God using you today to bring goodness and light? How can you lean further into the Spirit's calling on your life.

Friday 16th January

- Heavenly God,
In the midst of all that is dark at this time of year,
Shine your light, O Lord.
In the midst of all that is cold,
Bring your warmth, we pray.
- Christ who is Spirit,
Make yourself known in our world today,
Amen.

Saturday 17th January

- On this day in 1946, the UN Security Council met for the first time at Methodist Church House, Westminster, in London. An important moment in modern history, in the search for peace, and in the life of the Methodist Church.
- Today, you may want to give thanks for your story, and your place in the larger story of God's unfolding mission.