

**Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond  
United Church of Christ  
Our Church at Worship on the Baptism of Christ Sunday  
January 10, 2021 10:00 A.M.**

*Our Mission: To be an inviting, caring faith community connecting with Christ.*

Tune into Facebook at 10:00 on Sunday to share this time of worship. If you can't join promptly at 10:00, the video will be available later as well.

**You can access that video even if you don't have a Facebook account** – just type in <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityChurchOfRichmond/>

**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD**

GATHERING SONG                    “This Little Light of Mine”                    #524

Verse 1:

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.**

Verse 2:

**Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.**

African American Spiritual

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Hope Molozaiy

CALL TO WORSHIP & OPENING PRAYER

Ronnie Obara

One: Come to worship to remember God's promises in the water,  
God's blessings in the fire,  
God's presence in the breath of the word among us.

Let us pray:

Creator of the universe, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.  
You are full of mercy, loving-kindness, and great compassion.

**All: Your grace has overflowed for us, hallelujah.**

One: You wash us from our wickedness and cleanse us from our sin.

**All: Your grace has overflowed for us, hallelujah.**

One: Against you alone have we sinned, and by you alone can we be restored.

**All: Your grace has overflowed for us, hallelujah.**

One: Who is like you, the God who takes away iniquity and gives the people clean hearts and right spirits?

You are our God, the Holy One. We bring you thanks and praise.

**All: Your grace has overflowed for us, hallelujah.**

One: Amen.

OPENING HYMN                    “Rejoice, You Pure in Heart”                    #55, verses 1, 2, & 5

Verse 1:            **Rejoice you pure in heart;  
lift praises to the sky;  
Your festal banner wave with joy,  
the cross of Christ raise High!**  
Refrain:            **Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice, give thanks and sing.**

Verse 2:            **Bright youth and seasoned age,  
Strong souls and spirits meek,  
Raise high your free exulting song,  
God’s wondrous praises speak.**  
Refrain:            **Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice, give thanks and sing.**

Verse 5:            **Praise God who rules all worlds,  
The risen Christ adore,  
Praise God the Spirit, Holy Fire,  
one God for ever more!**  
Refrain:            **Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice, give thanks and sing.**

#55, The New Century Hymnal; Lyrics, Edward H Plumptre 1865 alt.; Tune: Marion S.M. w/refrain

WORD FOR ALL AGES – When Jesus was baptized, he heard a voice from heaven tell him, “You are my beloved Son. In you, I take delight!” Do you imagine that God also takes delight in you? Try it.

SPECIAL MUSIC                    “There is a River”                    Kim May & Penny Kraft  
Gaither Vocal Band; words and music by David Sapp and Max Sapp; Music copyright, CCLI 1779535

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 51: 6-13 (Common English Bible)

And yes, you want truth from the inside out; you teach me wisdom in my inmost heart.  
Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me and I will be brighter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and celebration again; let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.  
Hide your face from my sins; wipe away all my guilty deeds!  
Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!  
Please don’t throw me out of your presence; please don’t take your holy spirit away from me.  
Return the joy of your salvation to me and sustain me with a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways, and sinners will come back to you.

The Gospel according to Luke 3:1-22

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his

paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the

ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”



## MESSAGE Upset Expectations: What Should We Do?

### QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE FROM THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

PASTOR: *Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?*

CANDIDATE: *I do.*

PASTOR: *Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?*

CANDIDATE: *I do.*

PASTOR: *Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ’s disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?*

CANDIDATE: *I promise, with the help of God.*

PASTOR: *Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ’s presence and furthering Christ’s mission in all the world?*

CANDIDATE: *I promise, with the help of God.*



HYMN "Jesus Loves Me" #327, v. 1 & 3

Verse:

**Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.  
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.**

Verse:

**Jesus loves me! Still today, walking with me on my way,  
Wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live  
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

SONG RESPONSE "Doxology"

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God, above, you heavenly host.  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

OFFERING Invitation to Give – We are so thankful for the continued financial support that we have continued to receive during this time! Though we rarely see each other in person these days, our church is still: providing worship; providing Sunday school for our church kids; connecting members with each other; supporting neighbors in need, locally and further away. We believe those things are parts of God's calling for us in this place and we can do them because of steady financial support.

You may always send your check directly to the church at PO Box 246, Richmond IL, 60071.

Prayer of Dedication – You might pray as you write your check and address your envelope to the church... **You are our inspiration, O Lord. use us and our offerings and our church community to serve the kingdom you inaugurate. Make us good and faithful in all that we are and all that we do. Amen.**

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song "Go, Tell it on the Mountain" #154

Refrain: **Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

Tune African American Spiritual | Adaot Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992; Arr John W Work II 1907, CCLI License No. 1908882

## POSTLUDE

Call to Worship, and Opening Prayer, adapted from a longer prayer posted on <http://oratiocontemplativa.wordpress.com/2013/06/14/prayers-for-proper-19-year-c-bcp-closest-to-september-14/>; Prayer of Dedication, from *Spill the beans*, Is 21, p. 70; Music copyright, CCLI 1779535.

### **MAIN NEWS**

**ANNUAL MEETING** The Cabinet has scheduled the Annual Meeting of the congregation for Sunday, January 24, 2021. We'll convene the meeting at 11:15 AM following that morning's worship. This meeting will be held over Zoom with the main business items being to approve the 2021 budget and elect the 2021 officers as well as discuss our hoped-for visions for 2021 church life. If you have not been a part of a Zoom gathering yet, please let Pastor Hope know so that one of our church helpers can help you get connected to this meeting. You can connect either through a computer/laptop/smart phone/tablet or if none of those work for you, you can call in from a traditional phone and be a part of the discussions as you would be on a phone call.

**If you are a Ministry Chairperson or otherwise responsible for a group within the church**, please have your written annual report to Brandi by **January 10**. We prefer that you email those reports to her at [office@richmonducc.org](mailto:office@richmonducc.org).

### **NEW NEWS**

**CABINET MEETS TOMORROW** 6:30 PM on Zoom. Contact Pastor Hope or President Robert Richardson if you have business we need to discuss.

**FEBRUARY BOOK DISCUSSION** Pastor Hope has been reading *Love is the Way: Holding onto Hope in Troubling Times*, by Bishop Michael Curry (Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church) and if you need to find some hope in troubling times, she'd like you to join this discussion! The book is widely available for order or purchase (for about \$17-\$20), and is available as a digital read and an audio book as well. It is easy to read and uplifting. If you'd like Pastor Hope to purchase a copy for you, let her know this week.

We'll gather to discuss it the first week of February – online and perhaps with a small in-person group.

**ABOUT STAR WORDS** Most of you should have received Star Words this past week. What are Star Words? Star Word for 2021. We choose these words at the start of a new year and in the spirit of Epiphany – the story of those wise travelers from the East who followed a star for great distances to find their way to Jesus. This word was selected for you by me with help from the Holy Spirit. I ask you to put it somewhere where you'll see it often. Reflect on it. Pray about it. Take a look at the Bible verse that's listed with it. Maybe commit that verse to memory during this year or at least make it a regular part of prayer life. And then keep a watch out for this word at work in your life this year. Maybe it's something you will experience. Maybe it's something you will help bring to others. So keep watch; stay alert; pray often that God's good words, especially this one, will guide you in the months to come. If you didn't receive a word yet: Wait. A few were put in the mail and might arrive soon. If you still don't get one and would like one, contact [pastorhope@richmonducc.org](mailto:pastorhope@richmonducc.org) for a word!

## ONGOING NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**ZOOM BIBLE STUDY** resumes Tuesday at 2PM open to everyone to read and discuss the Bible passage for the coming Sunday. Tell Pastor Hope if you want the Zoom link.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL BUT ON A SATURDAY** is back at 10:30 on Saturday mornings. Contact Pastor Hope or the church office for the Zoom information.

### **BIBLE NOTES ON LUKE CHAPTER 3**

There are so many interesting things in today's gospel reading that Pastor Hope can't possibly talk about them all in the sermon. Here are a few extra observations:

- Luke begins his telling about John's preaching by telling us all of the leaders who were in charge over John and the region, from the Emperor of the whole Roman Empire on down. Luke did the same thing just a chapter ago before he told us about Jesus being born (and some of you had to say "Quirinius" on Christmas Eve). He's the only gospel writer who gives so much detail about the secular leaders. He seems to do this partly to highlight that God's action in our world doesn't usually happen in the places that we think of as 'power centers,' and also to show that he thinks of the gospel that he's telling as closely related to the secular and political world.

- The description of John here is definitely intended to show him as prophet: "The word of God came to John" (v. 2) and he's tied directly to the prophet Isaiah. It's important to remember that these things would help show John as a continuation of the ancient Jewish prophets, not something wildly new.

- John makes several references to fire in his preaching here: The trees that don't bear good fruit will be chopped down and burned, and the "chaff" from the harvested grain will be put in "unquenchable fire." A few things you probably know: Chaff is the stuff that we can't use, though it is useful to the grain itself as it protects the seed/grain.

Fire is a tool for refining, that is, separating the useful from not useful parts of a mineral. Many of the prophets about it as a metaphor for us humans being "refined," "cleansed from sin," etc.

Though this preaching from John sounds like he's saying there are "useful" people (aka, "good" people, also aka, "wheat") and "not useful" people (aka, "bad", also aka, "chaff"). Some commentators point out that really pretty much all of us have "wheat" and "chaff" within us. Perhaps this preaching isn't so much about saving some people forever and sending other people into a fiery hell as it is about refining each of us, winnowing out and burning out the bad/not useful/chaff within us in order to save the goodness within us for God's use. I think that would still be painful, but certainly is a different image than eternal fiery damnation, and I think there's probably a lot of truth in that idea.

- Even though John says all these things that we tend to hear as scary or threatening, the response in the text says that John spoke "good news." Not everyone hears his message as good news: his preaching causes Herod to arrest him. But the ordinary people hear John's message as good news. Maybe because they didn't fare well in the way things were and John preached for a change to that way?

- In Matthew and Mark's stories of Jesus' baptism, they say that as soon as he came up from the water was when he heard the voice from heaven. Luke tells it differently. He says that it was after Jesus had been baptized and was praying that he heard the heavenly voice. Luke will continue to emphasize Jesus' prayer life throughout his gospel.

## **PRAYERS FOR JANUARY 10, 2021**

If you have prayer updates or announcements to share, please send them to BOTH Pastor Hope ([pastorhope@richmonducc.org](mailto:pastorhope@richmonducc.org)) AND our office manager, Brandi Pletcher ([office@richmonducc.org](mailto:office@richmonducc.org)). THANKS! *We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer.*

**JOYS: We rejoice** with the Richardson family at the births of twin girls, Catherine Jean and Lena Marie, born to Andrew and Sarah Richardson on Dec 22. Both girls are currently healthy, though quite small, so we hold them in prayer for the weeks to come.

**Birthdays:** Melissa Jones (1/9), Annabelle Ortiz (Jan 14), Ronnie Obara (Jan 15)

### **CONCERNS**

Sheryl Vezina's uncle, Lynn  
Those struggling with loneliness and sadness  
Those awaiting test results  
Deann Workmon

### **Ongoing Prayers:**

School teachers, staff, and administrators; school children and their parents, including college students  
Those whose household relationships are strained  
Those whose employment has been lost or put in jeopardy due to the pandemic  
Healthcare workers, especially Cheryl Kazimier's niece and Rob Rummel's daughter-in-law  
Marti Swanson's brother, John Baldwin  
Ella Watts, Melissa Jones's mother  
Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik

### **Members and Friends who are Homebound or in Nursing Facilities:**

Ruthann Walters (Indiana)  
Mercedes Ahlgrim (New Mexico)  
Sharon Mensing (Sterling)  
June Whitney (at home)

## **Our Part in the Story: Devotions on Sunday's Text**

John's Preaching and Jesus' Baptism

Luke 3:1-22

### **Daily Readings**

These readings span the story between this Sunday's text and next Sunday's. Read a different text each day, and consider how it relates to Sunday's lesson and to your daily experiences.

#### **Monday: God's People are Comforted**      Isaiah 40:1-5

❖ Some of these words are used to describe John's work of preparing the people for Jesus. Who do John's words bring comfort to? Who do they trouble?

#### **Tuesday: Words of Wisdom**      Proverbs 22:1-16

❖ Which of these sayings speaks the most strongly to you?

#### **Wednesday: Ancestors of Jesus**      Luke 3:23-38

❖ Why do you think Luke lists Jesus' genealogy before introducing the beginning of his public ministry?

#### **Thursday: Paul in Ephesus**      Acts 19:1-7

❖ The same author wrote both Luke and Acts. How does he describe Jesus' baptism differently in each account?

#### **Friday: The Whole Armor of God**      Ephesians 6:10-20

❖ How do you suit yourself with the armor of God?

#### **Saturday: The Temptation of Jesus**      Luke 4:1-13

❖ Why do you think Jesus needed to be tested before his ministry began? How does the Spirit lead you to be tested?

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