

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 12, 2025

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Affirmed by Love

The teen waded into the cold lake. With words of being joined with Christ and the community of believers through the waters of baptism, under she went — emerging seconds later with the most radiant smile anyone had ever seen.

Her father captured that smile, memorializing the day with a photo in a frame that was inscribed with the words God spoke at Jesus' baptism, "This is my beloved."

Now, in a shoebox apartment with a toddler getting into mischief and overdue bills piling up on the kitchen counter, the girl with the once radiant smile, wondered where it all went wrong.

Tired and defeated, she sat on the couch, staring at the wall of pictures before her. It was then she spotted her younger self staring back at her with a smile that time had forgotten.

She shifted her gaze to the words on the frame. Only this time what she heard in her heart was a whisper, "You are STILL my beloved." Just then she did something strange. She smiled — radiantly — remembering who was still holding her.

Today is the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. It is a day that follows the celebration of Epiphany, underscoring the season of Christ appearing to us, revealing the love he has for us and the hope that is found when we clasp our hand in his.

Here, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is recognized as God's beloved, emerging from his baptism in the Jordan River to God's voice thundering praises and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. It is a new beginning for Jesus. The start of his earthly ministry.

Baptism is an invitation to new life. But as we know, life's newness — its bright prospects, endless possibilities and hopeful promises — can fade with time.

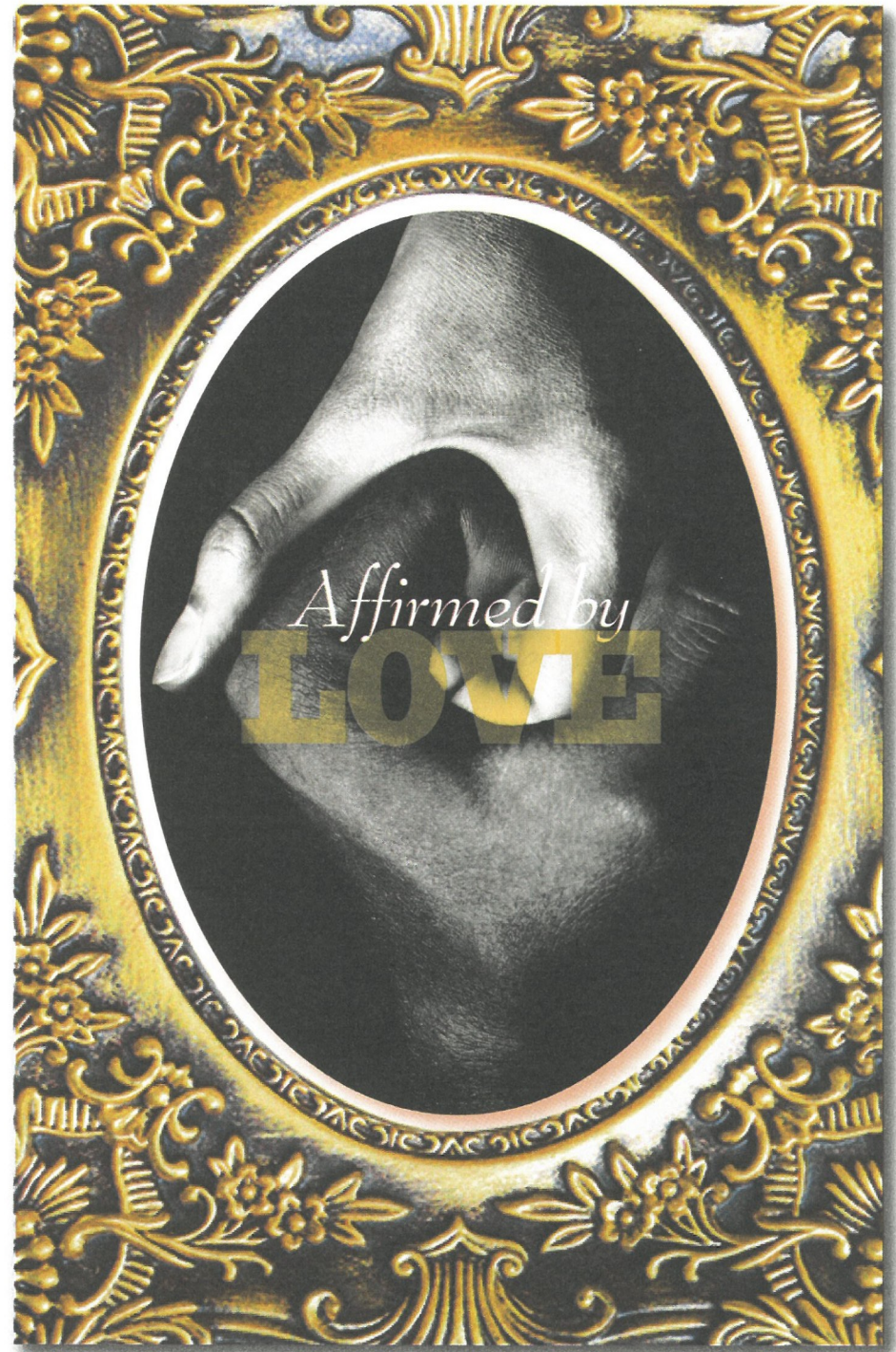
That is why on this day we remember not only Jesus' baptism, but our own. For the very act of remembering that we have been claimed as God's beloveds has the power to revive us once again.

It is said that on his most difficult days and times of great trials, 16th-century German Reformer, Martin Luther, would repeat these words: "I am baptized." It was Luther's way of reminding himself that no matter how off course life got, he was still held by a loving God who was always making all things new.

We all need that baptismal reminder.

So today, fill up a sink or a bowl with water. Dip, submerge, splash your hands in it. Then close your eyes and hear God whisper to you, "You are my child, the beloved, with you I am well pleased." And as you do, may you find a radiant smile sweeping across your face.

All-knowing and All-Loving God, may the cleansing waters of baptism wash over our lives, reviving hope for our tomorrows. May we hear Your voice this day reminding us that we are Your beloveds. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY CHURCH
A United Church of Christ
(708) 865-1282

Baptism of the Lord
First Sunday after Epiphany
"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's
journey, **YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!!**

January 12, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Welcome on behalf of our pastoral staff

Rev. Joseph E. Mills, III, Pastor 708/562-0759
Lawrence Underwood, Music Director
Joyce Kelstrom, Bell Choir Director
Pastor Vinod Wesley, Chicago Tamil Church Pastor
& Associate Pastor

Altar Flowers: The Benders Wedding Anniversary
Liturgist: Kathy Marinier
Ushers: Elaine Hempel and Jill Rouse

Westchester Community Church, United Church of Christ
1840 Westchester Boulevard
Westchester, IL 60154
708/865-1282
www.westchesterucc.org
Email: westcomchurch@hotmail.com

(If you have a prayer request you'd like to share with us,
go to CHAT on your Zoom page and type it in
so we can share it with others)

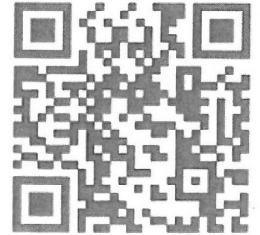
****ALSO REMEMBER TO MUTE YOUR ZOOM
SCREEN SO WE CAN HEAR THE PASTOR
UNLESS IT'S A TIME TO SHARE**

**Please remember to sign the Red Booklet at the end of every
pew. If you have any prayer request please put them into the
offertory plates so Pastor Joe can receive them. There are In
Touch cards in the pews if you want to fill them out please put
them in the offertory plates.**
Thank You, Your Parrish Fellowship Board

**FOR THOSE ON ZOOM AND
ANYTIME YOU WANT TO MAKE A SPECIAL GIFT**

We truly encourage you to use our online giving tool,
Which you can access through our website.
When you are at home on Zoom, or away on
trips, Our bills here at church don't go away.

We need your help!!
Remember to give, and if it is a special gift,
There is a way to make a note on the
Vanco page. Make clear what the donation
is for!!! Thank you!!



Manna news!!! Manna is a program where people order gift cards through the church, we order them through a company that gives us a discount on the cards and we keep the discount. So, you pay the value of the card, you GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR, and WE earn money. It's a win, win. With each order the church pays the tax and shipping fees. Manna forms are available in the narthex and on the table outside the office. Manna orders & payment is due the last Sunday of the month, and are distributed by the 2nd Sunday of the month. Manna is great for gifts, donating for In-reach, and for places you shop. Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please see Charlene Dol-nics or Sue Becerra.

The Music Board is selling tickets to the **Family Valentine's Dance** before and after church through February 9th. Please come out and support this event by bringing family members including grandchildren, friends, and neighbors. We are looking for help with the assorted sides that we are serving with dinner. If you can help, we have a sign-up sheet where we are selling tickets. If you eat at a restaurant regularly or frequent the same hair or nail salon, we have a letter asking for donations for our raffle. A donation letter is also available where we are selling tickets. Thanks for your support this event as we raise funds for the Beautification Fund.

There are a few United Church of Christ pieces of **jewelry** that have been donated to the church and can be found in the narthex that are free to anyone that would like one.

Upper Rooms can be found on the right side of the narthex by the restroom or outside the church office.

Our new **Website** is up and running!! You can access it at <https://westchesterucc.org> We hope you find it accessible and helpful!!!

Save the Date: a **Valentine's Family Dinner and Dance** on Saturday, February 15. Music by the Weed Wackers. Sponsored by the Music Board. More details soon!!!



If you are interested in a CPR and AED Class..... please see Chris Stout as soon ASAP

2025 Calendars for us have been donated by Conboys Westchester Funeral Home—they are in the narthex!!! Thank you, Conboys!!

Ben Linville's fiancé Meaghan will be in the Magical Starlight Theater's Production of **Cinderella**, January 10-12 and January 17-19 at the Naperville Central High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$20 (\$23 at the door) and are now on sale through the Naperville Park district at napervilleparks.org/magicalstarlighttheater. Any questions you can contact Mary Linville at 630-710-0358.

Our United Church of Christ asks that we support **The Christmas Fund/Veterans of the Cross**. Many active clergy are severely underpaid that one crisis puts them in financial crisis. Many retired clergy were underpaid for years, and never had retirement funds. What you give literally brings hope to those who have served Christ and us. You can make out a check to our church, and mark it "**Veterans of the Cross**".

Please continue to support our **In-Reach Fund**. This money helps our own members in medical emergencies, or rent, or just to make it possible to breathe. Please make out a check or on-line gift, and mark it "**In-Reach**".

Please bring food for our local Food Pantry – they empty out just before Christmas. We were able to raise several hundred dollars for the pantry, and there was a gigantic carload of food for them. And, as with every year, please bring in **2025 calendars** and **Personal Care and Hygiene Products** for **Hines Veterans Hospital**.

The **Altar Flower** calendar is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you would like to buy flowers for any occasion in remembrance of a love please sign up. Thank you, Deacon Board

WORSHIP SERVICE

"If we do not allow ourselves to be affirmed and cherished by God, and if we do not consider ourselves worthy of accepting his love or if we have never experienced his unconditional love, then the risk remains of seeking this affection and approval in our relationships, online and elsewhere." -Fr Billy Swan

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Kathy Marinier

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS Pastor Bill

*WE CELEBRATE GOD'S MAJESTY #352
"Spirit Song"

*CALL TO WORSHIP Kathy Marinier

Leader: Gather from East and West, from North and South.
God is calling us; listen, for God is naming you.

People: The voice of God thunders through our midst. The voice of God is powerful and full of majesty.

Leader: Bow in awe before the one who created you. God knows you completely, yet accepts you.

People: The voice of God commands our attention. The voice of God is like fire and tornado.

Leader: God reaches out to strengthen, not condemn us. God brings us through terror to a place of peace.

ALL: Ascribe to God glory and strength. Worship God in awe, wonder, and joy!

*A GLORIA PATRI #734

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, And to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen. Amen."

A Reading from God's Holy Word Kathy Marinier
From the Old Testament: Isaiah 43:1-7 page #520

WE PRAY TO THE LORD #492
"Spirit of the Living God" verse one

PASTORAL PRAYER Pastor Penny
THE LORDS PRAYER (Please Use Debts/Debtors)

THE MORNING OFFERING Kathy Marinier
AN OFFERTORY
**(THOSE AT HOME, PLEASE SEND IN GIFTS BY CHECK
OR USE OUR ON-LINE GIVING)**

*THE DOXOLOGY #34

***"Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."***

*A PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison) Kathy Marinier
**For bringing us safely to this hour, we give you thanks,
O God of wind and fire. May our offerings honor you.
May our lives reflect your mercy. May our hands
bestow on others the blessings we have received. May
our prayers unite us with one another and with Christ,
in whose name we celebrate the privilege of giving.
Amen.**

A Reading from God's Holy Word Kathy Marinier
From the New Testament: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 page #46

THE MEDITATION Pastor Penny and Pastor Bill

*WE PRAY THE LORD'S GUIDANCE #466
"Take My Life and Let It Be"

THE COMMISSION AND BLESSING Pastor Penny

+++++

Take My Life and Let It Be 466

1 Take my life and let it be con - se - crat - ed,
2 Take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti -
3 Take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sa -
4 Take my love, my God, I pour at thy feet its

Lord, to thee; take my hands and let them move
ful for thee; take my voice and let me sing
ges for thee; take my sil - ver and my gold,
treas - ure store; take my - self and I will be

at the im - pulse of thy love, at the im - pulse of thy love.
al - ways, on - ly, for my King, al - ways, on - ly, for my King.
not a mite would I with - hold, not a mite would I with - hold.
ev - er, on - ly, all for thee, ev - er, on - ly, all for thee.

WORDS: Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879)
MUSIC: Henri A. César Malan (1787-1864)

HENDON
7.7.7.7.



492 Spirit of the Living God

F Gm D/A Gm F/C C F

1 Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me;
 2 Spir - it of the liv - ing God, move a - mong us all;

Gm D/A Gm F/C C F

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.
 make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:

Bb F G7 C

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
 hum - ble, car - ing, self - less, shar - ing.

F Gm D/A Gm F/C C7 F

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.
 Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fill our lives with love.

WORDS: Daniel Iverson (1890-1977); vs. 2, Michael Baughen (1930-)
 MUSIC: Daniel Iverson (1890-1977)
 Words and Music © 1935, Ren. 1963 Birdwing Music (Admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing)
 Words vs. 2 © 1982 Jubilate Hymns (Admin. Hope Publishing Company)

IVERSON
 Irregular

CALENDAR

TODAY

Worship 10 am
 Chicago Tamil UCC Worship, 12:30 pm
 10:00 a.m. Worship
 Noon - Chicago Tamil Worship

NEXT SUNDAY

BIRTHDAYS THRU 1/19/25

- 1/12 **Barbara Boyd**
- 1/13 **Carol Hoppe, Janet Randle, Linda Clarke, Ed Hempel**
- 1/15 **Otis Randle**
- 1/16 **Judy Weismann, Keith Hoffman**
- 1/17 **Robert Wachowski, Marissa Karpes, Ana Kniesel**
- 1/19 **Herman Goodloe**

ANNIVERSARIES THRU 1/19/25

THINKING AHEAD...

Sassy Stitches—3rd Tuesday of the month from 1pm to 3pm
Women's Book Club— Meets on January 27th at Panera in Westchester. The book we are reading is "The Rescuer", by Jason Sautel. Call Barb Mills if you would like to join us.
Annual Reports are due on January 6th. Please have them in by this date!
Annual Meeting is on January 26th
Valentine's Dance is on February 15th. Tickets are on sale NOW through February 9th
Card Making is Friday, February 21st at 9:30am—2:00pm in the South Basement
Scrapbooking Dates: February 20—22, March 20—22, April 3—5, and May 1—3. Please come join us!



**PRAYER REQUESTS:
PEOPLE AT THEIR HOMES:**

Allen Meskan, Lou Bender, Virginia Hodina, Caroline Long, Char Schwass, Jimmy Marczuk, Paul Barnes, Melanie Miller, Bettyann Richeson, Betty Koenig, Isabella Brumwell, Doris Blomberg, Jim Barker, Wayne Scharlach, Allan Boyd, John Mika, Lorraine Feeney, Cindy Cox, Ed Monahan, Karen Hart, Bill & Maggie Smith, George Long, Mary Kay Baca, Donna Hansen, Chuck Yeiser, Linda Belice, Dave Vrablic, Emil Poprawski, Benny Locigno, Ellie Merritt, Barb Sweazey, James Hixon, Aldona Kitt, Judy Frandsen, Don Smith, Mark Henning, Serena Ivers & Chris, Elayne Dalheim, Patricia Ladner, Michael Kelstrom, Patrick McCarthy



FRIENDS IN PRAYERS: Joyce Barbee, Andee Brown-Roth, Bill and Kimble Compton, Bob and Jean, Sherri Cozzi, Drake Dennis/Family, Bill Ernst, Father Neil Fackler, Ashley Feeney, Nancy Fiala-Zinn, Ann Franz, Herman Goodloe, Kyle Hall, Karen and Bob, Karen Hekr, Helen Hicks, Frank Kriz, Mary Ann, Larry, Julie McGee, Julie McLean (mom to Nancy McLean), Frieda McKinnon, Jane McNamee, Amy Morlier, Betty Moticka, Eric Odelson, Pat (cousin to Linda Belice), Connie Petrik, Diana & Larry Ridener, Scott Rouse, Gary Schultz, John Symiakos, Anthony Taylor, Patricia Traylor, Ron Tulke, Lawrence Underwood Jr., Gwendolyn and Bob Westlund, Monica Wojdziak, Charles Woodman, Adam Zellman

OUR MILITARY: Samantha Brown (overseas), Tyler Kimbler is deployed; Jay & Bri Mills (Ft. Bliss, Texas), Malik Taylor—Norfolk, VA, Anthony Taylor—Ft. Hood, TX; Nick Weeks—Peace Corp. South Africa

HOSPITALIZED/Long-Term: Marilyn Sinda – Elmhurst; Jeanie Rowe—Michigan; Dave Else—the Pearl, Hinsdale; Frank Kriz (on Palliative Care); Jim Craver (our Jim's father)—Nursing Facility, Sara Zellman—the Pearl, Hinsdale; Joseph Mills Jr.—rehab in Tacoma; Lil Klippel - The Radcliffe; Steve Tomporowski – Wisconsin; Rosemarie Kosik (Terra Vista, OakBrook Terrace)

Unison Gmaj7 Gmaj7/F# Em7 A7 A7/G

1 O let the Son of God en-fold you with his
2 (O come and) sing of this song with glad-ness as your

F#m7 Bm7 Em7

Spir - it and his love. Let him fill your heart and
hearts are filled with joy. Lift your hands in sweet sur-

A7 D Dmaj7 Em7 F#m7 Gmaj7 Gmaj7/F#

sat - is - fy your soul. O let him have the things that
ren - der to his name. O give him all your tears and

Em7 A7 A7/G F#m7 Bm7

hold you, and his Spir - it like a dove will de -
sad - ness; give him all your years of pain, and you'll

Em7 G6/A G/A A7 D C/D D

scend up - on your life and make you whole.
en - ter in - to life in Je - sus' name.

Refrain Gmaj7 A7 A9/G F#m7 Bm

Je - sus, O Je - sus,

Em7 A7 Dmaj7 C/D D

come and fill your lambs.

Gmaj7 A7 A9/G F#m7 Bm

Je - sus, O Je - sus,

Em7 G6/A G/A D

come and fill your lambs. 2 O come and