

The Falls Village Congregational Church

January 11, 2026, 10 a.m.

The Baptism of Jesus

The Rev. Dr. Eileen L. Epperson, Guest Worship Leader

Welcome and Announcements

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude - *Prayer* - M. Larkin

THE CHURCH GATHERS TO PRAISE

Call to Worship

Leader: Creator God, the river of your grace flows about us.

People: We enter into its flow, deep in wonder, swimming in your grace.

Rabbi Jesus, at the sacred moment of your life, you were baptized by your cousin John in the Jordan.

We come with you to be washed in the grace of God, to be immersed in the glory of God by your side.

Holy Spirit, you came to Jesus at his baptism like a dove.

Come to us, and fill us with the joy of your presence, the song of your power, and the feathers of peace and delight.

Give us wings to do your will, and to be your people. Alleluia!

Alleluia! Come, Spirit of Life, and transform us by your grace.

Prayer of Adoration and for God's Presence (Unison)

God of grace and glory, you call us as you called Jesus to be your people, faithful and courageous. As your Son and Divine Messenger, he embraced his mission in the waters of baptism.

Inspire us with the Light of your Spirit to join in his transforming work. We ask this in the strong name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn #365 "*Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters*"

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Leader: The voice of one crying out in the wilderness ~ "*Prepare the way of the Lord! Repent, for the realm of heaven has come near.*"

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our shortcomings.

Merciful God, when we were baptized the promise we were given was that we were there a member of the church universal, the body of Christ. It was a public event, upheld and witnessed by a community. As your followers, we admit now, also in community, that last week we were preoccupied with ourselves, and separated from one another. We do cling to destructive habits, hold grudges, and show reluctance to welcome people we do not know or judge unworthy. We allow the past to hold us captive.

In your loving kindness, have mercy on us, and free us from our hold on our small selves. Fulfill the promise of our baptism so that we may rise to new life and live together in grace.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the Gospel!

As a voice from heaven said to Jesus, so God says to each of us: *You are my beloved child, and with you I am well pleased.*

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

Responsive Reading Psalm 29, Hymnal p. 737

Gloria Patri

#35 in hymnal

Passing the Peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you.

And also, with you

Let us pass the peace.

New Testament Reading: Matthew 3:13-17 Rev. Epperson

Prayer

Sermon: "Nothing is Required to be Loved" Rev. Epperson

TO RESPOND IN FAITH

Offertory – *Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me* - arr. K. L. Scott

Pastoral Prayer

Sisters and brothers, our baptismal vows call us to compassion and mercy on behalf of those in need. We offer our prayers for the church and the world. Prayers continue....

Lord God, you revealed your Son in the waters of the Jordan and anointed him with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim good news to all people. Sanctify us by the same Spirit, that we may proclaim the healing power of the gospel by acts of love in your name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

THE CHURCH DISPERSES TO SERVE

Hymn #375 *"In Water We Grow"*

Benediction

Benediction Response

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

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You are invited to place your offerings as you leave in the plate at either entrance to the church.

Scripture Lesson for January 11, 2026

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened^[a] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; ¹⁷ and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son,^[b] with whom I am well pleased.”