

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD SUNDAY

This service includes a renewal of baptismal vows for which you will need:

- *a pitcher with which to pour water into the font*
- *water in the font and perhaps other large bowls of water stationed around the sanctuary*
- *white towels for those who eagerly engage the waters of baptism*
- *small river rocks, which you can purchase from a craft store (optional)*
- *CD player*
- *PowerPoint with various images of different kinds of water at the call to worship*
- *Communion Bread*
- *Grape juice/wine*
- *Trays of prepared communion elements*

GATHERING

Call to Worship: “Down to the River to Pray” Traditional Appalachian Tune

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The starry crown, good Lord, show me the way
Oh sisters let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh sister let's go down, down to the river and pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The robe and crown, good Lord, show me the way.
Oh brothers let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh brother let's go down, down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The starry crown, good Lord, show me the way
Oh fathers let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh father let's go down, down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The robe and crown, good Lord, show me the way.
Oh mothers let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh mother let's go down, down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The starry crown, good Lord, show me the way
Oh sinners let's go down, let's go down, come on down.
Oh sinners let's go down, down in the river to pray.
As I went down in the river to pray,
Studyin' about that good 'ol way, (and who shall wear)
The robe and crown, good Lord, show me the way.

***Opening Sentences:**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God;

The holy habitation of the Most High.

The Lord pours forth rivers from bare mountains, and fountains in valleys' depths.

God opens rocks, and water gushes out.

On dry thirsty land God springs forth streams in the desert.

***Hymn** "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;

Streams of mercy, never ceasing,

Call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,

Sung by flaming tongues above

Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,

Mount of God's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer,

Hither by thy help I'm come;

And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wandering from the fold of God;

He to rescue me from danger,

Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor,

Daily I'm constrained to be!

Let that grace now like a fetter,

Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love;

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,

Seal it for Thy courts above.

1879, John B. Renville; Trans. Emma Tibbets, 1955

The Presbyterian Hymnal, Hymn 355

Call to Confession

Even as we enter into the presence of God, we exclaim with Isaiah: "Woe is me, I am a person of unclean ways, dwelling among a tainted people." If we claim we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Trusting in the steadfast love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord, let us pray,

Lord, have mercy

Christ have mercy.

Confession of Sin:

Sovereign God, in baptism you called us to turn from sin and to turn to Jesus Christ; but we stray from his ways and do not heed your call.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In baptism you joined us to Christ in his death
that we might be raised with Christ in new life;
but we cherish old ways
and fail to embrace the risen life
of righteousness, justice, and love.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In baptism you united us with all the baptized
who confess your name;
but we foster division in the church.
We refuse to live as one people,
and so fail to witness to your reconciling love before the world.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In baptism you call us to ministry
in all realms of life,
but we refuse the struggle to know your will;
we do not nurture the ways of peace;
we allow enmity to grow among us,
setting neighbor against neighbor
and nation against nation.
We abuse the earth you entrust to our care,
and live in discord with all you have made.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In baptism you sent us to serve with compassion
all for whom Christ died;
but we ignore the suffering of the oppressed
and the plight of the poor.
We take bread from the hungry,
and stop our ears to cries for justice.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

In baptism you gave us the Holy Spirit
to teach and guide us
but we rely on ourselves
and refuse to trust your direction.
We spurn your eternal wisdom,
Preferring, instead, the luring ways of the world.

(Silence)

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Remember the promises you made to us in baptism,
forgive our sinful ways
and heal our brokenness.
Set us free from all that enslaves us,
and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ,
that we may be your faithful servants,
showing forth your healing love to the world,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.

{See also the “Litany for Baptism of the Lord,” pp. 199-200 of the PC (USA) Book of Common Worship, which you may wish to substitute.}

Assurance of Pardon

As water is visibly poured into the font: Hear the good news: Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ lives in power for us, Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is of the New Creation. The old life is finished, gone. Behold, new life has begun.
Brothers and Sisters, believe the good news:
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Sung **Ascription of Praise** such as the *Gloria Patri, Alleluia*

Passing of the Peace

WORD

Prayer for Illumination—Creator Spirit, who hovered over the waters at creation’s birth, who descended in the form of a dove at Jesus’ baptism, who was poured out under the signs of fire and wind at Pentecost: Come to us, open our hearts and minds, so that we may hear the Word of life and be renewed by your power, for you live and reign with God and Christ now and forevermore. Amen.

Scripture Readings

A reading from _____. Listen for God's Word
Our ears are open.

(After reading): The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

EUCCHARISTIC RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Renewal of Baptism:

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord.

Lord and life-giving Spirit, who charged the waters with life when first the world began:

Make us dead to sin, but alive to you.

Saving Lord, who sheltered us with Noah in the ark upon the flood:

Drown our sin and raise us to new life.

Giver of freedom, who led your people out of slavery through the waters that did not overwhelm:

Drown our sin and raise us to new life.

O God, our provider, who gives thirsty people water from a rock:

Make us dead to sin, but alive to you.

Holy Lord, who gives water to purify what is unclean:

Drown our sin and raise us to new life.

Brooding Spirit, who anointed Jesus with your power of life no death could conquer:

Make us dead to sin, but alive to you.

Risen Lord Jesus Christ, who poured yourself out as a drink offering on our behalf, filling us with your Spirit:

Make us dead to sin, but alive to you.

Spirit of the Living God, who charges the waters of baptism with resurrection power so we might live as part of God's New Creation:

Drown our sin and raise us to new life.

Drench us once more in your life-giving Spirit, Almighty God, that we might be cleansed, sustained, and anointed with your power as we proclaim with boldness and live with joy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be all honor and dominion and glory now and forevermore.

Amen.¹

Through our baptism into Christ, we were redeemed from our slavery to the powers of sin and made citizens of God's Commonwealth. Let us remember what God has done and is doing by renewing our baptismal vows, renouncing sin and professing faith in Christ Jesus.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God?

Accepting the Father's love, I renounce all that makes me less than a child of God.

Do you renounce all powers in the world that defy God's Way of Life for all?

In the name of Christ Jesus, I renounce them.

Will you resist the forces of sin that hold the world in captivity?

With the power of the Holy Spirit, I will resist them.

Trusting the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from evil to seek good?

By the grace of God, I do.

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world?

I believe Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

Will you follow the Spirit of the living Lord and live in accord with God's Way?

By God's grace, I will walk in the Spirit Way.

Let us pray: Spirit of the Living God, hover once more over us as you did at creation, energizing us with your life, that as we remember our baptism in Christ, we may be an open conduit of your Holy Spirit flooding all of creation with blessings of your abundant, redeemed life. We ask this in the precious name of Jesus, the living water, to your glory we pray. Amen.

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” (Rev. 22:17)

People come forward to engage the water in the font as they will in prayer. (The instructions are given at the end of the sermon above.) If there are stones in the water, they may take a memorial stone to remember their baptism, then step forward to be signed with the sign of the cross traced with water from the font on their foreheads. They will then turn and sign and charge and bless the next person with the words,

“Remember your baptism and let God's river of mercy flow through you in service to the world.”

While this occurs, let the congregation and/or musicians sing the following, as your music license permits:

“Let the River Flow”

Let the poor [one] say, “I am rich in Him.”

Let the lost [one] say, “I am found in Him.”

Let the river flow.

Let the blind [one] say, “I can see again.”

Let the dead [one] say, “I am born again.”

Let the river flow, let the river flow.

Chorus:

Let the river flow, let the river flow,
Holy Spirit come, move in power.

Let the river flow, let the river flow,
Holy Spirit come, move in power.

Let the river flow, let the river flow,
Let the river flow.

1995 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing

Words and Music by Darrell Evans

"Wade In The Water"

Chorus:

**Wade in the water
Wade in the water
Children wade
In the water
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water**

Verse 1

See that host
All dressed in white
God's a gonna
Trouble the water
The leader looks
Like the Israelite
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water

Verse 2

See that band
All dressed in red
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water
Looks like the band

That Moses led
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water

Verse 3

Look over yonder
What do I see
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water
The Holy Ghost
A-comin' on me
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water

Verse 4

If you don't believe
I've been redeemed
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water
Just follow me down
To Jordan's stream
God's a-gonna
Trouble the water

African American Spiritual, *Sing the Faith*, Hymn 2107

"The River Is Here"

Down the mountain, the river flows
And it brings refreshing, wherever it goes
Through the valleys, and over the fields
The river is rushing, and the river is here

Chorus:

The river of God
Sets our feet to dancing
The river of God
Fills our hearts with cheer
The river of God
Fills our mouths with laughter
And we rejoice for the river is here

The river of God is teeming
with life
And all who touch it can be
revived
And all who linger on this
river's shore
will come back thirsting
For more of the Lord

Chorus

Up to the mountain we love go
To find the presence of the Lord
Along the banks of the river we
run

We dance with laughter, giving praise to
the Son

Chorus

Down the mountain, the river flows
And it brings refreshing, wherever it goes
Through the valleys, and over the fields
The river is rushing, and the river is here.

1994 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing
Words and Music by Andy Park

“Wonder of Wonders, Here Revealed”

O Waly Waly

Wonder of wonders, here revealed;
God’s covenant with us is sealed.
And long before we know or pray,
God’s love enfolds us every day.

Here in this sacrament we see
God’s grace unbound for all, for me!
May we respond with joyful praise
In loving service all our days.

Now we our vow of faith renew,
Stretch wide our sights to global view,
And claim with Christians far and near
A larger family held dear.

Jane Parker Huber, 1980
The Presbyterian Hymnal, Hymn 499

After all have been signed and blessed:

Now, remember your baptism as you go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to
obey everything that Christ has commanded you.

May God’s Spirit flow through us to bless the world.

And remember that God’s promise goes before you. For thus says the Lord, “I am with
you always, to the end of the age.”

Thanks be to God! Amen.

In thanksgiving for all God has done for us, let us present the offering of ourselves unto the Lord.

Offering Prayer (*after the ushers come forward, but before collecting the offerings of the
people*): O Lord, we give you thanks with all we are for all you have done for us. In your
divinity you have come to dwell with us in the muddy waters of humanity, and comingled
your glory with our sin so that the ribbon of corrupting time is becoming a sparkling
River of Life flowing through our days. Take all we are, Lord, and use it for your purpose.
Bless the gifts we give this day that the church might stand as shining witnesses to your
glory, planted by your living water to bring healing to all peoples. Use us as you will to
the praise of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Offering

Doxology *The communion elements can be brought forth as the offering is brought up to signify the gift exchange at the heart of the gospel. If the Lord's Supper is being celebrated, it is recommended that people be served in the pew by elders.*

Holy Communion

Invitation: We have been baptized into Christ, engrafted into his royal family tree, made citizens of God's kingdom. This is the royal banquet spread before us, set with the heavenly food of Christ who issues an invitation for all his subjects to come feast with him.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Creator God, we praise you

For you are continually making all things new
that the world might fulfill your good purpose.

Into the midst of our sin

you offer you love in Jesus Christ

who was baptized in the muddy waters of sin,

identifying with us in our human weakness,

yet without sin of his own

so he could raise us from our watery graves

into the Spirit's breath of new life.

Out of his own body offered for us and our salvation,

Christ our Lord feeds us,

nurturing us in the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Therefore we praise you with all the hosts of heaven

who forever sing to the glory of your holy name,

praying with them for the world you so love

and offering ourselves in service to you on behalf of a hungry world.

Make us good stewards of your creation, O Lord,

that generations to come might look upon your works of wonder

and utter a breathless prayer of praise.

Pour your Spirit out upon the poor

that they might be filled with your abundance.

Send forth your wisdom upon those in positions of authority
that they might exercise their responsibilities with your justice and compassion.
Set all those captive by sin free
to delight in your love.
Now, O Lord, send forth your Holy Spirit upon us and all the faithful
who join you at this table,
that we might glimpse your glory among us
and rise up as one to give you thanks in all we do,
through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor and dominion are yours, almighty God,
now and forevermore. **Amen.**

[Words of Institution]

Participatory Instructions: The good news is that our Lord comes to where we are to serve us with divinity. As you are served, continue to meditate upon how, in thanksgiving for all he has done for us, you might serve him with your life's labor. You may wish to pray about the various opportunities for service printed in your bulletin. Commune now with the Bread of Life, the Cup of Salvation.

Prayer after Communion: You are a good God who creates, gives birth, redeems, feeds, and encourages us to grow. Thank you for your many blessings to us. May those blessings now flow out to others in your name, we pray. Amen.

SENDING

***Marching Music**

"Ain't Got Time to Die"

African American Spiritual

Lord I keep so busy praisin' my Jesus
Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus
Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus
Ain't got time to die

'Cause when I'm healin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)
When I'm healin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)
When I'm healin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)
Ain't got time to die

Chorus:

'Cause it takes all of my time (to praise my Jesus)
All of my time (to praise my Lord)

If I don't praise Him the rocks are gonna cry out:
"Glory and honor, glory and honor!"
Ain't got time to die

Lord, I keep so busy workin' for the kingdom
Keep so busy workin' for the kingdom
Keep so busy workin' for the kingdom
Ain't got time to die

'Cause when I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the kingdom)
When I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the kingdom)
When I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the kingdom)
Ain't got time to die

Chorus

Lord I keep so busy servin' my master
Keep so busy servin' my master
Keep so busy servin' my master
Ain't got time to die
'Cause when I'm givin' my all (I'm servin' my master)
When I'm givin' my all (I'm servin' my master)
When I'm givin' my all (I'm servin' my master)
Ain't got time to die

Chorus

Charge and Benediction Go forth into the world to live as those baptized into Christ's mission. And may the eternal light of God keep you rock-solidly immersed in the river of life in the peace and power of Holy Spirit now and forevermore. Amen.

Postlude

¹ Based on the Prayer "Baptism in the Spirit," No. 130 in *The Wideness of God's Mercy: Litanies to Enlarge Our Prayer*, Vol. I: Prayers for the Church, Jeffery W. Rowthorn, ed. (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1985), 185-186.