



CHRIST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
MILFORD

January 9, 2021  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

## REFLECTION

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### **Christ our Brother, Baptized: Celebrating God's Solidarity with Us**

As Jesus was born under the Law,  
was obedient to the Law,  
and came to fulfill the Law on our behalf,  
so he submitted to John's baptism of repentance in our place.  
He who is without sin  
stands with us in our need for forgiveness.  
So let us be encouraged to claim the promises of God  
that were set as a banner over us at our own baptism,  
As we walk in love and obedience to Christ,  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Alleluia and Amen!

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### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

#### **Gathering Hymn**

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

#### **Call to Worship**

Isaiah 42:1-9

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
**I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.**  
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;  
**a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.**  
He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth;  
**and the coastlands wait for his law.**

1 Come ye sin - ners, — poor and nee - dy, Weak and woun - ded, — sick and sore;  
 2 Come, ye thir - sty, — come and wel - come, God's free boun - ty — glo - ri - fy;  
 3 Come ye wea - ry, — hea - vy - la - den, Lost and ru - ined — by the fall;  
 4 Let not cons - cience make you lin - ger, Nor of fit - ness — fond - ly dream;

Je - sus read - y stands to save\_ you, Full of pi - ty, — love and pow'r.  
 True be - lief\_ and true re - pen - tance, Ev' - ry grace that\_ brings you nigh.  
 If you tar - ry till you're bet - ter, You will ne - ver\_ come at all.  
 All the fit - ness He re - qui - reth Is to feel\_ your\_ need of Him.

*Chorus*

I will a - rise and\_ go to Je - sus, He will em - brace me\_ in His arms;

In the arms\_ of my dear Sa - vior, O there are\_ ten\_ thou - sand charms.

## Invocation

**New Testament Lesson** Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17

**Praise Hymn** How Deep the Father's Love

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts no power no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection  
Why should I gain from His reward  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## Confession of Sin

Eternal and merciful God, you have loved us with a love beyond our understanding,  
**and you have set us on paths of righteousness for your name's sake;**  
Yet, we have strayed from your way; **we have forsaken our baptism;**  
**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,**  
**through what we have done and what we have left undone,**  
**and we have wandered from your pathway.**

As we remember the cleansing water of baptism,

**O God, we praise you and give you thanks that you forgive us yet again.**

Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin,

**and to rise daily to new life in Christ, who lives and reigns with you,**  
**and in whose strong name we pray. Amen.**

– adapted from John Calvin

## Individual Confession

### Absolution

Matthew 13:11-12

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

### Thanksgiving Hymn

From the Depths of Woe

From depths of woe I raise to Thee  
The voice of lamentation  
Lord turn a gracious ear to me  
And hear my supplication  
If Thou iniquities dost mark  
Our secret sins and misdeeds dark  
O who shall stand before Thee

To wash away the crimson stain  
Grace grace alone availeth  
Our works alas are all in vain  
In much the best life faileth  
No man can glory in Thy sight

All must alike confess Thy might  
And live alone by mercy

Therefore my trust is in the Lord  
And not in mine own merit  
On Him my soul shall rest  
His word upholds my fainting spirit  
His promised mercy is my fort  
My comfort and my sweet support  
I wait for it with patience

What though I wait the live-long night  
And till the dawn appeareth  
My heart still trusteth in His might  
It doubteth not nor feareth  
Do thus O ye of Israel's seed  
Ye of the Spirit born indeed  
And wait till God appeareth

Though great our sins and sore our woes  
His grace much more aboundeth  
His helping love no limit knows  
Our utmost need it soundeth  
Our shepherd good and true is He  
Who will at last our Israel free  
For all their sin and sorrow

**Old Testament Lesson**    Ezekiel 36:22-29

**Peace of Christ**                    The peace of the Lord be with you!  
**And also with you!**

**Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Him, all creatures here below!  
Praise Him above, you heavenly host!  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen!

*Unison*  $Bm^7$   $A$

1. Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my -  
 2. Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fil thy  
 3. Noth - ing in my hand I bring, sim - ply to thy  
 4. While I draw this flect - ing breath, when mine eye - lids

$D$   $Bm$   $C\#m^7$   $F\#m$   $Bm^7$   $E^7$   $C\#m^7$   $F\#m$

self in thee; let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy riv - en  
 law's de - mands; could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for -  
 cross I cling; na - ked, come to thee for dress; help - less, look to  
 close in death, when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy

$Bm^7$   $E^7$   $C\#m^7$   $F\#m$   $Bm$   $A$   $D$   $C\#m^7$   $F\#m$

side which flowed, be of sin the dou - ble cure, cleanse me from its  
 ev - er flow, all for sin could not a - tone; thou must save, and  
 thee for grace; foul, I to the Foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior,  
 judg - ment throne, Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my -

$Bm^7$   $D/E$   $E^7$   $A$   $E$   $D/E$   $A$  *Fine*

guilt and pow'r.  
 thou a - lone.  
 or I die.  
 self in thee.

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Sermon Text** selections from Zephaniah

This is the Word of the Lord! **Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon** God of Judgment/God of Grace | Pastor Curran Bishop

**Response Hymn** Rock of Ages

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Bringing Our Life to God** Prayers | Collection | Profession

**Prayers of the People**

**Collection** Text **MNA 1708 to 76959** and follow the prompts or visit [give.pcamna.org/to/1708/](http://give.pcamna.org/to/1708/)

**Spirit of the Living God**

Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me. Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me. Break me, melt me, Mold me, fill me, Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me.

**Confession of Faith** The Nicene Creed (AD 325)

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic\* and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

\*the universal Christian Church in all times and places

## **Communion in Christ Jesus**

*All Christians are invited to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. When directed please take your bulletin, stand and form a circle around the worship space. Whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle. If you are not able to stand, please move your chair into the circle. We serve wine in the outer rings of the tray in the Lord's Supper, believing it to be the Biblical element used. We provide grape juice in the inner rings for those who, out of conscience or for health, do not drink wine.*

## **Communion Hymn**

Behold the Lamb (Verses 1-2)

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away  
Slain for us and we remember  
The promise made that all who come in faith  
Find forgiveness at the cross  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of peace  
Around the table of the King

The body of our Savior Jesus Christ  
Torn for you eat and remember  
The wounds that heal the death that brings us life  
Paid the price to make us one  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of love  
Around the table of the King

## **Prayer for those searching**

*Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.*

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## **Coronation Hymn**

Behold the Lamb (Verses 3-4)

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin  
Shed for you drink and remember  
He drained death's cup that all may enter in  
To receive the life of God  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of grace  
Around the table of the King

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise  
To respond and to remember  
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ  
As His body here on earth  
As we share in His suffering  
We proclaim Christ will come again  
And we'll join in the feast of heaven  
Around the table of the King

## **Benediction**

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## REFLECTION

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### **Solidarity**

What does “solidarity” mean? It means to stand alongside someone so closely that you’re almost “solidly” one with them. The word captures the essence of what the high, exalted, eternal Son did when he became human: he stood alongside us, he stood in solidarity with us. Our joys became his joys, our afflictions, his afflictions. Nowhere is this more dramatically expressed than in Jesus’ insistence to John that he must be baptized. He, the pure and perfect One, baptized by a sinner in a ritual signifying that one was morally dirty, in need of spiritual washing—a kind of bath for the soul stained by selfishness, by disregard for God and everything God calls good.

When John objected to baptizing Jesus, Jesus overrode the protest with the insistence, “It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” What did Jesus mean? At the very least he meant that this was the Father’s will that the sinner should baptize the Sinless One and thus place him who needed no moral cleansing squarely in the midst of those who do. Jesus was baptized in solidarity with us; and solidarity is love. Jesus came because he loved us. And whoever loves, serves. In obedience to his Father, Jesus came as the Suffering Servant, promised by Isaiah. He came to be our Brother and like an older brother hero, to take the rap we deserved. How striking is the parallel between God’s words in Isaiah 42 and the audible voice John heard from heaven as Jesus climbed up out of the river:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. (Isaiah 42:1)

And a Voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)

All this should move us profoundly: Jesus’ baptism should be a high moment in the history of God demonstrating his love for us. But it isn’t quite that for us, is it? To modern people, spiritual rituals seem artificial and a bit fakey. “After all,” we assure ourselves, “It’s just a ritual.” Political, military, and social rituals still have the power to move us, as I think most of us would agree when we watch, say, the graveside ceremony for one of our soldiers killed in Afghanistan or Iraq. But this ritual of a bath for the troubled soul, a symbolic washing off of the heart’s grime, was given to John the Baptist by God as something terribly important: a salve for troubled consciences. It was a baptism of repentance.

So also is the baptism Jesus later commanded his disciples to wash us in. But that baptism has something added to it, something which makes it, specifically, Christian baptism, something fuller than John’s baptism: it also now signifies the “pouring” of the Spirit of God, of divine Goodness, into the emptiness of our own goodness on the basis of Christ’s finished work at the cross.

God the Son was baptized in solidarity with us in our sinfulness so that eventually, by his grace, we might stand in solidarity with him in his righteousness, that everything he won in his dying and rising would become ours, when we believe. That is what the gospel means.

—Ron Lutjens

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Community Group** | We'll meet tonight at the Bishop house at 5:30pm for a Bible study and brief meal. Check the weekly email for a link to sign up to bring a dish, drink or side.

**Men's Breakfast** | Wednesdays at 7am, Pop's Restaurant (134 Old Gate Ln.). A space for community, important questions, and understanding. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors.

**Thursday Night Prayer Meeting** | 7-7:50pm. Regular prayer for each other, our community, our world and the redemptive work of God is essential to our mission. Please join us as we follow a short prayer and scripture liturgy and pray for each other. [Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 899 5618 6470 | Passcode: 355978

**Sunday Worship** | We'll meet at the MAC (40 Railroad Ave.) at 10:30am on Jan. 16 and 23, and at the Fowler Building (parking at I Shipyard Ln.) at 11:00am on Jan 30.

**Bible Studies** | Men will meet on Jan 22 from 9-10:30am. Women will meet again in February. Email questions for either study to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org).

**Men's & Women's Monthly Fellowship** | Generally 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, rotating months. RSVP to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org).

### Contact us

203.812.9928 | [cpcmilford@gmail.com](mailto:cpcmilford@gmail.com) | [facebook.com/CPCMilford](https://facebook.com/CPCMilford) | [cpcmilford.org](http://cpcmilford.org)

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