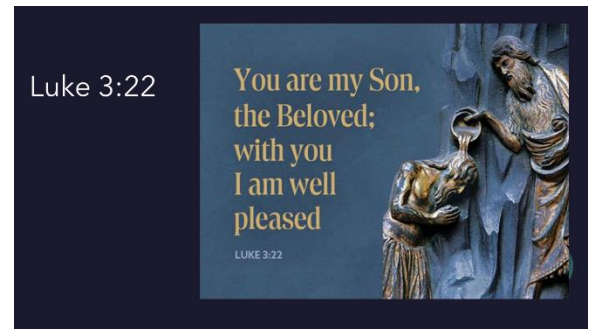


The Readings on This Day

***Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

Baptism of Our Lord

During Year C of the lectionary, most of the gospel readings come from the Gospel according to Luke. The post-Christmas standard Sundays of the year begin with a narrative of Jesus' baptism, just as, in the church, our life as Christians begins with baptism. This Sunday is a most appropriate time to schedule parish baptisms. Throughout this coming year, we are called into the Spirit of our baptismal life.



[Isaiah 43:1-7](#)

The poem from Second Isaiah is chosen because of its imagery of water, its proclamation of the love of God, its familial language, and the reference to being called by God's name. In baptism, we are washed, we receive God's love, we become sons and daughters, and we are called by the name of Christ. These ideas are echoed in Luke's account of Jesus' baptism.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

We respond to the Genesis creation story by singing [Psalm 29](#), which praises the Lord, that is YHWH, with phrases that appear to have been adapted by the Israelites from the worship of the Canaanite weather deity Baal. The psalm moves from a god of the storm to a God who blesses the people with peace.

[Acts 8:14-17](#)

Although Christians have not agreed about the scheduling of baptism in the life of the Christian, all speak of the water as including a proclamation of the word and as conferring the Holy Spirit, that is, the very presence of God, onto the candidate. The practice at baptism of naming the infant or of conferring a baptismal name developed from the idea that at baptism the candidate has been named a Christian.

[Luke 3:15-17, 21-22](#)

At the beginning of the year we commemorate both Jesus' baptism and our own. The images of the Holy Spirit as fire and as dove balance each other, and both illumine the meaning of baptism. This gospel is yet another Trinity Sunday, summing up the Christmas cycle, calling us into life with the triune God.