

*For the week of the First Sunday in Christmas
January 1st, through January 7th, 2022*

Catechesis Notes for the Week — “Rebirth” “How can a man be born again once he is old?” Thus asked Nicodemus when He went to Jesus in the dead of night. Jesus had just told him that we must be reborn in order to see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus, though he was a teacher of Israel, did not understand this teaching of Christ. It confused him. It didn’t make sense. And he was proving Jesus’ point. Because Nicodemus was not yet reborn (we learn by the end of the Gospels Nicodemus does, in fact receive this new birth) he could not see the kingdom of God. For the kingdom of God comes in ways that are hidden to the eye. Jesus’ crown was made of thorns. His throne was a cross. And yet, they are not hidden to those who have the faith to see.

God uses physical means to bring the kingdom of God, and though the world cannot see it is hiding in plain sight. “Unless one is born of the water and the Spirit,” Jesus taught, “he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” The phrase “water and the Spirit” should strike home to everyone who has been baptized. Now, is Jesus limiting this rebirth to only baptism? Of course not. Water is often a metaphor for the refreshing, revitalizing work of Christ and the Spirit among us. And yet, why the metaphor? We cannot deny that this work of the Spirit is inherently intertwined with Baptism.

For it is in our Baptism that we receive the external, public acknowledgement from God that we are His adopted children. We do not have to rely on finicky emotions that are driven to and fro. Instead, we can trust the Spirit’s work of uniting us with Christ in Baptism. Baptism is where God definitely brought us into the Kingdom of God. How can water do such great things? It is not the water itself, but it is the power of God’s Word in, with and under the water that does such great things. The kingdom of God, the activity of Christ and the Spirit, is revealed in that water by that Word. Without the Word it is nothing, but with the Word, for us it is everything. For us, we are born again into a new life with a new identity.

We now live in that new, baptismal identity. We understand that we have been brought to the kingdom of God, and so we seek to live in that kingdom, even with no magistrates to enforce His will among us. We do have God’s civil servants, though, His pastors who administrate the work of His kingdom by faithfully proclaiming His Word and administrating His Sacraments. And we live in our baptismal identity among them by continuing to return to that Word which made us God’s own. We live in our new life by continuing to examine ourselves according to that Word and repenting of all that does not belong to God and His kingdom. And bit by bit, moment by moment, God is making us to be what He has already declared in our Baptism, born again as holy and blameless children of God.

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

*Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate.
Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

APOSTLES’ CREED

VERSE: GALATIANS 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

PSALM 111 or the appointed daily psalms

Prayer on the Psalm

Praise belongs to You, our God, because You have fulfilled Your promises to Your people Israel in the incarnation of Your Son, and sent the light of Your truth to our fathers when they were walking in ignorance of You. Grant us steadfastly to trust Your covenant of grace that we may live therein. Make Your works of mercy and truth known to our children, that they may praise Your name in generations to come. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	62, 63	66	68	71	73	75, 76	78	80
Evening	64, 65	67, 70	69	72	74	77	79	81

BIBLE READINGS

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	Matthew 2:13-23 Circumcision and Name of Jesus	
Monday	The Boy Jesus in the Temple—Luke 2:41-52	John 18:19-40
Tuesday	John the Baptist Prepares the Way of the Lord—Matthew 3:1-12	John 19:1-22
Wednesday	Wise Men Worship, Magi—Matthew 2	John 19:23-42
Thursday	The Baptism of Our Lord—Matthew 3:13-17	John 20:1-18
Friday	Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams—Genesis 41:1-36 The Epiphany of Our Lord	John 20:19-31
Saturday	Isaiah 42:1-9	Romans 6:1-11

CATECHISM — The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

What does such baptizing indicate?	Third Grade+
It indicates that the Old Adam in us should be daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.	Third Grade+
Where is this written?	First Grade+
St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.	First Grade+

DEVOTION OR MEDITATION

DAILY PRAYER

Select from among the following prayers as time and circumstances allow:

Prayer on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Heavenly Father, You have forgiven our sins, rescued us from death and the devil, and given us eternal life by Baptism into the death and resurrection of Your beloved Son. Strengthen our faith so that we daily put to death all sins and evil desires and, trusting Your sure promises, are raised to live before You in righteousness and purity. Finally, bring us to the fulfillment of our Baptism in the resurrection of the body to life everlasting; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Collect of the Week

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Themes for Prayer

- Sunday: For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacrament.*
- Monday: For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.*
- Tuesday: For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.*
- Wednesday: For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.*
- Thursday: For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.*
- Friday: For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.*
- Saturday: For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.*

In Our Prayers this Week

Our Congregation: *Scott & Joy Dwyer, Jackson, Sydney; Joyce Eddings; Shari Edwards, Braden; Anna Ehmann; Christian Ellis; Aaron & Destiny Ellis; Peighton Ellis; Sofia Ellis; Austin & Lisa Entress, Aiden, Kielee, Landrie*

Baptismal Birthdays: *Tyler Ahrens; Clinton Bryan; Jean Davis; Charlotte Dehn; Kermit Deterding; Chasidy Dewey; Laykn Dewey; Joy Dwyer; Keith Janssen; Jim Johns; Deena Rogers; Michele Sherpy; Larry Hanson*

Wedding Anniversaries: *Timothy & Marie Roth*

The Sick:

Friends of our Congregation:

Our Circuit:

Faith Lutheran Church, Emporia; Reb. Adam Reichart

Messiah Lutheran Church, Emporia; Rev. Eddie Hosch

Our District Staff and President, *Rev. Justin Panzer.*

Jim Bradshaw, Education and Youth; Janet Powell, Administrative Assistant

Our Synod and President, *Rev. Matthew Harrison*

Our Community: *City of Richmond; City of Princeton; USD 288*

Our State and Governor, *Laura Kelly*

Our Nation and President, *Joseph Biden*

LORD'S PRAYER

MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER FROM THE CATECHISM

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

—or—

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

HYMN OF THE WEEK

"In His Temple Now Behold Him"

519

1 In His temple now behold Him,
See the long-expected Lord;
Ancient prophets had foretold Him,
God has now fulfilled His word.
Now to praise Him, His redeemèd
Shall break forth with one accord.

2 In the arms of her who bore Him,
Virgin pure, behold Him lie
While His aged saints adore Him
Ere in perfect faith they die.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Lo, the incarnate God Most High!

3 Jesus, by Your presentation,
When they blessed You, weak and poor,
Make us see Your great salvation,
Seal us with Your promise sure;
And present us in Your glory
To Your Father, cleansed and pure.

Text: Henry J. Pye, c. 1825–1903, alt.
Text: Public domain

Looking Forward to "Baptism of Our Lord"

January 8, 2023

Service Hymns: 398, 407, 404, 405, 394, 412, 537, 602

Readings: *Isaiah 42:1-9* | *Romans 6:1-11* | *Matthew 3:13-17*

The Baptism of our Lord is an "epiphany" of the one true God in the flesh and blood of Jesus. He is the chosen servant of the Lord, anointed with the Spirit for the rescue of God's people to "bring forth justice to the nations" (Is. 42:1). Thus, He makes all things new, and He is given "as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations" (Is. 42:6). In the waters of the Jordan, He takes His place with sinners and takes all the sins of the world upon Himself. He undergoes the Baptism of repentance in order to "fulfill all righteousness" for us (Matt. 3:15). He submits Himself to the curse of sin and death in order to redeem us. We are baptized with a Baptism like His, thereby dying and rising with Him, so that "we will also live with him" (Rom. 6:8). Indeed, all of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus are anointed with His Spirit and named by His Father as beloved and well-pleasing sons and daughters.

