

“Finding a Faith that Matters”
“Do we need faith?”

This Sunday we begin a new sermon series “Finding a Faith that Matters.” In this New Year, this sermon series will invite us to recommit our lives to Christ, who has come to offer light and life and love. What better way to begin a new year and a new commitment than to look to the Baptism of Jesus. Jesus identifies with us and invites us into community bigger and wider than anything we can possibly imagine. As we begin a new year, we were invited to remember our baptism and to pick a prayer focus word. Please use your focus word throughout the year and see how God will speak to you, guide and direct you as you are part of transforming the world into the kingdom of God.
---Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Do we need faith?”**

Prayer for the Week

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen. John Wesley’s Covenant Prayer

Study Guide

Monday, January 23 Isaiah 42: 1-4

This is the first of the “Servant Song’s” in the book of Isaiah. Every one of the songs or hymns give praise to the anointed of God. The anointed was the messiah or the Christ, who God would use to bring judgment and righteousness. This is not someone who is perfect or does not know sorrow or uncertainty. The anointed one will not be broken, although he or she might be bent. The light will not be extinguished, but could be dimmed. God’s presence will be made real even in weakness. This is a powerful word of hope for all people who try and live out their baptism and sometimes are bruised and hurt. *How do you experience God’s blessing in times of uncertainty?*

Tuesday, January 24 Matthew 3: 13-15

Matthew, like Luke, doesn’t get to the baptism of Jesus until chapter three. In the first two chapters Matthew describes the genealogy of Jesus, Joseph’s dream and decision to take Mary as his wife and their journey to Bethlehem and the visitation of the magi and the flight to Egypt. Chapter three begins with John and his ministry. People come from all over came to hear John. His message was harsh for the religious leaders and he begins to set the stage for the coming of Jesus. John was right, Jesus didn’t “need” baptism, but was not ashamed to be baptized. *As you read this, how does Jesus’ response to John make sense to you and your understanding of Jesus? How does your baptism and/or confirmation tie you to Jesus? How does your prayer word affirm your calling and your baptism?*

Wednesday, January 25 Matthew 3: 16-17

Jesus shows up at the river Jordan and is baptized by John. Jesus is one of many in a crowd of people. When Jesus comes up out of the water, God’s voice says “You are my Son, the Beloved.” Baptism marks each one as the beloved child of God. Baptism claims Jesus as God’s beloved son, called and challenged to go forth. John and Jesus both faced resistance to their ministry. Believers today, who claim God’s love for all, and challenge the world to live out justice, peace and righteousness, also face great resistance. *How do you see your baptism as God’s claim on you? How does that claim translate into your call and your challenge as God’s beloved child?*

Thursday, January 26 Isaiah 42: 5-7

After acknowledging that living as God’s servant isn’t necessarily what most might consider “successful, the author goes on to proclaim God’s word. First, by proclaiming who God is to the people and then by claiming that God has called God’s servant for “a good reason” to be a light to the nations and to open the eyes of the blind and to lead people out of darkness into freedom. *How did you find yourself responding to this message? Since “God has called you for good reason” (CEB) How does it match with the prayer word you have?*

Friday, January 27 Isaiah 42: 8-9

Again, God is declared as God of all, here in these last two verses, the prophet notes that God will be doing a new thing and God will share with God’s people the new thing God is doing. *As you ponder your calling and your baptism, how do you know and experience God’s love for you?*