

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) To watch **sermons recorded** on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage. There is also often now the ability to click on CC to view **closed captioning** on YouTube for those with hearing impairment. To potentially increase subscribers & views, also please like and share!
- 2) Please invite family or friends, who want to join us for live worship on Sundays @10:45am, to request access by emailing their name, email, & phone number to [fpcopataskala@gmail.com](mailto:fpcopataskala@gmail.com)
- 3) **One “Zoom” Schoolhouse** 10-10:30am Sundays for all ages 1/10-2/14 RP3: read, picture, ponder, & put into action Bible basics. Kids & youth earn special awards for perfect attendance!
- 4) January is Awareness of Human Sex Trafficking Month. A speaker from Gracehaven came to Zoom worship on 1/3. There numerous ways to help, including giving. Those interested can donate to FPC with Gracehaven in the memo area of the check. Giving can also be done on the website: [www.gracehaven.me](http://www.gracehaven.me) and participating in the Blueprint for Hope fundraising campaign there.

### **WORSHIP for Baptism of the Lord - January 10, 2021**

**Prelude** sung by the Wallace family women, **“O Breath of Life”**

Streaming CCLI 20373701; Author: Bessie Ann Porter Head, 1920; Tune: Spiritus Vitae; public domain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcLzhsmlmG8>

Opening Hymn: **“Breathe on Me Breath of God”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5keJHZdWYM>

**Call to Worship:** Psalm 107:1-2 *Responsively*

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

**Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story – those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.**

**Prayer of Confession:** Ephesians 2:1-3 *Responsively*

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

**All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**  
*(Pause now for a time of silent confession.)*

**Assurance of Forgiveness:** Ephesians 2:4-10 *Responsively*

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgression –it is by grace you have been saved.*

**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.**

**In order that in the coming he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.**

*For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this is not from yourselves.*

**It is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.**

**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

### **“The Gloria Patri”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uMeiUtOSVM>

### **Hymn of Preparation: “Spirit of God Descend upon My Heart”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymKxTkrRNBA>

**“Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?” John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.**

**Prayer for Illumination:** *Unison*

**Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring you glory and praise. Amen.**

### **Scripture Readings: Mark 1:1-13 & Ephesians 2:1-10**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1%3A1-13&version=NIV>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A1-10&version=NIV>

### **SERMON: “Alive in Christ” by The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford**

**Watch sermon on:** <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd>

The 1st passage in the 2nd chapter of Ephesians is about our being made alive in God’s family through Christ. It is a fitting one as today we celebrate the anniversary of when Jesus was identified as the beloved Son of the Father in heaven, at the time he was baptized by John & anointed by the Holy Spirit in power for his ministry ahead. Mark, the first Gospel written, is the only one that begins with the baptism of Jesus. It is the Gospel assigned in the lectionary for this year. Mark is also most concise of all the Gospels. Let’s hear the reading from **Mark 1:1-13**. Note that Mark’s Gospel thru Isaiah 40:3 begins with revealing John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus in baptizing for repentance of the forgiveness of sin. **Ephesians 2:1-3** also speaks of sin. Listen.

Paul begins this passage by leveling the playing field of sin for all of us, since all of us once lived as disobedient, gratifying the cravings of our flesh, following its desires & thoughts. Paul knows about following our own desires and thoughts, since before he became a follower of Jesus, he followed Jesus’ disciples to punish, imprison, and even kill them. In Acts, before his conversion he is described as breathing out murderous threats. Lest, we try to justify ourselves, claiming that we are not in his category of disobedience as Paul, we should consider Jesus’ words from the sermon on the Mount, where he equates speaking in anger against a brother or sister as the same as breaking the commandment against murder. Consider how we may be tempted to not apply Paul’s writing to children, claiming them as innocent. But based upon Scripture such

as this, John Calvin refers to our propensity toward disobedience as total depravity. Calvin writes that all of us are born with sin within us, as the result of the original sin and fall. Thinking back to our own childhoods, we may remember anger and sharp words against our siblings. I may not remember exactly what I said, but I remember times of anger against my brother. Children, like adults, are prone to sin. I also remember more than once each of my daughters experiencing the wonderful gift of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, crying in great remorse, coming to me with confession of their sins. Remember that Jesus said, unless we are humbled like a little child, we will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Sometimes, the sin is anger held onto against ourselves, holding onto to guilt, letting it morph into ungodly shame. After my daughters came to confess and were granted an assurance of forgiveness, in words and hugs, sometimes I would see signs of clinging shame. In which case, I would pick them up and put them over my shoulders, like the shepherd who scooped up the wandering lost sheep. Then we would do the dance of joy until their sadness turned to laughter.

When my daughters were of age, I also led their youth groups, before and after I was ordained as clergy. For these youth, I opened my time of getting to know them with the icebreaker of “who stole the cookie from the cookie jar.” Although it was a great way to help us learn names, it also brought us in touch with the gift of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, a feeling that unfortunately due to discomfort we may push away as we grow older. Ephesians 2:1-3, reminds us of our sin in hope of making us aware of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, if there is still any unconfessed sin. Regular periods of examination are important for us to maintain as Christians. Although we may resist, afraid for our sin to be discovered.

I lived in a rural country setting, when I was a little girl. I remember the smell of freshly washed laundry on the line, blowing in the breeze. I used to play among the clean white sheets, serving as the walls of my temporary playhouse. But I had to be careful not to touch the sheets with dirty hands, soiling them again. That would be troublesome, because after all no one wants to air dirty laundry in public. Thus, dirty laundry is vigorously scrubbed clean with soap and water. Some of the cleaning products, like bleach, are extremely harsh to be effective. My grandmother and mother were also laundresses in a local hotel. I can still smell the chemicals in the air. The dirt of our sin likewise needs cleaned away with a powerful process and agents. The process is baptism, which cleans us from our sin. The agent is the blood of Jesus, administered through the Holy Spirit.

The source of cleansing is described next in **vv. 4-5**. These verses tell us that we are saved by grace. The cleansing of sin through baptism, a sign of Christ’s dying on the cross for our forgiveness comes through grace. Grace is an undeserved gift.

I remember my grandmother showing me prizes from boxes of laundry detergent, towels and even china! My grandmother had a set of white rose china that came from boxes of laundry detergent. These were bigger than little prizes in cracker jacks, cereal boxes, or happy meals. Point is that gifts are undeserved, coming fully through grace. Forgiveness comes through undeserved grace.

I also remember an event, when I was caring as a single mother for my two small daughters, but also for my mother who had fallen ill. Although I wouldn’t trade the time in caring for my family for anything, I was exhausted. One day after Bible study, I went to pick up a prescription for my mother. To save time I took a backroad which I seldom traveled with a very slow speed limit that I did not realize. All of a sudden, I heard a siren & saw a police officer behind me. It was a wake up call for me, because I was so weary that I didn’t even remember the drive on the backroad. When the officer asked, “Do you know how fast you were going?” I admitted that I had no idea. I even thanked him for pulling me over to keep me safe. I also explained where I had been & my situation. He saw proof in the Bible & prescription on my front seat. When the officer returned from his car, he showed me the speed that he clocked me as going on my ticket, & then explained that I could check either the box innocent or guilty. I replied that I must be guilty, because he said so. I got my pen to check the guilty box. But the officer confessed that he too was a Christian. He also said that he did not want to give me a ticket. But he had been ordered by his supervisor not to make any exceptions to violations that day. Then he reminded me that we are innocent until proven guilty. Since I did not expressly know if I was guilty, he asked me to check the innocent box & to show up at the magistrate’s office for the burden of guilt to be on him. Trust me, he said. I was hesitant. But the officer convinced me to check the plea box innocent. It turns

out the officer did not show up at the magistrate. Without the burden of proof, I was found innocent. I, thereby, received the gift of grace, undeserved forgiveness.

Paul writes that the grace that saves us comes because of God's great love for us. God's love, called agape, is unconditional, undeserving love by grace. His love comes to us even while we are yet disobedient sinners, dead in transgressions. The Bible tells us that next to God's holiness, our sin is like filthy rags. God has always loved us, even while we were yet dressed in filthy rags. I remember many times falling down, ripping my trousers, and skinning my knees as a little girl. There are still scars on them to prove it. But my mother would help me out of the blood-stained clothes, disinfect my wounds, bandage my knees, and apply kisses to make the injured area "all better." Sometimes the injuries came because I was riding my bike how I shouldn't have been or running when I should have been walking, but the grace of my mother's love washed me clean. And as much as we love each other, as you so often hear me say, Jesus loves us far more, and that is very good news.

Hear now **vv. 6-7**. By Christ, we are picked up and brushed off, when we have fallen. We are raised up in Christ. Christ never fell into sin, like we have. But he is said to have fallen multiple times, in carrying his cross on the via Delarosa, the way to his death. Stations of these falls are marked in the city of Jerusalem along his path. Thus, Simon of Cyrene helped him to carry the cross according to Scripture. Once at Calvary, he was raised upon the cross, where he took our sin upon himself, punished as a criminal, though innocent of any wrongdoing. And he died. But in Ephesians 2:5 Paul writes of our being made alive in Christ. Because of the power of Holy Spirit and God's great love, Jesus was also raised from the dead. So, those who believe in him are also raised to life through love and grace. In the same power of the Holy Spirit, we, too, are saved by Christ.

Now we read **vv. 8-9**. We are saved by grace alone through Christ alone, but also through faith alone. Here is another component of Christian doctrine important for us to understand. Even faith in Jesus as our Savior comes through grace. Yes, we choose whether or not to accept Jesus. Whether or not to trust and believe. Whether or not to receive God's great love, through Jesus His Son. But since he loves us first, he extends the gift and grace of faith to us, before we can receive. He offers us love and grace, while we are next sinners. Our only work is to accept the free grace he extends. But salvation comes only through God, not through any work of our own. Salvation comes by faith alone (that comes through God alone), grace alone (that comes through God alone), and by Christ alone (that comes through God alone). We cannot work our way to salvation. We cannot only accept salvation as a free, unconditional gift of love and grace.

Then **v. 10**. We are God's handiwork. When my children were small, they often presented me with their handiwork, which I put on my refrigerator. Their handiwork was to express their love, and as signs of gratitude for the love they received from me. Their handiwork did not earn my love. They already had my love. Which is why, even before they could draw or paint, I had pictures of them on my refrigerator. I still do. They are my handiwork. But even more we are God's handiwork. If God has a refrigerator, we'd be on it. And if God has a scrapbook, we'd be in it, with photos of all our important endeavors. Not that our works gain our salvation, but they can demonstrate the good works that we do in gratitude for all God has done for us, good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The Heidelberg catechism derived from Scripture is summarized in 3 works implied into today's passage: guilt, grace, and gratitude. We were guilty of sin. Though by grace, faith and Christ, in God's love we are forgiven. What remains is to live the life for which we have been raised by Christ in gratitude for our salvation. Be alive in Christ with an attitude of gratitude, for we are God's handiwork. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Hymn of Response: "Come Holy Spirit, Dove Divine"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ332Eru3Ow>

**Statement about Baptism**

Sisters and brothers in Christ, our baptism is the sign and seal of our cleansing from sin, and of our being grafted into the life of Christ. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken and God's kingdom entered our world. Through our baptism we were made citizens of God kingdom and freed from the bondage of sin. Let us celebrate that freedom and redemption through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism. I ask the congregation, therefore, once again to reject sin, and profess your faith in Christ, and to confess the faith of the church, in which we were baptized.

### **Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows *Unison***

**Trusting in the gracious mercy of God,**

**I turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world.**

**I turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as my Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love.**

**I will be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love.**

### **Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed *Unison***

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen!**

**PRAYERS of Joy and Concern, followed by:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus**

### **Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison***

**In view of your mercy help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you, O God. Amen. *Romans 12:1***

### **Doxology**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSshNIuVPbA>

### **Closing Hymn: "The Church's One Foundation"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jotNbcFeIX4>

**Benediction: Ephesian 6:23-24 *Responsively***

Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love,... in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**