Dear friend
I enclose this week's Virtual Service for the first Sunday after Epiphany, the Baptism of Christ. To start, a rousing Epiphany hymn, 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness', to Was Lebet, from Chester Cathedral:
https://youtu.be/LBEmXFkwcOE

Another rendition of Gibbons' 'This is the record of John', sung by Daniel Elgersma with the Kampen boys' choir (I don't think it's real snow...):
https://youtu.be/gswHQevskKI

'There shall a star from Jacob come forth', from Mendelssohn's short oratorio Christus, which ends with the chorale Wachet Auf (Sleepers wake), sung by singers from Wilmington (Delaware, not the one near Marksbury):
https://youtu.be/339IDyhiJ1k

and while we're at it, JS Bach's Prelude based on the chorale, played by Ton Koopman:
https://youtu.be/VSkz3j9b23Y

Dante Bowe's joyful response to hearing the'Voice of God:
https://youtu.be/hP5u4BUcq_U

Finally, from Martin, 'O Praise The Name (Anástasis)' - Hillsong Worship with Lyrics 2015. We've had this one before, but here's a live version:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNkdKr9QP3w

Happy Epiphany!
Chris

VIRTUAL SERVICE 9.01.22
The Baptism of Christ.
(First Sunday of Epiphany)

While it is beyond our comprehension that eternity should meet us in time, yet it is true because in Jesus Christ eternity has become time. *Karl Barth*.



Baptism of Christ: Andrea Del Verrocchio

CONFESSION Forgive us, Lord, when we fail you in our discipleship, when we are self-centred, when we ignore the hungry, when we reject the refugee, when we pass by on the other side of the road from the homeless. Renew a right spirit within us, loving Father. *I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 43.25.*

COLLECT Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit, grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

READINGS Isaiah 43.1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8.14-17, Luke 3.15-17,21-22.

REFLECTION Luke's account suggests that Jesus' baptism was a public act; he came, in all humility, as part of a crowd. It was when he was praying afterwards that the thin barrier between the earthly world and heaven was broken, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. People were used to God's Spirit entering the great prophets, such as Elijah, but John prophesied that the one who was to come would cleanse each of us with the Holy Spirit and fire.
Jesus' baptism was more than a public declaration of faith, it asserted his mission as God's Son. Similarly, as God's adopted children, we are given a calling to serve him in our own individual way. We are even less worthy than John to untie Jesus' sandals, but we are made worthy by God's grace. When Martin Luther was beset by self-doubt, he touched his forehead, saying "Remember, Martin, you have been baptized".

PRAYERS Look down from heaven, O Lord, upon the lambs of thy flock. Bless their bodies and their souls, and grant that they who have received thy sign, O Christ, on their foreheads may be thine own on the day of thy appearing, for thy Name's sake. *Egbert of York*

We pray for war-torn areas of the world, for peoples governed by fear, for those who use violence to control others. Grant us peace.

We thank you for the privilege of clean water in our homes. Bless all who work to provide clean water and sanitation around the world. We praise and thank you for the gift of living water in our baptism.

Comfort and heal all who are sick, the hungry and thirsty, those are lonely or feel unloved, those who are on the road searching for a better life. Especially we pray for……..

We say **THE LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER Servant Christ, help us to follow you deep into the waters of baptism, to link our lives with all those who grieve about the injustice in human life, to break free from the chain of past wrongs, to become ready to face your coming age, and to be renewed by your Spirit, and anointed to preach good news to the poor, the oppressed and the prisoner. Servant Christ, help us all to follow you.
United Theological College, Bangalore, ed. Eric Lott