

EPIPHANY 1B - BAPTISM OF JESUS - January 7-13
Genesis 1: 1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1: 4-11. Rec. text - NRSV.

Additional resources for Epiphany 1B:

SCRIPTURE IN SONG, CMC Australasia, Grovedale, Victoria 3216; *AUSTRALIAN PSALMS*, Bruce Prewer, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 5000, 1991; *NEW JOURNEYS SONGBOOK*, JBCE, Melbourne 3000, 1991; *AUSTRALIAN PRAYERS*, Bruce Prewer, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide 5000, 1983.

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Based on Genesis 1:1-5.*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

TIS 447/AHB 61: "Lord, your almighty word"

TIS 72/AHB 42: "From all who dwell beneath the skies"

TIS 255: "O laughing light"

TIS 666: "We are marching in the light of God" with verses as suggested

TIS 675/SCRIPTURE IN SONG 580:"Lord, the light of your love is shining"

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND PRAISE

Eternal God, reigning over the universe and in our hearts, we worship and praise you. Through you comes the energy by which the world was made - through you the darkness is overcome and the light shines. And yet, in the midst of your greatness, you chose to reveal your power and glory: in - of all places - a stable and a new born baby ; in a pilgrim-packed river - through - of all people - an animal-skinned, locust-eating baptiser; and - on a cross of wood, through -of all things - an agonising crucifixion. All communicating the mystery and greatness of your love. We praise and adore you, O God, for revealing your love so fully for us in Jesus, and for renewing our lives with your Spirit. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Based on Psalm 29 If you do not have children's talk, Bruce Prewer has a good interpretation of Psalm 29 in *Australian Psalms* (page 39) If you have a children's talk invite people on left and right of church to read verses as follows - with accompanying sounds as suggested.

LEFT: Let angels and all heavenly beings, tell of God's glory and strength.

RIGHT: Let all people worship God's glorious and holy name.

LEFT: The voice of God is over the waters (stamp feet); the God of glory thunders (beat hands on back of pews/seats in front)

RIGHT: The voice of God is powerful(stamp feet); the voice of God is full of majesty (stamp feet).

LEFT: The voice of God shatters trees (stamp feet); even the great cedars of Lebanon (stamp feet)..

RIGHT: The voice of God makes the land jump and skip (stamp feet).

LEFT The voice of God flashes forth flames of fire.(make 'blowing' noise)

RIGHT: The voice of God shakes the wilderness (stamp feet).

LEFT The voice of God causes trees to whirl and dance, stripping forests and bush (stamp feet and make 'blowing' noise).

ALL: and in his temple all shout, "Glory!"

RIGHT: God is enthroned over all the oceans and seas of the world;

LEFT: God sits enthroned as king forever.

ALL May God give strength to all people and bless them with everlasting peace!

Making the suggested noise can sound like thunder. At the conclusion of the reading, talk about storms and how frightening they can sometimes be. Perhaps the person who wrote the psalm was moved to write it after having witnessed a storm. We know now that storms are caused by differing pressures in the atmo-

sphere, but it is not too difficult to understand how people in ancient times believed that thunder was truly the sound of God's voice. And yet the writer finishes the psalm with a word of peace. You could perhaps relate this to experiencing stormy times in life (illness, broken relationships, unemployment etc.) . Christmas is God's word of peace to us. Ask if they remember the angels' message (peace and goodwill to all people). We all may have stormy times in our lives at some time or another, but we know that God is with us in Jesus, strengthening us with his peace and love so that we can make it through to the calm beyond the storm. And, if we know anyone who happens to be experiencing a rough, stormy patch in their lives, Jesus wants us to be a channel of peace to them, maybe just by listening to them or by letting them know that you care what happens to them.

TIS 607: "Make me a channel of your peace"

TIS 466/AHB 402 "Peace with the Father, peace with Christ his Son"

TIS 155/ NEW JOURNEYS SONGBOOK 108 - 'How great thou art' -

(This is an old hymn but it is well worth singing following Psalm 29)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Psalmist wrote about experiencing God's voice as majestic power and force. Mark told of God's personal words of love to Jesus after his baptism by John. We long to hear God's words addressed to us, but too often we are so overwhelmed by uncertainty about the future, or feelings of powerlessness in the present, that we fail to recognise God speaking to us either personally or through the forces of nature. We long to hear God's words addressed to us as people beloved by God. Forgive us for listening to - and believing - voices that call us worthless and unlovable. Hear God's words speak louder: "You are my beloved sons and daughters" (silent reflection)

ALL: Loving and merciful God, forgive us when we allow our fears and our worries to stifle your voice of love. As you spoke so clearly to Jesus, speak to us also so that your words of love resonate in every corner of our being and we know that we too are your beloved, on whom your favour rests. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Our assurance of knowing the peace and joy of God's forgiveness is found in belief in the One baptised by John and identified by God in the words: "You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Know therefore that in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

SHARING WORDS OF LOVE Invite people to share with those round about:

"You....*name*....are beloved of God"

EPISTLE: Acts 19: 1-7

GOSPEL: Mark 1: 4-11

SERMON

TIS 250: "Christ, when for us you were baptised"

TIS 409/AHB 322: "O breath of life, come sweeping through us"

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Give thanks for God's identification with us through Jesus; for Jesus' willingness to join those other pilgrims in the River Jordan to be baptised by his cousin, John the Baptist. Give thanks especially for Jesus' Spirit-filled ministry which began in earnest that day. Give thanks and praise that in our baptism "we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, made members of the body of Christ and called to his ministry in the world." Pray that we may be continually challenged to follow in Jesus' steps and to live out his ministry in the world today and every day. Pray for events and people in your part of the world and further afield. Conclude prayer by acknowledging our enlightenment by Christ in our baptism and pray that his light will shine through us forever

through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.....

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

DOXOLOGY: TIS 772/AHB 577: "Worship, honour, glory, blessing"

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Worship, honour, glory and blessing are yours, O God - ours is the joy that you came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ - Light of the world - and continue to come through the power of your Holy Spirit. We offer these gifts as a tangible expression of our love, joy and gratitude, and pray that, through them - and our continuing witness - others may come to recognise and experience your presence in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

TIS 314/AHB 239: "As with gladness men of old"

TIS 317: "Love came down at Christmas"

TIS 416: "Great God, your Spirit like the wind"

BENEDICTION

Go into this week knowing yourself beloved by God,
blessed by the obedience of Jesus,
renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit