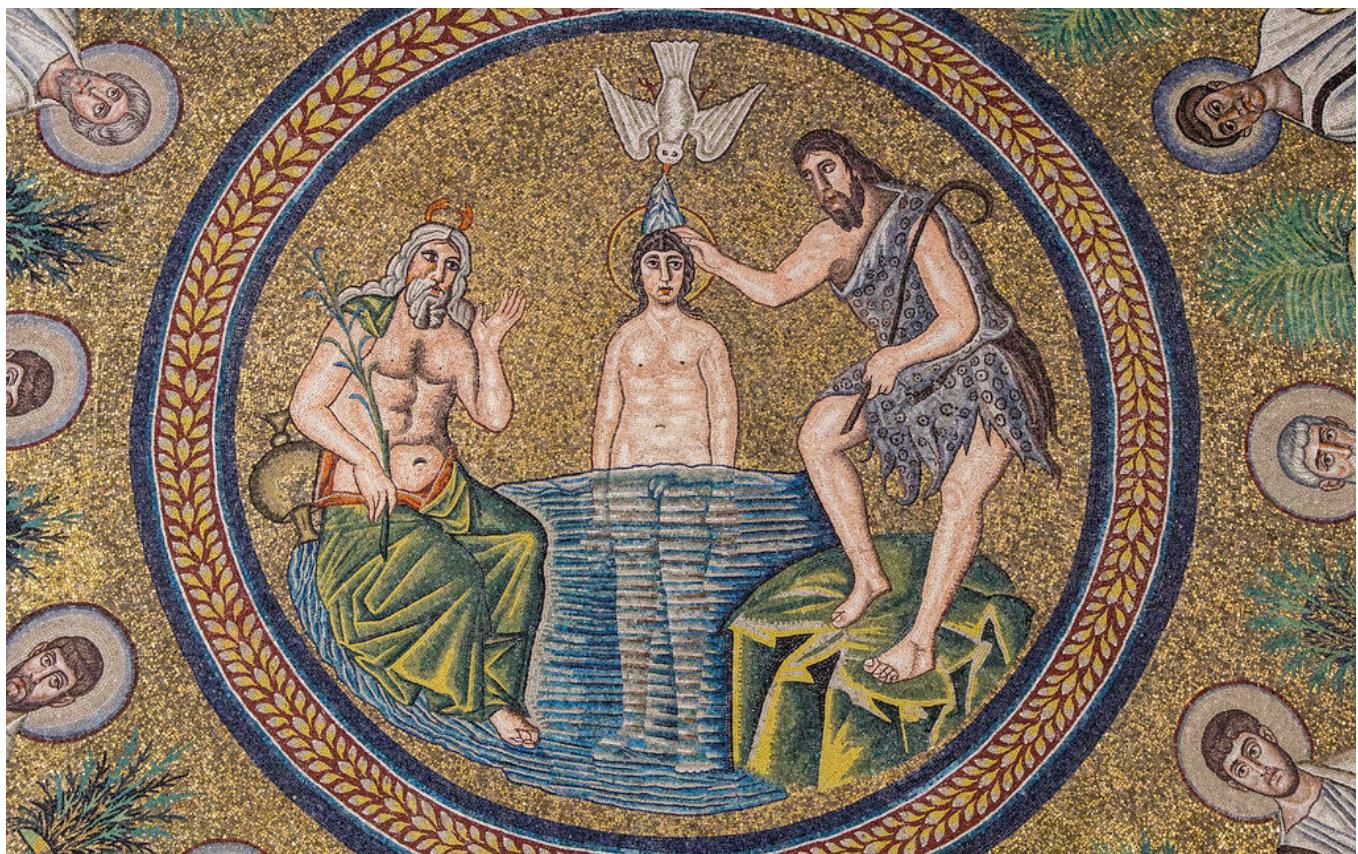


# Baptism of Christ



*Baptism of Jesus; Mosaic from the Arian Baptistery, Ravenna, Italy.*

St Aidan's Uniting Church  
11<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
Epiphany 1

## Call to Worship

God called the people of Israel  
to be in covenant relationship  
and be a light to the world.

God called Jesus  
“my beloved son”  
and filled him with the Spirit  
to give hope to the world.

God also calls us  
into relationship,  
into new life,  
into living out God’s reign.

**Let us respond to that call  
and let us worship God.**

## Prayers

Creator God,  
sometimes living in covenant with you is hard,  
we are challenged and don’t want to be,  
or our inner self is reflected back to us  
and we do not want to hear this.

When we hold onto what we were taught  
and refuse to explore again  
what new evidence means  
for those beliefs,

**forgive us and help us start again.**

When we think that you can only act  
in particular ways  
or at particular times,

**forgive us and help us start again.**

When we think that we are ok  
because we are in a covenant relationship  
and forget this covenant means responding  
and being a light to the nations,  
**forgive us and help us start again.**

When we look to the bullies of our world  
and want revenge rather than justice,  
forgetting the gentleness of your servant:  
**forgive us and help us start again.**

When our faith allows us  
to continue doing what we always did  
without thinking critically  
about where it is calling us today:  
**forgive us and help us start again.**

Help us to hear afresh your affirmation  
that Jesus is your beloved  
and we are as well,  
help us to live a life  
that truly shows what this means.

**Amen.**

#### *Words of Assurance*

You are God's beloved  
and God's grace is a gift for you.

When we confess our shortcomings  
in God's abundant grace,  
we are forgiven  
and granted a fresh start  
and helped to try again.

Know that you are forgiven:  
**thanks be to God.**

## Prayer of Intercession

Loving God,  
we hear in the Acts stories  
of your reaching beyond traditional boundaries  
to share your love  
with all the people of the world.

Now we pray  
for and with the many people around the world  
who particularly need to know your love,  
your justice,  
and your compassion  
at this time.

Isaiah said:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
    my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
    he will bring forth justice to the nations.

**May there be justice, O God,  
across your world,  
may all your people have hope  
because they can live in peace.**

He will not cry out or lift up his voice  
    or make it heard in the street;  
a bruised reed he will not break,  
    and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

**We pray for the people who experience violence:  
at home,  
in their workplaces,  
because of their country's policies  
or due to conflict and war.**

He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth,  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

**May your sustaining love be known  
wherever it is needed;  
may it uplift those who need it most  
and nurture those who grow faint and weary.**

Thus says God, the Lord,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

**Remind us that all the people across the earth  
are your beloved children:  
may we treat them as brothers and sisters  
regardless of race, religion, sexuality, or ability.**

I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations,  
to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

**We pray for those who are  
in physical or metaphorical darkness,  
that they may see anew;  
we pray for those in prisons,  
political prisoners,  
criminal prisoners,  
those in the prisons of their mind,  
that they may be freed to truly live.**

I am the Lord; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.

See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them.

**Amen.**

## Benediction & Blessing

God sent the people of Israel  
to live a covenant relationship  
and be a light to the world.

God sent Jesus  
The “beloved son”  
and filled him with the Spirit  
to give hope to the world.

God also sends us  
into relationship,  
into new life,  
into living out God’s reign.

**Let us respond to that call  
and live our lives in worship of God.**