

Sunday, 12 January 2025 – Baptism of the Lord

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus presents himself to John to be baptized in the Jordan. The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends as a dove and we hear the voice of God: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (see Psalm 2:7).

At this festival of the Christian year, we not only remember Jesus’ baptism, but we celebrate our own: the baptism we share with Christ. Accordingly, this Sunday is an appropriate time to celebrate the sacrament of baptism or the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. It also foreshadows the season of Lent, as Jesus was immediately driven into the wilderness for 40 days after his own baptism.

Source: <https://www.pcusa.org/events/baptism-lord/january-12th-2025-1200am>

Prelude – *Air for Organ*

Dr. Gerre Edward Hancock (1934-2012) was Organist and Choirmaster at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York City for over 30 years. His *Air for Organ* was composed in 1963 and features a variety of solo sounds on the organ as well the full dynamic range available from the softest sounds to almost full organ.

Sermon Hymn – *In Christ Called to Baptize*

Hymnwriter Ruth C. Duck (1947-2024) was an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and professor of worship at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. She was the writer of over two hundred published hymn texts. Ruth Carolyn Duck died peacefully from pneumonia on December 26, 2024.

Offertory – *At the River*

Shall We Gather at the River was composed by American hymn writer and Baptist minister Robert Lowry (1826-1899). Aaron Copland (1900-1990) included the tune in the second set of his *Old American Songs*, in an arrangement for solo voice. It was premiered in 1958 with William Warfield as soloist and Copland at the piano. This morning’s anthem is an adaptation for SATB chorus of Copland’s original.

Postlude - *Fugue on the Carillon of Soissons Cathedral*

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) was a meticulous composer, constantly revising his music, which resulted in a smaller output of compositions than many of his contemporaries. This perfectionism resulted in pieces of the highest quality, which are held in high regard in the organ literature.