

Baptism of our Lord
January 11, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE

"Walking in the Air" Howard Blake
Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, you who are weary, you who have been
bruised by life, you whose flame has flickered in the
winds of the world.

We come, longing to be renewed.

The Holy One who stretches out the heavens
is stretching us now—
stretching our hearts toward courage,
our hands toward compassion,
our lives toward gentle justice.

We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

A voice from heaven says to us, as it said to Jesus:
You are my beloved. This Spirit rests upon us, too.

We are God's Beloved, called to bring gentle justice.

Come, let us remember who we are.

Let us worship God with joy.

OPENING PRAYER

**Holy One, Breath of Creation, You stretched out the
heavens and set the earth dancing with life. You
whispered belovedness over Jesus rising from the
Jordan, and your Spirit rested upon him like a
gentle dove. Rest your Spirit upon us now. Stretch
our hearts where they have grown tight. Soften the
places that have been hardened by fear or
disappointment.**

**Remind us that we are your Beloved, not because of
what we have done, but because of who You are
and the love that holds us. As we gather at the
water today, let us remember who we are, and who
we are becoming together— your people of
compassion, courage, and gentle justice. In the
name of Christ, the One who shows us how to be
human, we pray. Amen.**

HYMN *"Down By the Jordan" (vs. 1,3,4)*

LYRICS: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

TUNE: LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.4.7.8

("Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty")

**1 Down by the Jordan,
a prophet named John was baptizing,
Preaching a message
the people found bold and surprising:
"God will forgive!
Show that you'll change how you live!
Surely God's new day is rising!"**

**3 Jesus, you went
to be baptized along with the others,
Taking your place
among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.
Then with great love,
God's Spirit came as a dove!
Your work began in those waters.**

**4 Here in the Church,
we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.
Freed and forgiven,
we're welcomed with joy! Can you hear it?
This is God's sign!
This is how God says, "You're mine!"
Let's take the good news and share it!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

All are invited to greet one another with words such
as *"The peace of Christ be with you,"*
and the response: *"And also with you".*

RESPONSE: *"Little Children, Welcome"*

#323 NCH Fred Pratt Green

**1 Little children, welcome!
Earth is yours to live in;
Arms of love protect you,
Little children, welcome!**

**2 Little children, welcome!
Jesus cares about you;
Jesus now enfolds you,
Little children, welcome!**

**3 Little children, welcome!
We, the Church of Jesus,
We will help your growing,
Little children, welcome!**

**4 Little children, welcome!
God will make you happy,
Jesus save and keep you,
Little children, welcome!**

CHILDREN'S TIME

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM: Lexi Marie Steinbach

Parents: David & Emily Steinbach

Sponsors: Matt & Tara Steinbach

HYMN *"Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"*

#325 NCH (vs 1, 3, 4) Ronald S. Cole-Turner

**1 Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign,
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.**

**3 Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are; from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.**

**4 Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are;
grow to laugh and sing and worship,
trust and love God more than all.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 42:1-9

¹"Look at my servant, whom I strengthen. He is my chosen one, who pleases me. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring justice to the nations. ²He will not shout or raise his voice in public. ³He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle.

He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.

⁴He will not falter or lose heart until justice prevails throughout the earth. Even distant lands beyond the sea will wait for his instruction."

⁵God, the Lord, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath to everyone, life to everyone who walks the earth. And it is he who says, ⁶"I, the Lord, have called you to demonstrate my righteousness. I will take you by the hand and guard you, and I will give you to my people, Israel, as a symbol of my covenant with them.

And you will be a light to guide the nations. ⁷You will open the eyes of the blind. You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons.

⁸"I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with carved idols. ⁹Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens."

NEW TESTAMENT Matthew 3:13-17

¹³Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

¹⁵But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

SERMON "You Are My Beloved" Pastor Julie

HYMN *"Here at Jordan's River"*

TUNE: Noel Nouvelet (*"Now the Green Blade Rises"*)
LYRICS: Ruth C. Duck (1995)

**1 Here at Jordan's river all is washed away.
As God's reign draws nearer, nothing is the same.
Gone are class and status; gone, degrees and fame.
Grace alone can save us on God's judgment day.**

**2 We at Jordan's river meet on level ground.
Valleys are uplifted; mountains fall to earth.**

None dare trust their lineage, none need doubt their worth.

Still the prophet asks us, "Will you turn around?"

3 God, reform, renew us; turn us toward your will.
Till our hearts for learning; root us in your work.
May the fruits of action grow from all we've heard.
As we lose our old lives, God, be with us still.

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "From Heaven Above" Gordon Young

Doxology "We Give You But Your Own" Wm.How
#785 NCH

We give you but your own,
whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is your alone,
We give it gratefully.

Prayer of Dedication

Bless these gifts and bless the lives from which they come. May they ripple outward in acts of compassion, in courage where it is needed, in justice that is gentle and strong. Just as the river does not hold itself, teach us not to hold back our love. We offer what we have and who we are, with joy and trust, for the sake of your dream of flourishing. Amen.

HYMN "Go, My Children, with My Blessing"
#719 W&R (vs. 1-3)

1 Go, my children, with my blessing,
Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you;
You are my own.
In my love's baptismal river
I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing -
You are my own.

2 Go, my children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you,
What I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story;
Here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.

3 Go, my children, fed and nourished,
Closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving,
Joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you;
Here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished,
Joyful and free.

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

As we are gathered together as children of God, we are called to share our blessings and joys and our concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and needs so that we may bear one another up and support each other in prayer and Christian love.

HYMN "Go, My Children, with My Blessing"
#719 W&R (vs.4)

4 I the Lord will bless and keep you
And give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you
And give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father,
Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you
And give you peace.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Karen Mohr

RADIO BROADCAST
11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

Tuesday, January 13th
- 1:00 PM Bible Study
3:30 PM Deacons Meeting

This week's radio broadcast
is given anonymously
in "Praise of Jesus Christ".

Coffee fellowship after worship -
Sign up on back bulletin board

Jan 11 – K & H Mathis' & Missy Holub
Jan 18 – *Annual Congregational Meeting*
Jan 25 –
Feb 1 -
We need people to sign up

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.
We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, January 11, 2026
<https://youtube.com/live/trfDnxE8JdU>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, January 11th

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon – Byrl Buddenhagen
Greeters – Pat Acheson, Herman Seebandt
Ushers – Don Quicker, Jerry Quicker
Power Point – Bonnie Weyer

FYI - (for those who are scheduled for PowerPoint or AV it is suggested that you arrive 30 minutes prior to the church service to get the laptop turned on, allow for any updates, lower screen and start running the announcements).

Following Sunday, January 18th

Deacon – Barb Shoemaker
Greeters – Linda Stalsberg, Carla Marty
Ushers – Hap Eddy, Roger Carl
Power Point – Paul Vine

