



BULLETIN INSERTS

January 12, 2025 – Epiphany 1 (C) Epiphany Bible Study: Week 1

During the season of Epiphany, The Episcopal Church's Office of Global Partnerships is offering a weekly Bible study prepared by writers across the church and Anglican Communion. Each piece, consisting of the Sunday readings, can be studied alone, in small groups, or even with a congregation. You can find the whole study for each week at www.sermonsthatwork.org. This week's study for Epiphany 1 (C) was written by **the Rev. David Copley**, director of Global Partnerships and Mission Personnel. He has served on the churchwide staff since 2006.

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Commentary from David Copley

I can imagine the scene: A long line of people who have heard the preaching of John, a voice crying in the wilderness to all who would listen. His calling was one of repentance and forgiveness as he baptized the throng of humanity with water along the banks of the Jordan. Jesus arrives and joins the end of the line, waiting patiently for his baptism by John. Fully God and fully human, Jesus lines up with the brokenness of humanity and in solidarity with them. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he becomes of part of who we are in our humanity as wounded people, not fully saint or fully sinner, just human beings in all our frailty. Jesus become part of who we are in this world. After John's baptism, Jesus is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit and declared the Son of God. Fully human as he lined up with the people to receive John's baptism and fully the Son of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism marks the beginning of our faith journey with our siblings in Christ and our journey as children of God. Baptism reminds us that we are filled with the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever. Learning to fully experience and live into that reality is a lifelong adventure with Christ. As children of God, we are called to live out our baptismal vows in prayer and action, recognizing that all humanity and creation are part of God's care and that we are siblings in Christ with our neighbors in all the world.

Discussion Questions

Where in your life have you lined up with those who are different than yourself and joined in solidarity with others who are also broken and needy?

How are you stretching yourself in your life journey into experiencing the Holy Spirit through the presence of others?