

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:** That Jesus who did not need the baptism of repentance was baptised for all of us. **"21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.""** (Lu 3:21-22 ESV)

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

**Open Hand Food Bank – Moncton** - is in need of grocery plastic bags to give out food to those in need. If you are interested in donating your unused grocery bags, you can bring them to church and someone will collect them and bring them over. Those who want to bring food to give to the **Open Food Bank** may do so by bringing to church and giving it to **Michael M.** of the Moncton congregation.

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#### **ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF January 2019**

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday

**In Saint John** – January 13 and 27 at 2:30 p.m.

**Communion**- on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

**Address: Moncton**—70 King St. —Sage building;

**Saint John**—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

**Discipleship Group** at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour this coming Wednesday January 30 at 7:30 PM. **Topic: 1 Peter chapter 2.** Please prepare a question for discussion or a topic for discussion.

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#### **UPDATES**

**AUDIO SERMONS** are also now uploaded to **YouTube.ca**. To listen to those sermons, you can **Google Grace Communion International New Brunswick** or go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>. Please pray that they will be a source of inspiration in sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a wider audience. They continue to be available in our local website at [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca)

**Update: Teen camp held in December in Kenya which the churches in NB helped to sponsor.** 31 campers attended as well as 4 full time trainers, 2 part time trainers and 4 support staff.



Photo taken after services



Girls at camp

Group photo



One of three baptisms



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**The good news of the gospel is a message to be shared with others.** Please pray that God will give us the love and wisdom to be able to share this message with others in a loving, clear and confident matter as we participate in his missional work on the earth in our generation. **“5 ¶ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (Col 4:5-6 ESV)**

**Please pray** that God will put an end to the senseless violence happening in North America continent and other parts of the world.

**Pray that we will see the good works that God has prepared for us in advance** so that we can enthusiastically participate in the on-going work He is doing now on this earth in bringing people in relationship with him in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

**Please pray, as per Jesus instructions, the disciples prayer, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:9-10)** as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

**Pray for the world and for all people:** we live in a world that does not know the way to peace. Important to pray as we are instructed by the apostle Paul — **“1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,” (1Ti 2:1–3 ESV)**

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**THE GOSPELS: MARK 1:9-11 – A LESSON ABOUT BAPTISM**  
(from <https://www.qci.org/articles/a-lesson-about-baptism-mark-19-11/>)

Have you ever wondered why Jesus, who was sinless, would need to be baptized? After all, baptism is a sign of our sins being washed away, and Jesus didn't have any sins to wash away. Or did he?

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

**Bore our sins**

Jesus was sinless, and yet he, the sinless one, bore the sins of the whole world. Paul tells us in [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) that God made Jesus to be sin for our sakes, even though Jesus himself was sinless, “so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” In keeping with God's purpose, Jesus was baptized for our sakes, not for his own. His baptism, like his death and resurrection, was a dramatic expression of God's grace toward sinful humanity.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the baptism of Jesus Christ — a baptism that is linked to Jesus' sinless life and his death and resurrection on our behalf.

**As us and for us**

The Son of God became one of us in order to represent all of us before God. This is what Christians mean by “representative atonement.” Because Jesus is human, one of us, he is able to represent all of us before God. But Jesus is

more than our representative. He also took all of our sins upon himself, bearing our sins and their penalty in our place. That is what Christians mean by “substitutionary atonement.” Jesus represents us before God, and he also substitutes for us before God. In substituting for us, he carries away our sins; in representing us, his righteousness is attributed to us. He is our “alpha and omega.” Our salvation is in Jesus Christ, and him only, from beginning to end.

### **God’s beloved**

The voice from heaven said to Jesus, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” But remember, Jesus is God’s Son, beloved of God, for our sakes and as our representative. In saying this to Jesus, God says it to every person for whom Jesus died and rose again. In Christ, God says this to you and he says it to me.

In his baptism for us, Jesus embodies from both sides the promised relationship of love between God and his people. As God, he represents God to us. As human, he represents humanity to God. This relationship that God has created between himself and humanity in the person Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of everything God promised to Israel, to the House of David — and through Israel to all of the world. In Christ, God has demonstrated in person his complete faithfulness to his covenant of love and redemption. God saves us because he loves us and wants us saved, and he did it in Jesus Christ. Religion teaches us to think of salvation in terms of laws, that is, God saves the lawkeepers and destroys the lawbreakers. But the gospel tells us that salvation is God’s gift to sinners: God makes sinners righteous in Christ, who is their perfect representative before God. That’s why we need to trust him for our salvation — it comes only through him, and not through our deeds. It is his commitment to us and his faithfulness to us that saves us, not our commitment and faithfulness to him. When we trust in Christ, we participate in Christ’s perfect commitment and faithfulness on our behalf. It is only because we are God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, that we can clothe ourselves “with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” ([Colossians 3:12](#)). Because God identifies us with Jesus, and this even while we were still sinners ([Romans 5:8](#)), we are freed to walk with him in the paths of his love. God acted in Christ to make us righteous. We receive his righteousness; we do not create our own, and in receiving his righteousness, we begin to walk in his ways.

Jesus did not come to vindicate the law, but to vindicate people — sinners, to be precise. Christians should not fall for the religious (as opposed to gospel) idea that God is more concerned about the law than he is about people. Paul wrote: “But when the fullness of time [the “Today” of [Hebrews 3:13](#) and [4:7](#)] had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children” ([Galatians 4:4-5](#), New Revised Standard Version).

When God says to Jesus, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased,” he is saying it also to all who are in Christ, because Christ has identified himself with humanity as one of us ([Hebrews 2:16-17](#)), both substituting for us and representing us in the presence of God.

### **A certain future**

Because of sin, the only future for humanity is disaster — unless, that is, God is faithful to his covenant love. The biblical descriptions of hell, whether pictured as outer darkness or a fire, with all its torment and anguish, are what we would have to look forward to were it not for God’s absolute faithfulness to his promises of forgiveness and redemption. Jesus took on himself the horror of hell in our place, but hell could not defeat him or hold him. He broke its power, disarmed it and led it captive in his parade of victory over all powers and authorities ([Ephesians 3:8-9](#); [Colossians 2:13-15](#); [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)). Captivity of every sort, whether the captivity of hell, of addiction, of human tyranny or of sin, has all been led captive by Jesus, our victorious Savior.

### **Struggle and failure**

Even though we know this, and even though we are fully committed to living godly lives in the light of Jesus Christ, we still fall short and do things that are contrary to the love of God. But don’t let that get you down. That is how things are right now, but it will not always be so. The day will come when the new creation that God has already made you to be in Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Galatians 6:15](#)) will be fully unveiled ([Colossians 3:1-4](#)). When that happens, there will be no more crying, no more pain and no more death ([Revelation 21:4](#)).

### **Trust him**

Even now, our hope lies in this: God has proven in Christ his love for us and his faithfulness to us (consider [Romans 5:6-8](#)). He has made our cause his own. He has taken responsibility for us — sins and all. He has taken us under his wing, and he will never let us go. That is why we trust him.

God, who proved himself faithful to faithless Israel, is the same God who is faithful to faithless you and me. He is the same from the beginning, which means he has and always will be for you, working to help and to heal, and not to condemn (consider [John 3:17](#)).

If you have turned your back on God, don’t ever think he has turned his back on you. Quite the contrary. He’s got the porch light on and dinner on the table, waiting for you to come home.

### **For reflection:**

1. How is Jesus' baptism related to our baptism?
2. Why did the voice from heaven say, "With you I am well pleased" ([Mark 1:11](#))?
3. Is it hard for you to accept the fact that in Christ you are beloved by God (verse 11)?

*Author: J. Michael Fezell, 2003, 2016*

**GCI principle** website and Moncton Websites—[www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org), [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca), [www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton); For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. *Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email—[evautour47@outlook.com](mailto:evautour47@outlook.com)*