

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a background of glowing question marks. The magnifying glass is held by a hand on the left side, and its lens is focused on a central question mark. The background is dark with several glowing question marks in white and red. The text "LA JOLLA UNITED METHODIST" is written in white, serif font, centered above the magnifying glass. The text "In the Beginning" is written in white, sans-serif font, centered below the magnifying glass. The date "Sunday, January 7, 2024" and the text "First Sunday After the Epiphany" and the website "www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org" are written in white, sans-serif font, centered at the bottom of the image.

**LA JOLLA
UNITED METHODIST**

In the Beginning

Sunday, January 7, 2024
First Sunday After the Epiphany
www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Gathering Music

Piano Miniatures

Mark Dorian
©2007 Dorian Music

Call to Worship

One: In the beginning...

All: God swept over waters, spoke light into existence, created day and night and called it good.

One: As the days and nights of creation filled with life...

All: God made humanity out of the dirt to love and tend creation, to be loved and tended by God.

One: As we lost our way...

All: God sent Jesus, Love Incarnate, to show us the way back.

One: On the day Jesus came to the banks of the Jordan River to be baptized...

All: God declared, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

One: Let us, then, follow Jesus into the waters, remembering our baptism in which...

All: God claims us as beloved children, the family of God.

Prelude

Adagio

Baldassare Galuppi/Arr. Hopson
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Introit

Down to the River to Pray

Southern USA Folk Song

Welcome *Welcome, attendance cards & prayer requests, flowers are from Bob Wuertz in honor of the choir and thanks for all their Christmas music)*

† Opening Hymn

When Jesus Came to Jordan

UMH 252

1. When Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized by John,
he did not come for pardon but as the sinless one.
He came to share repentance with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence with which good news begins.
2. He came to share temptation, our utmost woe and loss,
for us and our salvation to die upon the cross.
So when the dove descended on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended, the age of grace began.
3. Come, Holy Spirit, aid us to keep the vows we make;
this very day invade us, and every bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction, the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection that leads to Pentecost.

Blessing for Young Hearts

Prayers of the People

*A Pastor will begin a time of prayer and name those for whom our congregation is praying.
Online Worshipers may type prayer requests in the Live Chat, taking care for privacy.*

Pastoral Prayer

WE HEAR OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Scripture

Genesis 1:1-5 (CEB)

When God began to create the heavens and the earth— the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God’s wind swept over the waters— God said, “Let there be light.” And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

Mark 1:4-11 (CEB)

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. He announced, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

Scriptural Response

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God! Amen**

Anthem

Shall We Gather at the River
Chancel Choir, Lisa Corpron, Solo

Robert Lowry/Arr. McIver
©1995 Choristers Guild

Message

In the Beginning

Rev. Bob Rhodes

WE RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Response to the Word

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Basse et Dessus de Trompette

Louis-Nicolas Clerambault
Edited by Hal H. Hopson
©2006 Hope Publishing Co.

† Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

Prayer of Confession

All: We are incredibly stubborn, O God. We have entered the season in which Your Light has been given to the world, your blessings have been poured out on the world, and yet all we can think about is our own problems, our own needs, our own desires. Help us to desire you, Lord. Help us to yearn for your presence. Pour your baptismal waters over us again, cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance. Nourish and heal us so that we may joyfully serve you. Wash away our jealousy, greed, and all negative thoughts and behaviors that stand in the way of our truly being the people you have called us to be. Again let us receive the blessings offered in creation, in the birth and baptism of Jesus, and in the ministry of the saints of light. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

One: The love of God is always offered to us, freely, joyfully, for all eternity. Rejoice, dear friends, this grace-filled love is the Good News! In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Thanksgiving and Holy Communion

Musical Setting A

UMH 17

Online worshipers are invited to select elements including bread and juice (or similar) from their homes to participate in Holy Communion. Please wait until directed before receiving your elements.

The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Communion Song

What Feast of Love

W&S 3170

1. What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!

2. What light of truth is offered here, what covenant from heaven?
 What hope of everlasting life, what wondrous word is given?
 This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heaven.
 Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is given!

3. What wine of love is offered here, what crimson drink from heaven?
 What stream of everlasting life, what precious blood is given?
 This, this is Christ the king, the sweetest wine of heaven.
 Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is given!

Prayer After Communion

WE FOLLOW CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

† Closing Hymn

This Is a Day of New Beginnings (v1-3,5)

UMH 383

1. This is a day of new beginnings,
 time to remember and move on,
 time to believe what love is bringing,
 laying to rest the pain that's gone.

2. For by the life and death of Jesus,
 God's mighty Spirit, now as then,
 can make for us a world of difference,
 as faith and hope are born again.

3. Then let us, with the Spirit daring,
 step from the past and leave behind
 our disappointment, guilt, and grieving,
 seeking new paths, and sure to find.

5. In faith we'll gather round the table
 to taste and share what love can do.
 This is a day of new beginnings;
 our God is making all things new.

† Benediction

Postlude

*Variations on "God of Grace and God of Glory"
 and Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

Arr. Hal H. Hopson
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Liturgical elements from *The Abingdon Worship Annual* and *The United Methodist Hymnal*

Flowers: Bob Wuertz in honor of the choir and thanks for all their Christmas music
Liturgist: Jayson Coleman
Organist: Robert Wuertz
Pianist: Rebecca Cosford
Ushers: Steve Gray, Peter McCreight, Don Rushing, Russell Toppi
Communion Servers: Colin & Evan Crowder, Jerri Williams
Tech Team: AJ Prat, Cam Rhodes

LJUMC Ministry Team

Rev. Bob Rhodes, Lead Pastor; Rev. Tara Limbaugh, Pastor of Connexion;
Bob Wuertz, Music Ministries Director; Theresa Erb, Office Manager;
Emilio Valente, Information Technology Director; Erin Wyer, NS Executive Director