



Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary

914 Pine Street, PO Box 449, Hancock, MI 49930 • (906) 482-3337 • www.ilseminary.org
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February 2012

Dear Friends,

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. ¹⁴ But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? ¹⁵ And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. ¹⁶ And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: ¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:13-17

As we journey through the season of Epiphany, we celebrate the many ways God has made Himself known to us through His Son, Jesus. One of these manifestations takes place at the baptism of Jesus. But since John the Baptist came preaching a baptism of repentance, it seems fitting to ask “Why does Jesus need to be baptized?” And when John expresses his reluctance, Jesus explains that His baptism is fitting “*to fulfill all righteousness.*” But what righteousness is lacking in God’s Messiah?

The answer becomes clear when we see the baptism of Jesus from the right perspective. Jesus had no need to be baptized for His own sake, He was baptized for us! In the baptism of Jesus, God unites His Son with the human race. Christ takes our sin upon Himself and in turn gives us His righteousness. Martin Luther refers to this as the great exchange: “*This is that mystery which is rich in divine grace to sinners: wherein by a wonderful exchange our sins are no longer ours but Christ’s, and the righteousness of Christ not Christ’s but ours. He has emptied Himself of His righteousness that He might clothe us with it and fill us with it; and He has taken our evils upon Himself that He might deliver us from them.*” Christ has granted us mercy that we did not deserve and has taken the punishment that we truly did deserve. As the prophet Isaiah has said, “***All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.***”

Isaiah 53:6

Christ has paid the price for our sin by suffering and dying on the cross, so that we might be forgiven through His blood. In exchange, Christ has clothed us with His righteousness, so that we might stand before Him holy and perfect. Because we are joined to Christ, God in turn also declares to us that we are His beloved children, in whom He is well pleased. May God grant us grace to celebrate the gift that He has given us in His Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord.

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

II Corinthians 5:21

Yours in Christ.
Pastor Chuck Bylkas



Donations received...

In memory of Joyce Magner
from Joan E. Ostapenko

In memory of Darlene Heikka
from Kenneth Heikka

In memory of Wayne & Gertrude Rautio
from Clifton & Faye Rautio

In memory of Sam & Randy Munter
from Jack & Ruby Munter

In memory of Glenn Tapio
from Lillian Maunu

In memory of Vieno Stalo
from Donna M. Flaherty

In honor of Ruth Peltomaa's 90th Birthday
from Stuart & Evelyn Olson



Seminary Service Schedule 7 p.m.

February

12th – Nick Kandoll@ Seminary
19th – Ray Stenersen @ Laurium
26th – Charles Jousma @ South Range

March

4th – Nick Kandoll @ Zion
11th – Ray Stenersen @ Alston
18th – Charles Jousma @ Painesdale
25th – Nick Kandoll @ South Range

April

1st – Ray Stenersen @ Seminary
8th – EASTER (no service)

15th – Josh Bergstedt @ Alston
22nd – Ryan Kandoll @ Laurium