

Let's look at the Bible readings for Jan. 9 (The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday), to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy Lutheran Church.

## 1st Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7 God declares the identity and mission of His people

<sup>1</sup>Now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. <sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. <sup>3</sup>For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in

exchange for you. <sup>4</sup>Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. <sup>5</sup>Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. <sup>6</sup>I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, <sup>7</sup>everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

## SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO ISAIAH, CHAPTER 43

1. What does this passage say about who God is?
2. List all of the things, mentioned in this passage, that the Lord has done for Israel, and for us who have been grafted into the root of Israel through baptism.
3. Along the same lines, what promises are given to God's people here?
4. For what purpose have we been created and called by God? (vs. 7)  
What does that mean for daily living?

## 2nd Reading: Romans 6:1-11 Baptism: dying and rising with Jesus

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who **died** to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized **into** Christ Jesus were baptized **into** his **death**? <sup>4</sup>We were **buried** therefore **with** him by baptism into **death**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the **dead** by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness

of **life**. <sup>5</sup>For if we have been **united with him** in a **death** like his, we shall certainly be **united with him** in a **resurrection** like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was **crucified with him** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For one who has **died** has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we have **died with Christ**, we believe that we will also **live with him**.

<sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the **dead**, will never **die** again; **death** no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup>For the **death** he **died** he **died** to

**sin**, once for all, but the **life** he **lives** he **lives** to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves **dead** to **sin** and **alive** to God in Christ Jesus.

### SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO ROMANS, CHAPTER 6

1. In this passage, Paul is responding to Christians who argue that since God loves to be gracious, why can't we just go on sinning. What is Paul's reply?
2. Many years ago, Dr. Gerhard Forde wrote a book called: "Justification: a Matter of Death and Life." How does that title relate to this Romans passage?
3. What's the significance of the terms "into," "with him," and "united"?
4. What does vs. 11 mean for you in your daily struggle with sin, selfishness, and doubt?
5. Who is the actor (the "doer") in baptism, us or God?

### Gospel Reading: Luke 3:15-22 John's baptism: Jesus' ministry begins

<sup>15</sup>As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup>John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with **the Holy Spirit** and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." <sup>18</sup>So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

<sup>19</sup>But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup>added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

<sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup>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."

### SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO LUKE, CHAPTER 3

1. How does John answer those who suspected that he was the Christ (the Messiah)?
2. What do these stories tell us about who Jesus is and why He came?
3. Does vs. 17 sound like good news to you? (see also vs. 18)
4. Jesus was without sin. Why, then, was He baptized?
5. With what about Jesus is the Father pleased (vs. 22)?
6. What promises are given here for those who are in Christ?
7. How does this passage relate to the reading from Isaiah above?