

## WELL PLEASED

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*And just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." - Mark 1:10-11*

Every year it is the same. After the sermon, the prayers of the people, and communion, church members begin lining up. Every year they wait patiently for the pastor to trace a cross of water on their forehead, speak their name, and say a few beautiful words.

"Blessed are you, Ralph" (and Jay and Carlton), "beloved child of God. With you God is well pleased."

"Blessed are you, Skyler" (and Ivy, Sara, Charron, and Nancy), "beloved child of God. With *you* God is well pleased."

Every year it is the same: For some, the tears begin flowing even before they reach the glass bowl filled with a mix of clear tap water from the church kitchen and murky stuff from the River Jordan. There is a holy hush as the building inspector, the midwife, the lawyer, the teacher, the student, the grandparent, the retiree, the cis-gender and transgender, the single and partnered, and young and old of different races stand on line awaiting affirmation of their sacred worth. Faces crumble as deep speaks to deep.

I cannot say how Jesus felt when he came up from the waters of the Jordan and saw the Spirit descending like a dove. I do not know how badly he might have needed to hear that voice of heavenly love. But every year, on Baptism of Christ Sunday, I am reminded that we all long to know God's pleasure in our very existence, and that the heavens are torn open whenever we speak God's love. And every year, if only for a moment, we are all well pleased.

### **Prayer**

For reminding me I am beloved, I give you thanks and praise. May I please you today and every day.