

FIRST things FIRST...

Daily Devotions

Devotional Guide ~ Jan. 5-10, 2026

Offered by Pastor Aimée to prepare for next week's sermon.

Monday: January 5th "Cleanliness is next to Godliness"

Scripture: Exodus 19:9-11 Matthew 3:16-17

That saying about cleanliness and Godliness has been around a long time, but I never knew just *how* long! Our own John Wesley actually penned the phrase in his sermon "On Dress," where he preached about neatness being a virtue because it reflected an orderly life.

God brings the people out of Egypt and immediately prepares them to receive the Ten Commandments. They will be so close to God that they will hear God's voice! So, they are to make ready by being consecrated and by washing their clothes. Scripture tells us that people look on our outward appearances, but God looks in our hearts. [I Samuel 16:7] Dress codes for coming to worship these days certainly have relaxed. I've always told people to put on the cleanest and best they have for the Lord...a suit or a pair of jeans!

Prayer: God, I know that You look at my heart and not my physical appearance but let my appearance be part of my offering to You each Sunday. Amen.

Tuesday: January 6th "Clean Up Your Act"

Scripture: Leviticus 14:1-9 [10-20] Matthew 3:16-17

The Old Testament book of Leviticus contains guidelines for a myriad of offerings made to God. It also describes cleansing rituals about clean and unclean food, purifications following childbirth or bodily discharges as well as after infectious diseases such as leprosy. Truth be told, many cleansings protected the people from things as simple as mold when no Mr. Clean Erasers or Clorox yet existed!

Now, in our Baptisms, we are "initiated into Christ's holy Church and symbolically in that water ritual are "given new birth through water and the Spirit." It is from our sin and sinning that we need to be made clean. Jesus made that possible by dying in our place on the Cross. We are baptized into the triune God and Jesus' Name! You, Lord Jesus, have cleaned up our acts!

Prayer: Lord, Jesus, thank you that it is in Your powerful Name that I am baptized and set apart for You! Amen.

Wednesday: January 7th "Remember Your Baptism"

Scripture: Acts 2:36-41 Matthew 3:16-17

We are so pleased and excited, as we should be, when parents bring

infants for baptism. Can you imagine on the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 new believers accepted Peter's message, repented, and were baptized! Do you remember your baptism? Many of us were baptized as babes in arms. We grew and took on faith for ourselves and may think that rebaptism is appropriate to mark spiritual maturity and closer to God experiences. We United Methodists do not rebaptize. God worked perfectly when you were baptized initially. However, the Affirmation of Baptismal Covenant IV service in our UMHymnals at pgs. 50-53 is for when we wish to recall and reaffirm the promises our parents made or that we made for ourselves if we were baptized as a youth or adult.

Prayer: God, thank you for opportunities to reaffirm previous faith experiences. And thank you for believing parents who brought many of us for baptism! Amen.

Thursday: January 8th "Commissioned to Baptize"

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20 Matthew 3:16-17

After Jesus' resurrection, He met the eleven on the mountain in Galilee. There, as we just read, He commissioned them to go and make disciples in every place, "baptizing them." This is still the call of Christ's Church around the world. When we pray for others, invite them to church, encourage them, give them a helping hand, whatever God's Holy Spirit prods us to be about, it is all to this very end: faith in their hearts and baptism into His Church.

Prayer: God, teach me more about loving others enough that I can be a conduit to their faith, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, whom You loved. Amen.

Friday: January 9th "United Methodist Baptism"

Scripture: Acts 8:26-38 Matthew 3:16-17

We United Methodists encourage infant baptism, but we also baptize children, youth, and adults. In infant/child baptism, we parents and the Church promise to raise up the baptized in the faith, be taught Scripture, and learn to worship publicly and privately under the ministry of the Church until they accept salvation and are confirmed into the Church. In adult [some say "believer"] baptism, the baptized speak for themselves. For us, Baptism is one of our two Sacraments, an outward and visible sign of God's grace acting inwardly. While the human promises are crucial, God is actually the prime Actor in baptism.

Prayer: O, God, thank you so much for Your grace in my baptized life! Amen!

Saturday: January 10th "Jesus Is Baptized"

Scripture: Mark 1:9-13 & Luke 3:21-23 Matthew 3:16-17

Think about the details in these accounts of Jesus' baptism. What are the similarities? The differences? How is the conversation between Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist and Jesus important? Is it confusing? Is it telling?

Prayer: God, show us Your great purposes in Jesus' baptism. Amen.

Sunday, January 11, 2026 "Worship at 10:00am"

Psalm 29 & Matthew 3:16-17 Title: "Baptized for the Better" ~ Pastor Aimée