

Mt. Zion UMC

January 11, 2026

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Countdown/Prelude/Pre-Service Video, **THIS IS THE DAY**
Birthdays/Anniversaries, Announcements

Opening Hymn - TFWS 2248 Baptized in Water

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, as we remember the baptism of Jesus, speak again Your word of love over us. Wash us in Your mercy, renew us by Your Spirit, and strengthen us to live as Your beloved people. Lead us in Your justice, guide us in Your peace, and send us to share the hope we have in Christ our Lord. Amen.

Children's Moments: UMH 445 vs. 1

Joys and Concerns/Prayer Song

**There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God
A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.**

Pastoral Prayer/The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

Hymn of Preparation - Creator of the Water

Pre-Message Video

Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon - "Beloved, Claimed, and Sent" - Pastor Shawn

Choral Invitation - Come Be Baptized - The Faithful Few

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Kristen Mary Brooks

Mia Jane Duenas

Jocelyn Kristine Duenas

Renewal of Baptism Vows

Offertory/Doxology UMH No. 94 (with Alleluias)

Closing Hymn - TFWS 2251

We were Baptized in Christ Jesus

Benediction

Parting Song - As We Go

Dear Mt. Zion Family,

As most of you are aware this year hasn't started out the way myself and my family had it planned. My wife came down with flu-like symptoms on New Years Eve and I was hit with it a couple days later. We are both feeling much better and we thank you all for your prayers during that time. I truly appreciate your understanding of the delay in this letter going out this month.

A new year always brings a quiet invitation. It invites us to pause, breathe, and look both backward and forward with honesty and hope. As I reflect on the year we have just completed, I am grateful for the ways God has carried us, shaped us, and held us together as a church family. We have walked through joys and challenges, and through it all God has remained faithful.

Now we step into January with fresh expectations. The turning of the calendar is not magic, but it is meaningful. It reminds us that God is always doing something new. Scripture tells us that those who are in Christ are a new creation. That promise is not tied to a date on the calendar. It is tied to the ongoing work of God in our lives. Even so, the start of a new year gives us a chance to open our hearts again to that renewing grace.

On Christmas Eve I offered a simple invitation to those who were worshiping with us for the first time or returning after some time away. I want you to know that this invitation extends to every person who calls Mt. Zion home. I am asking you to give me a year. Give God a year. Dedicate yourself to worship, to Bible study, to children's Sunday School, to outreach, or to whatever place God is calling and leading you in this season. Show up with intention and openness, and let us see together what God has in store for us. I believe that if we commit ourselves to this journey, God will grow our faith in ways we cannot yet imagine and will strengthen us as a church for the work ahead.

January Focus

This month we will lean into the theme of renewal. Renewal of faith. Renewal of community. Renewal of our commitment to follow Christ with courage and compassion. Worship throughout January will help us explore what it means to begin again with God, not only once a year but every day.

New Year Bible Study

I am excited to share that our New Year Bible Study begins on **Wednesday, January 14 at 6:30 PM**. This will be a wonderful opportunity to grow together, ask questions, and deepen our understanding of Scripture. Whether you are new to Bible study or have been part of many, you are welcome. Bring your curiosity, your hopes for the year ahead, and your desire to grow in faith. We will learn from the Word and from one another.

Looking Ahead

As we move through January, let us stay open to the ways God may surprise us. Let us look for moments of grace in ordinary days. Let us encourage one another and continue building a church where people feel seen, welcomed, and loved. Mt. Zion is a place where God is at work, and I believe this year will bring new opportunities for ministry, connection, and transformation.

Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor. I am grateful for each of you, and I look forward to walking into this new year together with hope.

With gratitude and joy,
Pastor Shawn