

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH
Baptism of the Lord
First Sunday After Epiphany
January 11, 2026

Gathering In Community

Prelude

Introit This Is the Day by M. Blankenship

Peace Greeting: Turn to your neighbours and behold the light of Christ within each face you see. See one another of God's beloved children---children baptized with water and the Spirit, children who abide in the grace of the Living God. Greet one another in spirit and in truth....

The Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you

Opening Hymn Will You Come and See the Light VU: 96

Territorial Acknowledgement

For millennia, Indigenous peoples have lived, worked, worshipped, and played on this land. They have cared for this land. Over time, people from other parts of the world have come to this region and made their home here. Together, Indigenous people and Settlers share the responsibility of care for the land, the water, and the air we breathe. May we learn together, as we move toward right relationship.

Announcements

Reverend Jan

Words of Welcome

Theme Introduction

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship

When we are reluctant to dip our toes into faith's river,
Jesus comes to teach us how to swim.
When we are hesitant to cup our hands
to drink from the fountain of grace,
Jesus comes, to reach in and splash our faces with God's
joy.
When we are unwilling to be the pipeline of hope,
Jesus comes, to turn on the faucets
God has installed in our hearts.
Come, let us worship the God of Life.

Opening Prayer

**O God,
you who promise to make all things new;
does that include me?
Will you make me new?
Cleanse me from top to toe,
renew my heart,
revise my mind,
revive my worth?
For I am poured out,
emptied,
ready to be filled:
but with what?
Fill me with your gracious self, O God.
Be you, in me.
Great Spirit, you renew us,
as we seek to be renewed and to renew.**

**Embrace us into your inner silence,
that we may speak with the voice of love.
Enable us, in word and action,
to affirm one another as your Beloved.**

Amen

Hymn Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized VU: 99

Seeking to Grow Spiritually

Prayer for Illumination

Grace Boogers

God of New Beginnings, we come,
listening for your voice,
in the words we are about to hear,
for your voice gives us strength
and blesses us with wisdom and peace.
Draw us close to your message
of promise and possibility,
that we might discern your call for us.
Enable us to listen with receptive spirits
and respond with eager hearts.

We pray in the name of the Ever-Present Christ.

Amen

Hebrew Testament Reading

New Revised Standard Version

Isaiah 42: 1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.
²He will not cry out or lift up his voice
 or make it heard in the street;

³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵ Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, [\[a\]](#)
a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ I am the Lord; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.

⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Gospel Reading
Matthew 3: 13-17

New Revised Standard Version

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying,

"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"
15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, ^a with whom I am well pleased."

**God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.
Herein is Wisdom. Thanks be to God. Amen**

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|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Gift of Music | Piano Solo | Sabatino Vacca |
| Message | A Renewal of Mind and Heart | Reverend Jan |
| Hymn | I Was There to Hear Your Burning Cry | VU: 644 |

Responding In Care

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow VU: 541

Offering Prayer

God of bold visions for our world,
you love all peoples and nations,
seeking a world where everyone flourishes.
Use us, and our gifts,
for the newness you declare possible.
Make this newness spring forth
in and through us.
We ask that you bless these gifts
for your work in the world. Amen

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from
evil;
for thine is the Kingdom, and the power,
and the glory,
forever, and ever. Amen**

Reaching Out In Love

Closing Hymn God of Grace and God of Glory VU: 686

Commissioning

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Postlude

Worship resources: Gathering Magazine

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2025-2026 Year A (page 18, 39-41);
Abingdon Worship Annual 2026 (pages 6-9); Feasting On the
Word: Year A, Volume 1, (pages 218-241); Texts For Preaching: A
Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year A (pages 91-
99). Used with Permission.

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM STATEMENT

We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work at East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you haven't already picked up your Offering Envelopes, they are still in The Gathering Place.

CLIMATE STUDY GROUP meets Saturday evening, Jan. 24 - 7:00 meet and greet, to begin at 7:30 until 9:00. On this occasion the group will be discussing the book by Bill McKibben: HERE COMES THE SUN, a thorough update (2025) on the remarkable recent growth and development of solar energy - the basic science (how it works), the economics and politics around it.

A readable book, available at Different Drummer and other bookstores. People are welcome, whether or not they have read the book. It will be briefly summarized and openly discussed. Enter off **WEST** parking lot to meet in the Campbell Room. Everyone is welcome. (For more info., call Harold Wells, 905-639-4125)

Jan's Journal



On this first Sunday after Epiphany, we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus, which officially marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the world.

The Community Connections Team (formerly known as the Community Hub Ad Hoc Committee) has begun a process of tidying and de-cluttering spaces within our building in preparation for the exploration of new partnerships with the Aldershot community. You are invited to get involved and assist with this process. Please contact Karen Maerz or any member of the Team. In addition to working on de-cluttering and organizing the space, the Community Connections Team is working with Community Development Halton to plan a “Round Table” discussion event. This will be planned for the near future. It will be an opportunity for representatives of various organizations within the community to meet with representatives of East Plains to discuss their needs for space and the space that is available within the church, as we investigate possible partnerships.

In conjunction with these avenues of inquiry, I strongly believe that we also need to seek God's guidance in determining a way forward for East Plains. To help us to listen for God's nudges, I will offer a day of contemplative prayer on Saturday, January 31st between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. During this time, you will have an opportunity to learn the technique of “praying with scripture”, also known as Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) or Gospel Contemplation. There will also be some education about the history and meaning of the Labyrinth and an opportunity to walk a Labyrinth in Peart Hall. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend! Also, please invite neighbours, friends, family members, anyone whom you think would be interested.

I also met with Reverend Carolin Macmillan, minister at Appleby United Church, last Wednesday to begin planning “A Week of Guided Prayer” to be held jointly. We have chosen the week of May 3rd -May 9th, 2026. A “Week of Guided Prayer” requires the commitment of approximately ½ an hour of prayer, in the form of “Praying with Scripture” on your own at home each day, followed by a meeting

with a trained Companion to discuss and deepen your prayer experience. The week will follow a particular theme. There are specific scripture passages offered each day from which you will choose one passage to focus upon. It is best to meet with your Companion in person, at the church for your discussion time, however, there will be Companions available to meet on Zoom, for those who find it a challenge to come in person.

The week begins on Sunday afternoon with an Opening Service which includes training in how to "Pray with Scripture," and pairing with your Companion for the week. The Week finishes with a Closing Service on Saturday.

The Opening Service will be held at Appleby United Church on Sunday May 3, 2026. This will be an afternoon event. The time will be determined closer to the date. The Closing Service will be held at East Plains United Church on Saturday, May 9th, between 9 a.m. and noon.

We will need trained Prayer Companions to accompany participants throughout the week. I will be leading a Companion Training Session on Saturday, March 28th, 2026, here at East Plains.

A "Week of Guided Prayer" is described as a "retreat in the midst of daily life." It has been offered through the "Week of Guided Prayer Network" in affiliation with Hamilton Conference, and more recently, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, for more than 30 years.

I personally experienced "A Week of Guided Prayer" for the first time in November 2003. The experience was, for me, a transformative one. I became trained as a Companion and then a Co-ordinator. I was involved in bringing "A Week of Guided Prayer" to Appleby United Church in 2004 and each year thereafter until 2014. I also served as a Prayer

Companion in “weeks” at other churches in this area. I was invited to join the “Week of Guided Prayer” planning team, and have participated in developing themes and resources for the “weeks” each year for nearly 20 years. My experience as a Companion for “A Week of Guided Prayer” was instrumental to my becoming trained as a Spiritual Director and establishing a Spiritual Direction practice. I highly recommend the experience! I hope that you will prayerfully consider participating in this “Week of Guided Prayer” in 2026. We have decided to follow the resource materials for “Hope,” as it seemed appropriate for this time. Stay tuned for more information as the planning progresses!

Continuing with the subject of prayer----A Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is an annual, international tradition, will begin on Sunday, January 18th, 2026---which is just a week away! The services have been written by the Armenian Church. Everyone is welcome to attend any or all of these services. The schedule is as follows:

Sunday, January 18th ----Opening Service at Appleby United Church at 2 p.m.

Monday, January 19th----evening service at Grace United Church at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 20th --- evening service at St. Raphael's Roman Catholic Church at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, January 21st--- evening service at Burlington Anglican Lutheran Church at 7 p.m.

Thursday, January 22nd--- evening service at Archangel Raphaela and St. Marina Coptic Orthodox Church at 7 p.m.

Sunday, January 25th--- a Taizé service at Port Nelson United Church at 4:30 p.m.

You can reach me at: revjanmcc@gmail.com or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings, Pastor Jan