



### Grain

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair ..., we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way ...” Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* Submitted by Rev. Peter Heide

### Field

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. 11 And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” 12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. Mark 1:9-12

### Thoughts written by Rev. Peter Heide, Baraboo

Happy New Year! We live in the midst of schismatic times. The conservative right and the liberal left are pulling away from one another creating a chasm that neither can cross. We call this schismatic tearing apart polarization. Especially during this election year, schism is likely to be highlighted. It is important for the political agendas to be differentiated in order for the electorate to make the decisions for the future governance of our nation, states, and local governments. Schism is the energy that drives our elections.

But, as it is in so many instances, God’s ways and the world’s ways are not the same. This week we read that when Jesus was coming up out of his baptismal waters, the heavens were torn apart (schismaticised) and the spirit descended like a dove on him. This schismatic action brings about a new unity in our world. As the membrane that separates heaven from earth is torn apart, we receive God inbreaking to our world. The revelation of our prayer demand, “Your will be done on earth as in heaven,” is initiated.

Not only is the word of God revealed to us in the person of Jesus, but God’s kingdom is presented as heaven and earth. What was divided has become one. With the words that are heard from heaven, “You are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased,” we see Jesus as the one who is truly human and truly divine, not at odds with himself, but fully integrated incarnationally.

It is in this new unity that the spirit drives Jesus into the place of new creation, good news wilderness, the place from which God’s teaching and ministry begins. In this ministry there will be temptations, alienation, anxieties, and limitation (life and death), all this and more. In ministry, Jesus models for us what baptismal living is all about—finding new wholeness through forgiveness of sin which is those things that separate and create schism in our relationship with God and one another.

The challenge for us today, is how can we find new wholeness in the milieu of our present schisms? What forgiveness is necessary for us to move forward together? How can our baptismal living help us to act with justice in word and deed? Into what wilderness is the spirit driving us? What are the opportunities for new creation, resurrection living? Happy Monday!

### Share

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Peter