

Baptism



What is it and Why do we do it?

What is Baptism?

- ◆ Baptism is a Sacrament.

What is a sacrament?

- ◆ It is an earthly element used according to a biblical command and bearing a promise from God
- ◆ In summary: Earthly Element, Biblical Command, and Divine Promise

What makes Baptism a Sacrament?

- ◆ It is water (element) used in accordance to the biblical command of God with the promise of his saving grace.

Where do we Find this?

- ◆ Read what is written in [Luther's Small Catechism](#). This Small Catechism was written in 1529 for parents to use in teaching the Christian faith to their children in their homes.



*Material from Small Catechism follows in black.

What is Baptism?

Answer. Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

Which is that word of God?

- Answer. Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: Go into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

What does Baptism give or profit?

- Answer. It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and
promises of God?

Answer. Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned."

Let's rephrase and expand that a bit.

In Baptism God forgives us our sins, known and unknown, and delivering us from death and the devil sets us free to live faithful lives.

This means our past failures have no power over us and that we constantly have the ability to act as God leads us. Even death cannot separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ that has granted us this grace.

You are set free in Baptism to live with God each and every moment forever.

Let us consider Element and Luther's comments in the Catechism.

How can water do such great things?

Answer. It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter three: By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.

What does this represent?

What does such baptizing with water signify?

Answer. It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Luther found this where?

Where is this written?--Answer.

St. Paul says [Romans, chapter 6](#): We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Let consider water and what it brings.

Water is used to wash, in excess it can kill, but most of all it is seeable and touchable. It is a physical substance something a word is not. But connected to the Word of God it brings that Word into the realm of historical action bearing a visible sign of what God promises in the Word attached to it.

When we are baptized the very name of God is given to us with water in a way that is seen by others and can be testified to by the community. In this it becomes an act that can never be denied.

So what do we learn in all this about Baptism?

- ◆ Baptism is an Act of God, not Humanity
- ◆ Baptism is something Commmanded by God
- ◆ God promises us Forgiveness of Our Sins
- ◆ God Promises us Eternal Life and Salvation
- ◆ In Baptism we are given God's Name
 - ◆ The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Why do Lutherans practice infant Baptism?

- ◆ Because God commands us to baptize and we, humans, bring nothing to Baptism
- ◆ God's command and promise is trustworthy
- ◆ We simply respond in obedience trusting God's power in Baptism as an act of faith

Are there any examples in the Bible of infant Baptism?

- ◆ In Acts 3, Peter goes to the house of Cornelius. It is said that Peter baptized Cornelius and his household. This was considered to include all children.

Do Lutherans only baptize Infants?

- ◆ No, many are baptized as adults because they were never raised in a community of faith
- ◆ Baptism is available at any age someone comes into contact with the Word of God
- ◆ Baptism is offered by the church in obedience to God's Word for anyone who desires the promises of God

If Baptism is God's Act does that mean it works like magic by invoking a name?

- ◆ No, Baptism works in the power of a promise given and received.
- ◆ While God's promise of baptism may be given at any age our understanding and trust may grow and wane across life but the promise is always good.
- ◆ The power of the promise of Baptism is fulfilled whenever we simply trust God's faithfulness and live our life based on God's Word and grace.

How much water must be used in Baptism?

- ◆ The more the better but all that is necessary is water is used
- ◆ Luther stated that running water is best as a symbol of “Living Water”
- ◆ That baptism by immersion was the best symbol dying and rising to new life
- ◆ That sprinkling and pouring was sufficient
- ◆ Why? Because all water used in accordance to God’s command was a physical element to which the Word of God was attached

Our response to God's Faithfulness

- ◆ Our Response as a Community in Baptismal Practice
- ◆ Our Response as Parents
- ◆ Our Response as Sponsors

Our Response as a Community

- ◆ Reflected in Baptismal Practices
- ◆ Reflected in our Preaching
- ◆ Reflected in our lives together

Reflected in Baptismal Practice

- ◆ In the Midst of the Community of Faith
- ◆ In the structure of order and space
- ◆ In the use of symbols to reinforce its meaning

In the Midst of the Faith Community

- ◆ Baptism normally takes place in the midst of local church's worship
- ◆ Baptism is entrance into the priesthood of all believers and family of God and the presence of that community is important
- ◆ The community joins in witness to what God has done for the individual, especially, for those baptized as infants speaking to the baptized of what God has done.

In the structure of order and space

- ◆ Flood Prayer (a Remembering of God's Use of Water throughout Scripture)
- ◆ Location within Worship Order (Following Confession at the Start or after the Sermon)
- ◆ Local symbols
 - ◆ Font shape and style
 - ◆ Font location

The Flood Prayer

- ◆ Remembering of God's Use of Water throughout Scripture
 - ◆ Almighty eternal God, who according to your righteous judgment did condemn the unbelieving world through the flood and in your great mercy did preserve believing Noah and his family, and who did drown hardhearted Pharaoh with all his host in the Red Sea and did lead your people Israel through the same sea on dry ground, thereby prefiguring this bath of holy baptism, and who through the baptism of your dear Child, our Lord Jesus Christ, have consecrated and set apart the Jordan and all water as a salutary flood and a rich and full washing away of sins: We pray through your same unbounded mercy that you will graciously behold (names of the ones to be baptized) and bless him/her/them with true faith in the Spirit so that by means of this saving flood all that has been born in him/her/them from Adam and which he/she/they has added thereto may be drowned in him/her/them and engulfed, and that he/she/they may be sundered from the number of the unbelieving, preserved dry and secure in the holy ark of your Church, serve your Name at all times fervent in spirit and joyful in hope, so that with all believers he/she/they may attain eternal life according to your promise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Location within Worship Order

- ◆ What significance does location hold
- ◆ Following Confession at the Start
 - ◆ The Community Confesses its Sins followed by Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins for the one being baptized.
- ◆ After the Sermon
 - ◆ Baptism celebrated as response to God's Word proclaimed
 - ◆ At the location of the Apostles Creed which is part of the Baptismal order combining the confession of faith of the community and the one being baptized

Location within the Church

- ◆ While Baptism can be performed on any Day at any moment where the need of the promise of God exists there is benefit in the orderly practice as we have seen in relationship to the worshipping community.
- ◆ The benefit of this Order includes using specific festivals at Messiah as foci for baptism.
- ◆ These Baptismal festivals include; The Baptism of Jesus, Palm Sunday, Holy Trinity, All Saints. Each brings its own emphasis to the proclamation of God's grace in Baptism. (more info: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Learning-Center/FAQs/Baptismal-Festivals.aspx>)

Baptism of Our Lord

- ◆ It is celebrated on the Sunday following January 6th (Epiphany)
- ◆ It focuses our attention on Jesus Baptism in the Jordan and its significance for our Baptism and our lives.

Palm Sunday

- ◆ Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter each year and is a floating celebration depending on the date of Easter.
- ◆ Palm Sunday focuses our attention on Baptism as an entrance rite and, specifically, our entrance into God's grace revealed in the events of Holy Week and Christ's saving death and resurrection.

Holy Trinity

- ◆ Holy Trinity is another floating festival determined by the date of Easter. It falls during May or June.
- ◆ In Baptism we are baptized in the name of the Father , of the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Holy Trinity.
- ◆ The Festival helps to focus us on this name that we receive and its theological significance.

All Saints

- ◆ All Saints is November 1st. It is usually observed on the Sunday following that date.
- ◆ All Saints focuses on our role as one among a community of believers across all time and places. Every baptized child of God is a small “s” saint.

Local symbols

- ◆ Location of the Font
 - ◆ The location of the font should reflect the theology of baptism as a central act of the church
 - ◆ Baptism is an entrance rite; possibilities include in the narthax near the main entrance of the of church building, the head of the aisle entering nave, or at the foot of the aisle between the nave and the altar.
 - ◆ Messiah's font stands at the head with the Pascal Candle to emphasize the entrance aspect of Baptism

Local symbols (cont.)

- ◆ Shape of the font
 - ◆ Fonts can be deep enough to walk in for immersion, shaped like crosses, may have running water, and more. Whatever the shape it should provide visual support for the theology of baptism.
 - ◆ The complexity of Messiah's font holds many symbols.
 - ◆ a crown representing the Kingship of Christ our Lord and Savior, eight sides of the top representing the eight day and beginning a new creation, four pillars for the four gospels, all rest on a base in the shape of a cross.

What is the Role of the people involved

- ◆ If it is God who baptizes then what is the role of those participating; pastor, baptizand (the one being baptized), parents, sponsors (God parents), congregation.
- ◆ Pastor: to proclaim the Gospel and the name in which a person is baptized.
- ◆ Baptizand: to simply receive God's Word and grace.
(Cont.)

What is the Role of the people involved?(Cont.)

- ◆ Parents: to request baptism for their child and to promise to raise the child within the community of faith and God's Word.
- ◆ Sponsors: To work with the parents to fulfill the promises made for nurturing the baptized in their faith.
- ◆ Congregation: To bear witness to God's act in the life of the baptized recording the event and in supporting the parents and sponsors in their work.

What do parents promise?

- ◆ To bring the child to church
- ◆ to teach the child the Lord's Prayer
- ◆ to teach the child the creeds
- ◆ to Teach them the 10 Commandments
- ◆ to place the scriptures in the child's hands
- ◆ To provide for the Child's education in the faith.
- ◆ To live together in the community of faith

Who can be a sponsor?

- ◆ Sponsors should be people capable of helping to raise the child in your faith as Lutheran Christians, this creates a hierarchy of desirability:
 - ◆ Someone active in the local congregation,
 - ◆ Someone active in another Lutheran congregation,
 - ◆ Someone active in a Christian Congregation

Setting up a home pre-Baptismal visit.

- ◆ Identify some dates to meet with the pastor.
- ◆ Call the church office with the dates and your phone number
- ◆ Pastor will return the call and set up a date

