

Sermon January 9, 2022
First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown
Rev. Dn. Jeanette Hile
Guest Preacher

Let us pray; May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen

There are two great sacraments in the Christian faith. They are Holy Communion and Baptism.

When we celebrate Holy Communion or Holy Eucharist, we recognize that Jesus sacrificed himself for our sins. At the last supper after Jesus gave thanks, he took bread, broke it and said to his disciples; “Take eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. The bread representing or becoming the symbol of body of Jesus.

Then, Jesus takes the cup of wine, offering thanks and gave it to his disciples and said; “Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant (New Testament) which shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink this, do in remembrance of me.”

The ultimate sacrifice, Jesus’ body and blood for all of us.

Next time you partake in communion, ponder those wondrous symbols of sacrifice and love.

Baptism is the other great sacrament.

In today's gospel we learn of Jesus' baptism by John in the river Jordan.

Some background on John. Now John was quite the character. I dare say had he lived during our lifetime he would have fit perfectly the Hippies of the late 1960's and 70's. He ate locust and honey and wore camel skin and burlap for clothes. John preached for repentance among the people. Once they repented their sins John baptized them in water. For water purified and cleansed. He also knew that he was a messenger, a precursor for the true messiah. When Jesus arrived to be baptized John knew immediately Jesus was the chosen one. He also knew that his influence among the people was to decrease and Jesus mission was to increase.

We know all this because scripture reveals after Jesus was baptized suddenly the heavens opened up, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Can you imagine what a profound and awesome moment that was in Christian history? God proclaims Jesus is his Son via the simple act of baptism. It signaled the

“official” beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus knew this as well as John.

Now then, I suspect the majority of us here today do not recall our own baptism. Most of us, (unless you are a Baptist), were baptized as infants or very small children.

It is with our baptism we are christened- that is formally welcomed as Christians. We are baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In some cases, we are additionally anointed with oil which seals our connection to the Holy Spirit and a child of Christ forever.

Our parents and/or god-parents reaffirm our baptismal covenant with the words;

“There is one body and one spirit,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God the Father of all who is above all.”

Then the entire congregation is asked to profess and reaffirm their faith.

And so, on this day of our Lord’s baptism, let us reaffirm our commitment to our faith. Let us acknowledge our baptism as a sign and a seal of our cleansing from sin, and our full commitment to Jesus as our savior. That through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power

of sin was broken and God's kingdom has indeed entered our world.

Through our baptism we are made citizens of God's kingdom and thus freed from sin.

So let us therefore reject sin, embrace what which is true. Let us renounce all evil and it's power in this world.

Let us pledge to be faithful disciples and active witnesses to Jesus Christ

To listen and obey Jesus' words, by sharing His love with all whom we may encounter

And in the words of the Apostles Creed;

To believe in the Holy Spirit
The holy catholic (small c) universal church
The communion of saints
The forgiveness of sins
The Resurrection of the Body
And the life everlasting.

Amen