

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

East Moline, Illinois

Pastor Becky Sherwood

September 8, 2024, The 17th Sunday After Pentecost

Isaiah 43:1-5a, Matthew 3:13-17

BAPTIZED INTO ONE FAMILY

A Celebration of Membership and A Service of Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant

The Gift of Baptism

The beauty and love of seeing a child held in his or her parent's arms beside the baptismal font.

The mystery of God's loving presence holding on to those gathered around the baptismal font:
parents, sponsors, pastors and the child.

The joy of a baptismal gown handed down through the generations to your child.

Or the gift of a gown created by a friend or relative.

And the memories you hold in your family, and we hold as a church family,

of children who cried and screamed, and children who slept, and children who threw up and
children who laughed and waved.

And in the midst of all of that is the mystery of God, who speaks at each baptism and says into the
heart of each infant and child: "You are my beloved child, I claim you as my own."

The Gift of Baptism:

The love and joy for a child, expressed in parent's promises that they will raise their child to
know and love Jesus Christ.

The love and joy for a child expressed in a congregation's promise to be partners with the
parents, sharing the Good News of God's love through Jesus.

And in the midst of that, the mystery of God saying into a child's heart, no matter how young or
old they are: "You are my beloved child!"

The Gift of Baptism:

The kneeling teen or adult, feeling a bit self-conscious in front of everyone, but also feeling that
something is happening that far surpasses the moment.

The emotion of naming your faith in Jesus Christ, out loud.

The feel of the water running down your head.

The joy of belonging to the family of God.

And in the midst of that, the mystery of God saying into that teen or adult's heart: "You are my
beloved child!"

Baptism is a memory we hold for ourselves, a story told to us by our parents and
grandparents, a story we tell to our own children who are ready to hear about their special day.

It is a time of remembering the love of God, the love of a church family, and the love of parents
for their children, the commitment of teenagers naming their faith, and adults publicly stating that they
are followers of Jesus Christ.

And as each teen or adult rises from their knees, as each baby is carried down the aisle to
meet their church family, God is speaking into each of their hearts saying the words first heard over
the Jordan River at Jesus' baptism: "You are my beloved child, I claim you as my own."

In the **MEMBERSHIP** of this church there are people who have been living out the promises of their

baptism for decades, and there are our newest confirmation youth who are just starting the journey of church membership and being faithful followers of Jesus. Today we are going to honor all members of the church and especially those who have been members of our church for 50 years or more. You can find this list on the yellow insert in your bulletin. (Invite youth to come up to help) Let us celebrate the joy and gift of our long-time members!

Baptism is a sacrament; it is sacred and holy. For us as Presbyterians it is one of two sacraments, the other being the Lord's Supper.

One way Presbyterians understand the word sacrament is that a sacrament is "an outward sign of an inward grace."

The water is placed onto our heads,
or the bread is broken and the cup is poured,
and while we see those outward signs or practices,
God's grace is taking root in us.

The sacraments are pathways the Holy Spirit uses to shape and guide our lives.

"An outward sign of an inward grace."

The reason that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are our two sacraments is because we believe Jesus gave them to us: As he was baptized, we are baptized.

And as Jesus served his disciples that Last Supper in the upper room the night before his crucifixion,

he continues to serve each of us his body and blood
whenever we eat the bread and drink from the cup.

When we are baptized the minister is using the words Jesus gave us, from Matthew 28, when he told us to go out and invite people into the faith and then baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized, and also when we witness someone being baptized, we are being shown God's love and grace for us.

Part of what makes infant baptism so powerful is that we are seeing how God's grace is for us
before we speak a word,
before we make a choice for faith,
even before we can understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Before we do anything, God does everything!

We love God, because God loved us first!

God chose us first, and in our baptisms named us as Beloved Children of God!

In Baptism,

God says to us: "You are my child (no matter what your age) and you belong to me."

God says to us: "You are my child and nothing can separate you from my love.

It is a gift I will always give to you."

God says to us: "You are my beloved child, I am well pleased with you, and my Holy Spirit now lives in your heart."

In baptism we become members of the church of Jesus Christ.

Just as Jesus died and was resurrected to new life,

our baptism shows how we die to the old life and we rise to new life in Christ.

In baptism, the water is a sign of our sins being washed away.

Baptism is a sign that God's grace now holds onto us, Baptism is "an outward sign of an inward grace;" it is a sign that we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit of God living in our heart.

Whenever there is a baptism, a profession, or promise, of faith is made. A confession of faith in Jesus and the desire to be his disciple is always made.

For infants and young children this is done by their parents on their behalf, with the prayer that when they are older, they will live their own journey of faith.

For older children and youth and adults, they make their own profession of faith.

As Presbyterians we believe that baptism isn't a private sacrament, but a sacrament that takes place right in the middle of the family of faith. Baptisms take place in the middle of a worship service, because we are being baptized into God's family.

If you are learning about baptism today, and have not yet been baptized, I encourage you to consider being baptized here in worship with us. Just talk to me today after the service and we can arrange for that sacrament to happen for you or for your children.

(cf: The Book of Common Worship, PCUSA, pp 38-39, 431)

Today you are being invited to take part in a service of reaffirmation of your baptism. This is not a service of being re-baptized. As Presbyterians we believe in only being baptized one time. This is a service of naming again our commitment to faith in Christ, and a life spent following our God. It is a time to remember that we are baptized, we are God's beloved sons and daughters, and God's Holy Spirit lives in our hearts.

If you have not yet been baptized, it is still very appropriate to make these vows with the rest of the congregation today as a statement of your faith.

A Service of Reaffirmation of Baptism is an ancient service, used by the early Christian church. In the last 30 years or so, many Protestant mainline denominations, including the Presbyterians have reclaimed this ancient service and begun using it again.

As a church family we celebrated this service together eight years ago. (2005, 2008, 2013 and 2016.) It is definitely time for us to celebrate this joyous naming of our faith again.

Participating in this service is completely optional today. It is a time for you, if you so choose, to name again your faith in Jesus, and your desire to follow him.

What happens in a Service of Reaffirmation of Baptism is that we
once again name our desire to turn away from sin
and turn toward faith in Jesus Christ.

And we name again our commitment to being disciples of Jesus Christ
in our daily lives.

I invite you to take out the insert you'll find in your bulletin that says: "A Service of Reaffirmation of Your Baptismal Covenant" on the cover. I invite all of you who would like to reaffirm the promises made in your baptism, or the promises you will make when you are baptized for the first time to join together for this service.

Then you will be invited to come forward and receive a symbol of your reaffirmation of your baptism, or your reaffirmation of your faith.

You'll be invited to reach into the waters of baptism and take one of the stones you'll find there.

I hope that you will put this stone in a place where you will see it. Put it in your wallet, on your desk or dresser, inside your car, or your locker at school

Each time you see the stone

may it remind you that you have made promises to be a follower of Jesus, and each time you see it may you know again that you are a Beloved Child of God.

Whenever you see or hold this stone, I hope you will say the good news to yourself:

“I am baptized; I am a beloved Child of God, and God’s Holy Spirit lives in my heart.”

And now if you so choose, I hope you will join me in the: Service of Reaffirmation of Baptism that you will find on the bulletin insert.

(Pour water into font and two bowls with glass beads)

Sunday September 8, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

A Celebration of Members and

A Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Covenants

First Presbyterian Church, East Moline, IL

Those who’ve been members for 70-79 years!:

1947—77 yrs: Ted Frels

1948--76 yrs: Jane Anderson, Bev Clark;

1953—71 yrs: Mary Lou Massa

1954—70 yrs: Ramona Zude

Those who’ve been members for 60-69 years!:

1955--69 yrs: Cathy Runburg

1957—67 yrs: Bob Haigh,

1961--63 yrs: Dorothy Horton, LeJeane Rahn,

1963—61 yrs: Don Buss, Carol Haines, Shirley Belanger;

1964—60 yrs: Chuck Massa,

Those who’ve been members for 50-59 years!:

1968—56 yrs: Jamie & Gail Glockhoff-Long, Dean & Sharon Smiddy,
Jan Haigh;

1969--55 yrs: Jim & Linda Barber, Sandy Kirchhoff;

1973--51 yrs: Pat & Candy Wendt, Carol Curry

Those who’ve been members for 40-49 years!:

1976—48 yrs: Jim Buche; 1977--47 yrs: Ron Rahn, Linda Miller; 1979—45 yrs: Karen Uzzell; 1981—43 yrs: Mike & Pat Tyler, 1982—42 yrs: Margo Murdock; 1984—40 yrs: Laura Ybarra;

Those who’ve been members for 30-39 years!:

1987—37 yrs: Diane Bartleson, 1988--36 yrs: Mark Maxwell, Mike Smiddy; 1989—35 yrs: Betsy McKnight Latko; 1991--33 yrs: Jenni Fields;

1992-32 yrs: Denise Maxwell, Bob & Dixie Volk; 1994-30: Don Rahn

Those who’ve been members for 20-29 years!:

1996--28 yrs: Heather Rahn, Joe & Marcia Schissel; 1999—25 yrs: Barb Newburg, Bev Warren, Wanda White,

Connie Stufflebean; 2002—22 yrs: Paul Noakes; 2003—21 yrs: Karen Paytash, Ginny Wruck; 2006—18 yrs: Ben Barrigah, Clay and Susan Curry, Angele Mivedor, Shirlee Barta Nelson, Nadou Nicoue, Jennifer Noakes, Reine Dogbe

Those who've been members for 10-19 years!

2007--17 yrs: Clint Newburg, Rose Agbemadon, Thierry Agbemadon,
2008--16 yrs: Koudzo Apetcho; 2009--15 yrs: Jan Leonard, Linda Leonard, Mary McNeil; 2010--14 yrs: Edwige Barrigah, Michael Kassehin, James McNeil, Becky Newburg; 2012--12 yrs: Adele Barrigah, Aneita Buss, Porter McNeil, Darlos Stroud, Caleb Kassehin, Jack McNeil, Charlie Reynolds, Katey Maxwell DeBisschop, Jim Schneider; 2013--11 yrs: Suzanne Bailey, Brian & Ella Layer, Newt Newburg,

Those who've been members for 1-10 years!

2015--9 yr: Nick Maro, Greg Layer, Devin Reynolds, Ellie McNeil, Drew Noakes, Laura & Ronnie Brown, Kay Etzel, Doug Stufflebean; 2017--7yrs: Judy Medley, Esperence Barrigah, Alex Curry, Kyle Michaels, Khrystina Reynolds; 2018--6yrs: Essivi Apetcho, Bella Tenu Apetcho 2019--5 yrs: Joseph Lawson, Darius Sanda, Sylvie Akakpo; 2020--4yrs: Darryl Lamps, Terry Miller, Nathan Zude; 2022--2yrs: Anna Barrigah, Madelyn Curry, Eunice Dogbe;

And All Our Children, Teens and Young Adults!

Lateh Lawson, Daniel Apetcho, David Apectcho, Kathryn Vaughan, Sibi Lawson, Matthew Vaughan, Xavier Reynolds, Debora Gle, Charlie Reynolds, Grayson Thorpe, Walter Newburg, Shalom Agbemadon, Leah Barrigah, Olivia Thorpe, Faith Murphy, Willa Newburg, Hayley Newburg, Avery Fields, Wisdom Dogbe, Regis Agbemadon, Spencer Curry, Daphne Curry, Brianna McGill, Maria Layer,

Becky/FPCEM/ List of Members by years 24-09-08

A SERVICE OF REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

SCRIPTURE SENTENCES

1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27

Minister: Just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit
we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Sisters and brothers in Christ, our baptism is the sign and seal of our cleansing from sin, and of our being grafted into Christ. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken and God's kingdom entered our world. Through our baptism we were made citizens of God's kingdom, and freed from the bondage of sin. Let us celebrate that freedom and redemption through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism. If you have not yet been baptized, today can be a profession of your faith. If and when you are ready, please come and talk to me. Now, today I ask you, therefore, once again to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we were baptized.

***RENUNCIATIONS**

(Before answering the first question, you will be asked to stand as you are able and to face the back of the sanctuary. You can also do this from your seat, turning so you are facing the back). This is an act of worship that comes from some of the earliest days of the Christian faith being practiced. It is symbolic of turning our backs on sin and death and evil.)

Do you renounce all evil, and powers in the world which defy God's righteousness and love?

ALL: I RENOUNCE THEM.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God?

ALL: I RENOUNCE THEM.

(Before answering this next question you will be asked to face back to the front, which symbolizes turning to Christ.)

Do you turn to face the front of the church now and turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior?

ALL: I DO.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love, to your life's end?

ALL: I WILL, WITH GOD'S HELP.

***PROFESSION The Apostles' Creed**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

Minister: Do you believe in God the Father?

All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Minister: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Minister: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

The Lord be with you.

ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE OUR THANKS AND PRAISE.

(Unison) We give you thanks, Eternal God, for you nourish and sustain all living things by the gift of water.

In the beginning of time,

your Spirit moved over the watery chaos, calling forth order and life.

In the time of Noah,

you destroyed evil by the waters of the flood, giving righteousness a new beginning.

You led Israel out of slavery,

through the waters of the sea, into the freedom of the promised land.

In the waters of Jordan

Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with your Spirit.
 By the baptism of his own death and resurrection,
 Christ set us free from sin and death,

and opened the way to eternal life.

We thank you, O God, for the water of baptism.

In it we were buried with Christ in his death.

From it we were raised to share in his resurrection,

Through it we were reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son,

we celebrate our fellowship in him in faith.

We pray that all who have passed through the water of baptism

may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior.

To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,

be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Minister: Remember your baptism and be thankful.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN!

Introduction of the Symbol and Receiving A Symbol of Baptism–

Beginning with the choir, please come forward to the front of the church and

receive a symbol of baptism and the reaffirmation of our baptismal vows. For those who are unable to come forward, this will be brought to you.. Please join in singing as people come forward, please remain seated until just before it is your turn so you can help with the singing. Please return down the side aisles.

Hymn #482

Baptized in Water

Hymn #188

Jesus Loves Me

Hymn #649

Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound`

(we will sing as many verses as necessary, until everyone has come forward.)