

January 12 Worship
Greeters- Corinne Rainville, Joyce Hopkins
Reader- Nadine Callahan

Announcements/Joys- Altar flowers are dedicated to the memory of Gayanne Boyer's daughter, Heidi Langille on the date of her birthday.

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."* Matthew 3:11

Opening Scripture- Psalm 29(page 478-479)

Opening Chorus- 403- Open My Eyes That I May See

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

People: Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

Leader: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

People: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'

Leader: May the Lord give strength to his people!

People: May the Lord bless his people with peace! Amen!

Hymn- 419- Children Of The Heavenly Father

Unison Prayer-

God of many names, we give ourselves into the hand of your continuing creativity; our past, with its joys and triumphs, its failures and regrets. Our present with its struggles and accomplishments its hopes and setbacks. Our future with its fears and freedom, its pain and possibility. Trusting the Spirit that breathes life, trusting the love that will not let us go, trusting the promise of the Word made flesh. We pray as Jesus taught, saying...*Lord's Prayer*

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Isaiah 43:1-7(page 623)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Luke 3:15-17,21-22(page 891)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 300- Breathe On Me Breath Of God

New Testament Scripture- Acts 8:14-17(page 955)

Message

“Water & Fire”

In the calendar of the Christian Church, today is the commemoration of the baptism of Jesus by His cousin John in the River Jordan. We learn from the scriptures that Jesus was about 30 years old when He was baptized and began His ministry. The last we had read of Jesus in the gospels, prior to His baptism He was 12 years old and teaching in the Temple. There is a gap in His recorded life of about 18 years. Where he lived and what He did during that time is all a matter of guessing and conjecture. We can assume that Jesus spent a good bit of time with His earthly father, Joseph, learning his trade as what we today a carpenter but was more than likely a person who made and fixed all kinds of things. It is also believed that Jesus was trained as a spiritual leader since He was often addressed as Rabbi or teacher by those who followed Him. Whatever He had done during those 18 years, the beginning of His formal ministry began with His baptism. We all know the story of His time in the wilderness and what happened there. This will be a lesson for another time.

What is baptism and why is it important to us, today? The practice of baptism goes well back in time before the formation of the Christian Church. It was common practice in the Jewish faith to make candidates for the priesthood or new members of the faith undergo ritual cleansing in bathing pools to cleanse themselves of sin before entering the temple or any place of worship. Christian baptism began after Jesus was baptized and only after His ascension into heaven. It was not until Jesus said; “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:18-19) Baptism, as well as Holy Communion, are the 2 sacraments followed by most main stream Protestant denominations. The reasoning behind this is that they are the 2 activities that Jesus also participated in personally.

Baptism, as practised by John the Baptist, is different from the baptism prescribed by Jesus Christ in that John's baptism was to prepare for the coming of the Messiah through repentance of sin while Christian Baptism has the deeper significance of acknowledging and accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. Christian baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is through this ordinance that a person is admitted into the fellowship of the church. When we are saved, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the church. The sacrament of baptism is the means by which a person makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. Does baptism have any value in today's church? Is baptism really necessary for our salvation? Does the fact that I was baptized as an infant make adult baptism important?

The act of water baptism as an adult is required by some denominations as an outward declaration of acceptance of Christ. The scriptures, however do not specifically require baptism. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son

of God.” (John 3:16-18) “And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”(Acts 16:31) Simply going through the physical act of baptism does not and cannot guarantee a person's salvation. Depending on the act itself would be considered attempting salvation through works. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not because of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

While it is not the act of baptism that brings us into salvation as much as the spiritual awakening that a person experiences when they truly accept Christ, there is one further part of the event that many people don't realize happens when they receive Christ as Savior. This 2nd part is when we receive the Holy Spirit. This happens when the Holy Spirit places the believer into union with Christ and with other believers. The form of baptism that today's church seems to use most often is when we baptize an infant. While this is a beautiful and important ritual, it is misunderstood. Years ago, infant or childhood baptism was called Christening. Christening is different from baptism in that baptism requires knowledge and acceptance of ideals that are beyond a child's understanding. When we baptize, or Christen, a child, we are not asking the child to make the decision, we are pledging all the members of the church as well as the parents and God parents to dedicate themselves to see that the child is brought up in an environment that teaches the Word of God. Then when the child reaches the age of reason, they may confirm their baptism within the church.

If we consider ourselves to be followers of Christ, we must not hide that fact from the world. Being a Christian does not mean that we have joined some sort of secret club where only those close to us know who we are and what we believe. We are called, by Christ to proclaim the gospel to the world. Where is there a better place to start than within the body of your church? Jesus, Himself, told His disciples; “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”(Matthew 28:19-20) When we accept Christ, we become His disciples and this command pertains to us as much as it did to those followers 2,000 years ago. Living as Christians, we should not hide the fact, we need to proclaim it. It is not necessary for anyone to go around preaching the Word. Simply living the Word is as important if not more so. The important thing is, if the question comes up are we willing to state that we are Christian?

Christian baptism is the means by which a person makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. In the waters of baptism, a person says, wordlessly, “I confess faith in Christ; Jesus has cleansed my soul from sin, and I now have a new life of sanctification.” Christian baptism illustrates, in dramatic style, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. At the same time, it also illustrates our death to sin and new life in Christ. AS the sinner confesses the Lord Jesus, he dies to sin and is raised to a brand-new life. Being submerged or washed with water represents death to sin, and emerging from the water represents the cleansed, holy life that follows salvation.

The answer to the question; Is baptism relevant in today's world, is yes, absolutely. Baptism or public declaration of our faith, even if done in the confines of this church, gives us the ability to say to all who listen; I am a Christian. I follow a living Savior and I am blessed beyond measure by God's grace. Praise be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- God who shows no partiality, show your favoritism on all your people. Send forth your justice for all to see. Save us your people. Empower us to preach and testify to your great love and mercy. God who makes and keeps covenant with your people, You called us to be a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to set the prisoners free, Help us to answer your call that these things come to pass. God of grace and glory, We pray for those who suffer from pains and sorrows. We pray for those whose hearts are broken. We pray for those whose families are fractured. We pray for those whose lives are ravaged by war. We pray for those who struggle with poverty, and starvation We pray for our brother and sisters in Christ who are being martyred and tortured for their beliefs. Thank you for hearing our prayers. Thank you for pouring out your Spirit on your son and pouring your spirit out on us too. May we too hear you say to us this day that “This is my son, my daughter, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” We pray these things in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 443- The Solid Rock

Benediction- Go in peace; love and care for one another in the name of Christ; and may the Spirit of God which filled John and Jesus, fill your hearts, souls and minds; may the power of God which upheld them, strengthen you for each day; and may the love of God which directed their every action be your guiding light and your shining star, both now and forevermore. Amen