



Part One: Beliefs and Practices

“The New Life of Grace”

St. Joseph's Episcopal Church

Adult Christian Formation

October 19, 2021

Tonight's Agenda

Opening Prayer

Welcome

Norms for the Course

Reflection on Homework

The New Life of Grace





OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen



WELCOME



Norms for the Course

BE ON TIME

Late entries to the video conference interrupt the lesson.



TURN ON YOUR VIDEO

It's hard to have a conversation with a black box.



BE PREPARED

It is difficult to participate or ask for help if you are behind with your work.



USE THE CHAT FEATURE RESPONSIBLY

Remember – a record is kept of everything you post in the chat.



MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE

This helps reduce background noise and allows everyone to hear the speaker.



JOIN FROM A QUIET PLACE

Try to avoid places with a lot of activity and distractions.



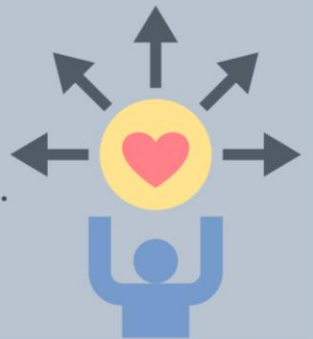
RAISE YOUR HAND

Let your teacher know if you have a question or want to comment.



BE RESPECTFUL

Everyone deserves to have a safe learning environment. Be kind in everything you say, post, and do online.

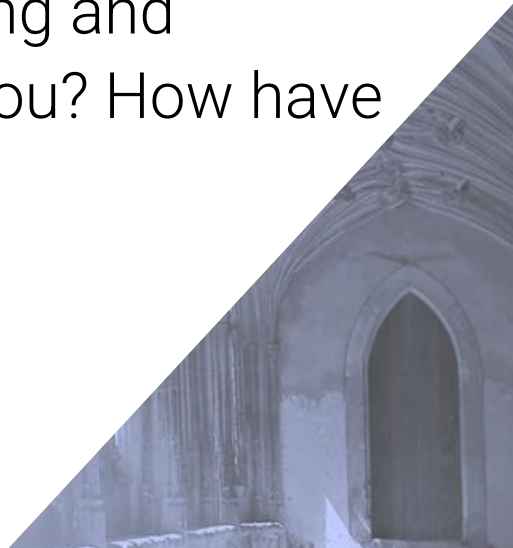


Homework Reflection

What is your favorite prayer, and why is it your favorite?

Do certain lines from prayers come to mind during your daily life? What are they and when do you think about them?

What does the baptismal promise “to continue is the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers” mean to you? How have you lived up to that promise in your life? How could you do better?





The New Life of Grace



INTRO

Prayer is not the only way we experience God.

What are other ways?

In the Episcopal Church sacraments are apart of the experience of God



INTRO

In the sacraments, we experienced grace,

Grace is defined in the prayer book as:

“God’s favor towards us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills” (858)

Though grace comes in infinite ways, we know that the sacraments are “sure and certain” means of grace.



INTRO

What is a Sacrament?

They are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. (857)

Sacraments are an external manifestation of something that happens internally.



INTRO

Christ-like love is not about us; it is about God and our neighbors
Christ-like love is impossibly generous, and we'll never manage to love
this way on our own

This where our liturgies come into play

To see bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ
(radical transformation)

Taking part in the sacraments helps us to see God's grace at
work in the world around us

Seeing God's grace at work trains us to open our hearts and
eyes to God's action in the sacraments



INTRO

It is important to emphasize that the sacraments are not the only way to receive grace.

God's grace come to us daily in our lives in many ways

It is also important to note that sacraments are not mere symbols



INTRO

How many sacraments are there?

Anglicans don't always agree on the number of sacraments

During the Reformation period 1500s/1600s focus was on two sacraments: baptism and eucharist

19th century focus was on seven sacraments



INTRO

Currently we divide the sacraments into two categories:

Dominical sacraments (taught by Jesus):

baptism and eucharist

Ecclesial sacraments (taught by the church):

confirmation

healing (unction)

reconciliation (confession)

marriage

ordination



INTRO

The Book of Common Prayer calls the first two sacraments and the last five sacramental rites

In terms of our theology, they are all outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace

Baptismal Beliefs

Baptism is the first sacrament.

It is the first one Jesus taught

The context of baptism should be viewed as the sacrament of beginning for all new Christians no matter the age



Baptismal Beliefs

Jesus did not invent baptism

He took an existing practice and completely redefined it

In ancient world, like today, many religions made use of ritual baths

In Jesus' time, many Jews understood baptism to be cleansing, a way to wash away sins



Baptismal Beliefs

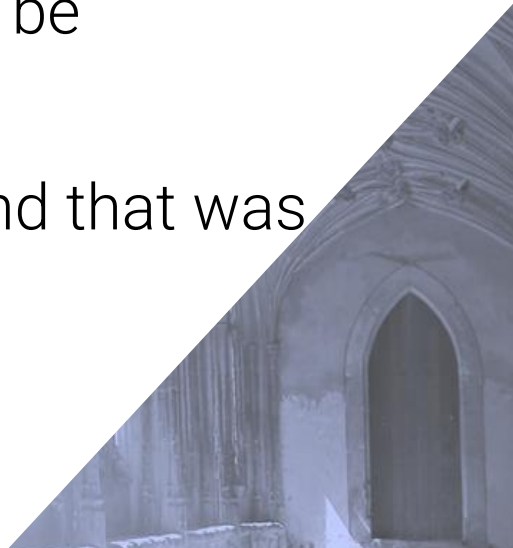
Who was the famous person to do Jewish baptism?

Where does baptism originate?

It came from the Greek baptisma or baptismos, which meant to dip or to immerse

When John the Baptist started calling for people to repent and be baptized, there was no confusion about the meaning

Anyone who went to John was literally immersed into water and that was baptism



Baptismal Beliefs

Read Matthew 3:1-17

What is the difference in the baptism John was doing and the Baptism of Jesus?



Baptismal Beliefs

Jesus adopted the idea of a cleansing ritual required for entry into a community

Jesus baptism added new dimensions starting with his baptism by John in the Jordan River

At his own baptism, Jesus was blessed by God's presence for all to see and we were introduced to the coming of the Holy Spirit

Jesus taught that coming of the Holy Spirit in baptism was the beginning of a new life of faith

To this day baptism is by water and the Holy Spirit



Baptismal Beliefs

Christians began to teach baptism soon after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension that baptism was an essential part of the Christian life

Paul teaches in Romans 6:3-4 (read)

Paul conveys two important ideas

1. baptism is the way to enter into the church, the body of Christ Jesus
2. in baptism we die to our old selves and rise to new life in Christ



Baptismal Beliefs

Union with Christ

The BCP says baptism is “union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God’s family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit (858)

Death & Resurrection:

we are mystically joined with Christ when we are baptized

the old sinful self dies

a new person is raised to life

we receive the promise that we too will be raised at the day at the resurrection of the dead



Baptismal Beliefs

Birth into God's family, the church:

baptism is the entry to the church, to the community of those who have committed themselves to follow Jesus

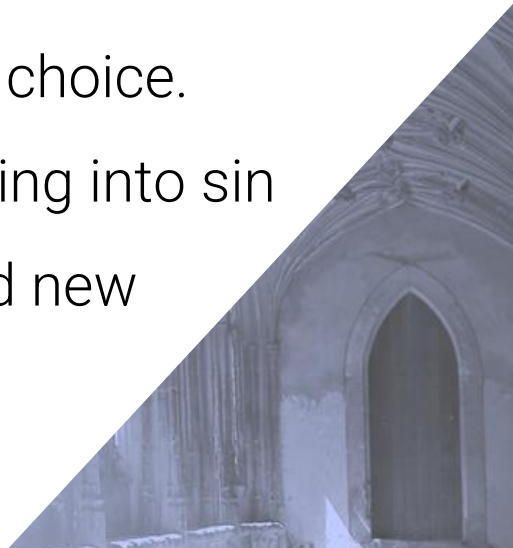
we are adopted into God's family

Forgiveness of sins:

from creation we were created good, and we were given freedom of choice.

we squandered the goodness and freedom that God gave hence falling into sin

baptism were are cleansed from this curs of sin and made clean and new



Baptismal Beliefs

New life in the Holy Spirit:

Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to be with his followers, the church

the entire Book of Acts is the story of Christ's people living with the presence of the Holy Spirit



CONCLUSION

Though not every Christian will see the complexity of baptism in the same way, baptism is the one sacrament that nearly all Christians recognize as universal

For the episcopal church baptism involves water and is done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be considered valid

Some Christian reserve baptism as a sacrament only for adults

Episcopalians have a different view, believing that God's grace is present in the sacrament even when we do not understand how or what is happening. Therefore, we baptize people of all ages including infants

Baptism most often is performed by clergy in the churches, in the community that represents the Body of Christ

But of all the sacraments, baptism is the one that can be performed by anyone, anywhere, in an emergency



Homework

How have you experienced inward and spiritual grace through one of the sacraments?

Our scriptures and liturgies make a strong connection between baptism and death. What are some of the things that we die to in our baptism, and how is our relationship with death changed by the waters of baptism?

Through the waters of baptism, we are raised to the new life of grace. What are some of the qualities or characteristics of this new life?





Next Class October 26, 2021

The Covenant They Have Made
Baptismal Practices

Notes Taken From:

Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs & Practices by Scott Gunn & Melody Wilson Shobe

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)

