

OCTOBER 2023



St. John Journey

www.stjohnabingdon.org

Council President's Corner

“All who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.” John 4:14

What do you see when you first walk into our sanctuary? The mural above the altar? Perhaps the stained-glass window? Whereas both are unique and beautiful in their own right, to me, nothing compares to our baptismal font.

The font is distinctive and its location is intentional. When we walk into our sanctuary, there it is. Boom! It is hard not to see it, and we have to walk around it or we’ll stumble over it. As I recall, it was not part of the original design, but added toward the end of construction. It is intentionally located where it is so we encounter it every single time we enter the sanctuary. Over the years I’ve seen many folks walk in, dip their fingers in the water, and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads. Those who do this are effectively remembering their baptisms. When we see the granite bowl, the verse, and the water, we should be reminded of our own baptism every single time. Martin Luther once wrote: “every time I wash my face, I remember my baptism.”

As Lutherans, we put a lot of stock in the Word and the Word teaches us about grace and faith. Through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (2:8-9) we know that grace alone means that God loves, forgives, and saves us not because of who we are or what we do, but because of the work of Jesus Christ. That work is tied back to our baptism.

Baptism is not a one-time event; it has a daily impact in our lives. We believe in a daily “dying and rising” made known to us through the grace of Jesus Christ. Each day we live both as saints and sinners. Every day we sin, yet every day we are forgiven and redeemed because of Christ and what he did for us. Through baptism we are united with Him. Because we daily die and rise, we are always reminded that we are called to grow in faith on a daily basis. As we walk into the sanctuary, the location of the font helps remind us of this. God’s gift of Holy Baptism can never be taken away from us by the sin and brokenness of the world. As we encounter the daily joys and struggles of life, we are reminded that we are “always being made new in Christ.”

Baptism is essentially a means by which He chooses to give us His Spirit and forgive our sins. Our font is special and its location in the sanctuary is not accidental. Placing the baptismal font near the entrance of the sanctuary is symbolic because it is through baptism that we enter God’s church. Consequently, it makes sense to have it here reminding us of this each and every time we enter the sanctuary. Walking up to that font and remembering our own baptism is special.

So, the next time (and subsequent times) you enter the sanctuary, don’t walk around the font, walk up to it, dip your fingers or maybe even your hand into the water, and remember that as Lutherans, we believe that baptism is “one of the miraculous means of grace (together with God’s written and spoken Word) through which God creates the gift of faith in a person’s heart.” Then as you walk out of the sanctuary, remember Matthew 28:19 and “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

As an ELCA Lutheran congregation, “we are a church whose unity is in Jesus Christ, who gathers us around word and water, wine and bread. Baptism is a significant part of our faith journey as we come from the baptismal waters to live a new life as children of God.”

I can almost envision Luther washing his face at our font, and whereas I’m not advocating washing your faces there, I am suggesting that our baptismal font can and should help us all to remember our baptisms every time we enter the sanctuary. I’ll meet you there on Sundays.

God’s Peace and Blessings,
Bill



Prayer Chain

Joanna Wolfe
Kathy Smith
Bob Murphy
Richard Brumleve
Joel Rosen
Dallas Church
Bridgette Smith

Peg Curphey
Erik Flynn
Taulbee Cherry
Adelynn Peck
Joseph Easter
Ramsey Seagle

We pray for all on the front lines: doctors, nurses, medical personnel.

We pray for the homebound: Marty Dunn, Vickianne Dotten, Ann Godsey, Barbara Wright, Nancy King, Betsy Bohham

If you have names to add (or ones to be taken off) the prayer chain, please email Joan at the church office.

St. John serves at the Food Pantry the week of October 2nd-6th. Please give of your time for this important service to our community. Volunteers needed Monday Oct. 2nd 9AM-1PM, Tuesday Oct. 3rd 4-6PM, and Friday Oct. 6th 9AM-1PM.

Saturday Oct. 7th--Rails to River Ride for Taylor--see bulletin board for registration information.

Sunday October 8th--Stewardship Fair in the Fellowship Hall following Worship.

Sunday October 29th Reformation Sunday

October Birthdays

Oct. 2--Kelly Read
Oct. 6--Kathy Smith
Oct. 9--Jim Meacham
Oct. 21--Wrenda Fuller
Oct. 29--Mike Shaver

If we missed your October birthday, please let the church office know.

Volunteers for October

Sunday October 1

Sunday October 29th--5th Sunday--Noisy offering to benefit My Refuge House

Thursday Nov. 2nd 11:30-1:30 Lunchtime Gathering with Heather Bland, CEO of My Refuge House. Sandwiches and hors d'Oeuvres served.



Lay Asst.: Linda Garnett , Lector: Charlie Garnett

Ushers: , Altar Guild:

Sunday October 8

Lay Asst.: Joan Shaver, Lector: Brenda Murphy

Ushers: , Altar Guild:

Sunday October 15

Lay Asst.: Ken Croghan, Lector: Bill Spencer

Ushers: Sue Croghan, Don Williams , Altar Guild:

Sunday October 22

Lay Asst.: Ed Davis, Lector: Helen French

Ushers: , Altar Guild:

Sunday October 29

Lay Asst.: Ken Croghan , Lector: Dave Morris

Ushers: Sue Croghan, Don Williams, Altar Guild:

Sign-up sheets for Usher and Altar Guild are on the bulletin board. There is also one for after church snacks.

Please find someone to trade with if you cannot serve your assigned Sunday.