



# By Water And the Spirit

MAKING  
CONNECTIONS  
FOR IDENTITY  
& MINISTRY

GAYLE  
CARLTON  
FELTON

STUDY GUIDE & TEXT OF  
BY WATER & THE SPIRIT

## BOOK SUMMARY HO KANG

## Author – Gayle Carlton Felton (1942-2014)



A clergy member of the North Carolina Annual Conference, the Rev. Gayle Carlton Felton is a consultant to the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Chair of The Board of Directors of The Reconciling Congregation Program, and author of *The Coming of Jesus*, *This Gift of Water*, and *By Water and the Spirit*. Retired from the faculty of Duke Divinity School, she is now living in Rougemont, North Carolina, where she is a writer, consultant, and speaker.

# Introduction

- By Water and the Spirit is an official statement by the UMC to be used in teaching our people how we understand and practice baptism.
- This book is specifically designed to be a document for practice use rather than a presentation of abstract theology.
- Its goal is to help United Methodists live more faithfully as God's baptized people.
- The resource is organized into six teaching and learning sessions.
- Each session contains three types of material: the text of the document approved by the General Conference, commentary about that text, and suggestions for teaching it.

## Session One.

Where Are We? How Did We Get Here?

# A UM Understanding of Baptism

- Within the Methodist tradition, baptism has long been a subject of much concern, even controversy.
- John Wesley retained the sacramental theology which he received from his Anglican heritage. He taught that **in baptism:**
  - A child was cleansed of the guilt of original sin
  - Initiated into the covenant with God
  - Admitted into the Church
  - Made an heir of the divine kingdom
  - Spiritually born anew.
- While baptism was neither essential to nor sufficient for salvation, it was the “**ordinary means**” that God had designated for applying the benefits of the work of Christ in human lives.
- Although JW affirmed the regenerating grace of infant baptism, he also insisted upon the necessity of adult conversion for those who have fallen from grace.
- A person who matures into moral accountability must respond to God’s grace in repentance and faith.
- Without personal decision and commitment to Christ, the baptismal gift is rendered ineffective.
- Baptism for Wesley, therefore, was a part of the **lifelong process of salvation**.
- He saw **spiritual rebirth as a twofold experience** in the normal process of Christian development –
  - 1) to be received through baptism in infancy and
  - 2) through commitment to Christ later in life.
- Salvation included both **God’s initiating activity** of (prevenient & justifying) grace and a **willing human response** (out of God’s justifying & sanctifying grace).

# A UM Understanding of Baptism

**Sacrament** vs. Human dedication

# The Sacrament of Baptism

It is through the sacrament of baptism:

- We are given identity as (Christian).
- We are initiated into the Christian church.
- We are incorporated into the community of God's people, the body of Christ.
- We are commissioned into ministry
- We are called to continue the work of Christ for the redemption of the world.

\*As we realize who we are (by God's grace), what kind of community we comprise, and with what mission we have been charged, we eagerly seek the instruments that can aid us.

# Our Roots – Sacramental Tradition

- A sacrament of baptism stems from **Jesus Christ**, and the following **Apostolic church**.
- Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy transcend its tradition along with their stress on other ceremonies (including confirmation, penance, marriage, ordination, and extreme unction).
- Protestant church:
  - Martin Luther and John Calvin regarded **only baptism and Holy Communion as sacraments**.
  - Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland practiced baptism and Holy Communion as occasions for **remembering** Christ and our **profession** of faith, rather than as means of grace.
  - Anabaptists taught that baptism is an individual's profession of faith; therefore, **only believing adults** should be baptized.
- The family free of UM can be traced through the Roman Catholic–Lutheran–Calvinistic branch, particularly as it developed in the Church of England.
  - Philip William Otterbein (German Reformed minister), chief founder of the United Brethren in Christ, was grounded in the Lutheran tradition.
  - Jacob Albright, the founder (?) of the Evangelical Church, was Lutheran, whose shaping influence was Methodist.



# Our Roots – Evangelical Tradition

- Along with its roots in the **sacramental tradition**, UM is also deeply grounded in Christianity's **evangelical tradition**.
- All of the founders of the various groups that came together as The United Methodist Church were deeply influenced by **pietism** and its emphasis upon **personal religious experience**, conversion, and commitment to Christ.
  - Martin Boehm, another founder of the United Brethren, was a **Mennonite** in the **Anabaptist tradition**.

# Our Roots – John Wesley

- John Wesley, the founder of the Methodism, was an Anglican priest.
- He taught that baptism is a good **gift from God** to the church, a significant part of God's plan for bringing people to **salvation**.
  - Christian parents are expected to bring their infant children to receive God's grace through baptism.
- Wesley understood baptism as sacrament (God's initiative work), but he insisted strongly that simply having been baptized is no guarantee of anyone's salvation.
  - Baptism is a part of the lifelong process by which God works in our lives.
  - The grace that comes to us in baptism **must be responded** to and **accepted in repentance** and **faith** as we mature.
- **The synthesis of "sacramentalism" and "evangelicalism" is the key – it's JW's legacy!**
  - Wesley blended and balanced the free gift of divine grace, which is made available to us through various means (including the sacraments), with the necessity of our human response of faith and holy living.

# Our Roots – American Methodism

- Methodism came to America with the European immigrants in the 1760s.
- The Revolutionary War for independence from the Great Britain made it impossible for American Methodists to continue receiving the sacraments in Anglican churches.
  - Because Wesley always insisted that only properly ordained people be allowed to baptize and serve the Lord's Supper.
  - Until the official creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference of 1784, there were no ordained Methodist ministers to offer the sacraments.
  - Indeed, one of the pressing reasons for setting up a separate church was to be able to ordain ministers to officiate the sacraments.
- In the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emphases on sin, repentance, faith, conversion, rebirth, and holiness became increasingly unpopular.
- The understanding of baptism was significantly affected and altered. There was lessened appreciation for the church and its sacraments as means of divine grace, as well as a reduced sense of sin and need for spiritual transformation.
  - \*The author thinks that many of the UM's difficulties – namely, stark decline in membership – have their roots in this tearing apart and discarding of our theological heritage.

## In Recent Years (\*The book came out in 1997)

- By the middle of the twentieth century, infant baptism was commonly understood as simply an act of dedication in which parents thanked God for the child and pledged themselves to raise him or her in the Christian tradition.
- **Little consideration was given to the role of God or to the church as a community of faith.**
  - Baptized children were officially designated as “preparatory members” of the church, but were usually treated as outsiders until they participated in services called “reception into membership,” or later called “confirmation.” Such services were often viewed as “joining the church.”
  - In many cases baptized children were not welcomed to take Holy Communion until they had been through such a service and made their vows publicly.
  - **These practices clearly reveal that infant baptism was rarely understood as a means of grace through which God is truly acting.**
  - The frequent use of the term “christening” is convincing evidence that infant baptism was seldom considered to be “the real thing.”

# In Recent Years (\*The book came out in 1997)

- By the 1960s many leaders of the church were realizing and becoming concerned that we had lost our appreciation for baptism as a sacrament.
- In the baptismal ritual of the 1964 Hymnal, there is an effort to begin the process of recovery. Plainly, UM sought to return to the Wesleyan synthesis that had been largely lost.
- When the 1988 General Conference approved the current “Services of the Baptismal Covenant,” it recognized the need for the church to study the meaning of baptism more comprehensively.
  - The General Conference authorized the General Board of Discipleship to form a committee that would focus on this task.
  - At the 1992 General Conference, the document produced by this committee was recommended for study throughout the denomination.
  - Cokesbury published the document.
  - Taking these responses into consideration, the committee rewrote the document.
  - In its revised form, **By Water and the Spirit**, was approved as an official interpretive statement on baptism for the church by the 1996 General Conference.

The background is a dark blue gradient with a series of thin, curved, light blue lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized wave or a tunnel effect. The lines are more prominent on the left side and fade towards the right.

Session Two.  
Who Are We?  
Who Does God Intend Us To Be?

# A Sinful People – BUT We Reluctant to Speak of Sin

- \*How can anyone ... glance at the daily newspaper headlines ... without being confronted with the powerful, inescapable reality of sin?
- H. Richard Niebuhr, "A God without wrath brought [people] without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross" – This kind of cheap and falsely optimistic Christianity remains a dangerous heresy today.
- The idea of sin is rather "out of style" in our contemporary society. We prefer to talk about "dysfunction," "maladjustment," "relationship difficulties," or "social problems." – Unfortunately, this unwillingness to look honestly at sin is not limited to the secular society; it also deeply afflicts the church.

# A Biblical Guide – The Human Fallen / Bad News of Sin

Genesis 1-3 depicts the human condition as...

- God brought all creation into existence and pronounced it “good.”
- God crowns the created universe with human beings, male and female, who are loved by God and who are intended to live in a loving relationship with God, with each other, and with the natural world.
- Tragically, human beings reject God’s purpose for them; they put their own **desires** in place of the divine will; they try to live apart from God.
- These actions of human unfaithfulness result in separation from God, in alienation from each other, in antagonism to the natural environment.
- Sin is not simply the human actions of disobedience; it is more profoundly the very condition of human life. We are in a state of sin; we are sinful creatures who live in a world that we have made sinful.
- Sin distorts our vision of God and of ourselves. Sin corrupts individuals, institutions and the whole society.



# God's Saving Grace / Good News of God

- God is not willing to leave us in sin; God acts to save us.
- The entire story of the Bible is the story of God's efforts to bring us back into the loving relationships for which we are created.
- The God of the Bible is a God who acts in and through the events of human history.
  - God chose a particular people – the Hebrews (Israelites) – to be an instrument of divine purpose.
  - (God revealed His divine power and His steadfast love (hesed) towards His covenantal people and promised the coming of the Anointed One.) – And indeed, Christ came as promised! Jesus fulfilled all the laws and prophets (and yet, not in a way Jews anticipated – God's way was different than human understanding.)
  - Jesus Christ suffered death to bear the burden of human sinfulness and restore to life; and revealing the power of God. Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection guarantee God's ultimate victory over sin and evil, and make it possible for each of us to share in that victory.
  - Even in the face of sin, suffering, and injustice, God and God's people are at work and that the divine purposes will be fulfilled at last (**Kingdom of God reigns forever!!**)

# Repentance

- To have faith is to trust God instead of ourselves.
- Faith requires our realization of the reality of sin in our lives and our helplessness to free ourselves from it. When we become aware of the sin that separates us from God and from others, we grieve and desire change.
- **This is repentance: sorrow for sin and turning our lives around.**
- Repentance is an essential part of the larger experience of conversion – Conversion is a process of transformation through which we become the people God intends us to be. (The form of it can be vary – some more dramatic and instant; some others more gradual and static).
- For all of us, repentance and conversion must be **ongoing** throughout our lives. Its process needs to involve constant and conscious turning away from sin and turning toward God.

# Means of Grace

- Means of Grace: Nature, People, Holy Spirit (Holy Scripture, Prayer...), Sacraments, Church (Preaching, teaching, praise, fellowship, serving)
- UM has always valued the means of grace. John Wesley taught that the means of grace instituted by Christ were prayer, searching the Scriptures, receiving the Lord's Supper, fasting, and joining with other Christians for mutual nurture and accountability. Wesley stressed the necessity of intentional Christian living and provided directions for Methodist people to follow.
- **The sacraments of baptism and Eucharist are special means of grace that God has given us.**
  - They are not simply reminders of what Christ has done; they are actual channels through which grace is made available.
  - Because **God has chosen to use them**, the physical elements of water, bread, and wine (along with the words of the rituals) are sign-acts of divine love. They are kind of divine "show and tell."
  - God communicates to us on a level that we can "**understand**" and "**experience**" God through the sacraments.
    - "In preaching, God's love is made audible; in the sacraments, God's love is made visible." (James F. White)
  - **In baptism we are initiated into the church – the family of God; in the Eucharist we are nourished and sustained in our ongoing journey of faith.**

The background is a dark blue gradient with a series of thin, curved, light blue lines that create a sense of depth and movement, particularly on the left side.

Session Three.  
The Meaning of Baptism

# Biblical Roots

- Christian baptism has its roots in various Jewish rituals that use **water** as a sign of **cleansing** and **renewal**.
- Jesus' baptism by John marked the beginning of His earthly ministry (cf. Re-creation; Spirit-Water-Word).
- God has chosen to use the sacrament of baptism as one of the ways that divine love comes to us.
- **Covenantal relationship** between God the chosen people.
- BUT over the course of the history, it was **proven** that the people are **unable** to remain faithful; they so easily and hastily fall again into sin.
  - Much of the OT is the story of this broken covenant.
  - Some of the prophets realized that the very nature of human beings had to be changed (**need of a new covenant**) if they were ever going to be able to live faithfully in a covenant relationship with God.
- This promise of **a new covenant** was established by the life, death, and resurrection of **Jesus Christ**.
  - Jesus Himself makes this explicit when He speaks of the wine at the Last Supper as symbolizing "the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 20:20).
  - Throughout the history of the church, baptism has been understood as the sign of this new covenant.
- Just as Israel was in covenant relationship with God, the Christian church is in the new covenantal relationship with God in and through Jesus Christ.

# Water and Spirit

Christian baptism is by **water** and the **Spirit**.

- **Water** plays a major part in the biblical story of God and God's people.
  - In the acts of creation, God's Spirit moved over and acted upon the water; the first animal life came forth from the water (Gen 1:1-10, 20-21).
  - As it was from water that physical **life** began, so it is from water that every human life comes into existence (cf. Jn 3:1-8).
  - Water is also associated with **death** (cf. The great flood in Gen 6-9; Rom 6:1-11).
  - Water also signifies salvation (cf. Crossing the Red Sea in Ex 14:19-31; Jos 3:7-17) – liberation from sin.
  - Sustain of life (cf. Ex 17:1-7; Num 20:2-11).
  - In the end time (cf. Rev 21:6; 22:1).
- **Spirit's** role:
  - In Creation account in Gen 1, it is the Spirit of God that moves over the waters.
  - As the flood is receding, a dove – always a symbol of the HS in the Scriptures – brings Noah a sign of life returning.
  - Baptism of Christ.

# How to Use the Water

- The Methodism has offered the choice of three modes – sprinkling, pouring, and immersion.
  - Although it is a common among some groups to insist that Jesus was baptized by immersion, there is no clear evidence to this effect. Descriptions of Jesus and others going into or coming out of the water may simply refer to their stepping off from and back onto the shore.
  - Indeed, the very early use of a shell as a symbol of baptism offers evidence that water may have been poured over the head of an individual who was standing in or being held over water.
- All three modes have rich symbolic value.
  - Sprinkling expresses both the imagery of cleansing (Eze 36:25-27) and of setting apart for service to God (Exo 29:21).
  - Pouring expresses the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the person being baptized and upon the whole church (Acts 2:1-4, 17-18).
  - Immersion expresses dying to sin and rising to new life, participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:1-11; Col 2:11-12).

# Laying on Hands

- The laying on hands was a biblical symbol of consecration for an office or service and was understood to convey divine authorization and empowerment (cf. Nu, 8:10-11; 27:18-23; Acts 6:5-6; 13:2-3).

## Of oil:

- In the Bible, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the OT, priests and kings were anointed with oil as a sign of their call by God into a special role; even objects were anointed to designate them as holy (cf. Exo 30:22-38; 1Sam 16:1-13).
- In the NT, anointing was a sign of healing (Mk 6:13; Jam 5:14), of hospitality and love (Lk 7:36-50), and of the claiming and equipping by the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22; 1Jn 2:20, 27).



# Incorporation into the Body of Christ

- Baptism brings people into the church – the body of Christ.
- The church initiates and incorporates new members through the sacrament of baptism. By receiving baptism, people have participated in the ritual of initiation.

# Sin and Repentance

- Baptism brings people into the church – the body of Christ.
- The church initiates and incorporates new members through the sacrament of baptism. By receiving baptism, people have participated in the ritual of initiation.

# A Journey of Holiness

- The physical birth of an infant is not an end in itself; it is the beginning of a process toward maturity. Similarly, the spiritual birth is the beginning of a lifelong journey of growth in grace and holiness of life.
- John Wesley, “The repentance is the porch of religion, faith is the door, and holiness is religion itself.”
- This process of growth in holiness is called sanctification. It is carried out by the activity of the Holy Spirit working in our lives to make us more like Jesus Christ.
- Sanctification (or, holiness) is a gift of divine grace, but it also requires human cooperation. We are responsible for utilizing the various means of grace available to us.
- Holiness involves our personal relationship with God – horizontally with God and vertically with others.
- God is not finished with us until the command of Christ is fulfilled – that we be “perfect ... as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:48).
- Wesley believed that this could happen, not because we are such good people, but because God is so great. God is both able and willing to transform us.
- The goal is that love become “the sole principle of action,” that we are motivated by nothing else than the love of God and neighbor.

The background is a dark blue gradient with a series of thin, curved, light blue lines that create a sense of depth and movement, particularly on the left side.

Session Four.  
The Baptism of Infants and Adults

# Sacramental Understanding

- Regardless of the age of the person being baptized, the active agent in the sacrament is God.
- Divine grace comes to those who are baptized.
- God's grace is available for all; one can never be too young or too old to both need and receive it.
- A child who is born in a Christian family and will be brought up within the nurturing community of the church should be baptized as an infant. That child's own profession of faith in Christ will take place in life when he or she is competent to make such decisions.

# Adult Baptism

- An adult who has grown up outside of the community of faith should receive the sacrament when he or she is ready to profess faith in Christ.
- Adult baptisms are most common in situations where the Christian faith is being proclaimed for the first time.
- \*This is why most baptisms mentioned in the New Testament are baptisms of adults. – These people were being converted to faith in Christ from the non-Christian world.
- Of course, baptism is far from the conclusion of an adult's journey of faith. She or he anticipates future growth in holiness and committed discipleship.

# Infant Baptism (1/4)

- Infant baptism is the ancient and almost universal practice of the church, beginning probably in the New Testament period.
- In a very powerful way, it is in the baptism of an infant that we most authentically represent how God works in our lives toward salvation. (= Salvation is solemnly onto God.)
- All of us are helpless in becoming the people God wants us to be; we are utterly dependent upon divine grace.
- This we see most clearly when the person receiving baptism is an infant, plainly incapable of doing anything for himself or herself.
- In this way, the baptism of people of any age is alike.
- For the same reason, people whose physical and/or mental condition is such that they cannot profess faith for themselves are eligible for baptism, just as they are eligible for God's love.
- \*The difference between adult baptism and infant baptism is that adults are capable of rejecting divine grace. Therefore, adults must come to the sacrament having made decisions of repentance and faith.

# Infant Baptism (2/4)

- The infant baptism is a beginning, not an ending.
- It is essential that the maturing child be carefully nurtured in spiritual development and intentionally taught about the Christian faith and the life of discipleship. Otherwise, the baptismal grace will be like seeds sown on stony ground; it will not develop and grow.
- Thus, if there is no likelihood that the faith process of which baptism is a part will be continued in the child's life, baptism is best postponed.
- In often cases, sadly, pastors should refuse to offer the sacrament until the parental commitment (for Christian nurturing) is promising in so far as they seem to have some degree of understanding of the nature of the baptism (that this is just a beginning, not an ending).
- In this regards, pastors need to be more contentious in preaching, teaching, and counseling about the meaning of baptism as part of one's ministry.



# Infant Baptism (3/4)

- The current Book of Discipline makes clear that it is the duty of Christian parents to have their infant children baptized and the duty of pastors to “earnestly exhort” them to do so.
- The UMC does not offer infant dedication as a substitute for baptism.
- It is safe to say that “christening” and “baptism” connotes the same implication. However, to avoid the confusion it’s better not to use this term, “christening,” in place of “baptism.”
  - The word, “christen” may be a carryover of the word chrism, which refers to the anointing oil used in baptism or a derivative of the English word “Christianize” meaning to make one a member of the church.

# Infant Baptism (4/4)

- Baptism is not a requirement for salvation.
- Our salvation is a free gift of God made possible by the work of Christ.
- Therefore, there is really no such thing as what may be called “an emergency baptism” in UMC.
  - Ex. If a newborn child dies without having been baptized, that child is received into the loving arms of God as surely as the one who has been baptized.
  - But this does not mean that baptism is unimportant or optional.
- **God has chosen to give us the gift of baptism as the ordinary way that people are brought into the church – the community of the new covenant. God expects us to utilize this marvelous gift in our work of shaping people as Christians. However, our failure (intentional or unintentional) to be faithful in our use of the sacraments does not mean that God cannot bring people to salvation through other means.**

# Scriptural background of infant baptism

- Acts 2:38-41 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and **for your children** and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So **those who received his word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- Acts 16:13-15 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her **household** as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.
- Acts 16:30-33 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your **household**." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to **all who were in his house**. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was **baptized at once, he and all his family**.
- 1Corinthians 1:16 (I did baptize also the **household** of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

# One (and Only) Baptism

- “the practice of re-baptism does not conform with God’s action in baptism and is not consistent with Wesleyan tradition and the historic teaching of the church” (341.7, BOD, 2004)
- The essential truth is that God never fails to maintain the divine side of the covenant into which we are initiated by baptism. Therefore, that covenant can never be destroyed and never needs remaking.
- What is necessary is that we repent and return to it.
  - Cf. Marriage covenant (husband : wife = God : baptized people)
- Throughout our lives, our relationship with God will change – sometimes for the better, sometime for the worst. Therefore, it is appropriate to reaffirm our baptismal vows (through repentance).



Session Five.  
Nurturing People in the Life of Faith

# Lifelong Journey of Salvation

- Journey of salvation is lifelong in which we need careful and continual nurture other people in the Christian community.
- As baptized children grow up, they need constant and intentional nurture. This nurture should include both instruction and demonstration.
- Two chief places where Christians can be formed are in the “home” and in the “church.”

# Confirmation

- The fruits of the process of nurture find public expression in the individual's first affirmation of the baptismal covenant – what we now call confirmation.
- Traditionally in early adolescence, young people are offered a special series of programs (i.e., confirmation class) designed to inform them about the church and the faith, as well as to promote their spiritual formation.
- Unfortunately, the effectiveness of some of them is called into question by statistics showing that many young people – and their families – regard confirmation as “graduation from the church.”
- While the individual Christian is confirming his or her own faith, the greater act of confirmation is that of the Holy Spirit, who blesses the person with strengthened faith for living out the Christian calling. This work of the Spirit is expressed in the words of the pastor and the act of laying on of hands by the pastor and others, symbolic of the presence and power of the Spirit. Another ancient symbolic action may also be used – anointing with oil in the sign of the cross.

# Reaffirming Our Baptism

- The covenant community of God's people in the OT came together regularly to celebrate God's faithfulness and to reaffirm their own commitment.
- Water should be used in this service as a reminder of its rich significance in the story of salvation. People might come to the front and look at the water, touch it, perhaps trace with water the sign of the cross on their foreheads.
- The pastor might sign each worshiper with water as he or she says, "Remember your baptism and be thankful." It is important that water be used in ways that are clearly a remembrance, rather than a repetition of baptism.



## Session Six.

# Baptism in Relation to Other Rites of the Church

# Holy Communion

- Other than baptism, there are a variety of means through which God's grace comes to us such as Holy Communion, Christian ministry, Marriage, Death and resurrection.
- Holy Communion is a **sacrament**. Through our participation in it, we receive divine grace, which sustains us in our ongoing process of salvation.
- It may be convicting or converting or justifying or sanctifying.
- It provides us with "**bread for the journey**."
- HC is the "**family meal**" of the community of faith.
  - Just as a child experiences love through receiving food for physical hunger (most likely) and grasping the intimate connection through eating/drinking, HC conveys this message.
- It's a "**mystery**"; none of us can fully comprehend how and why God so works.
  - HC is a gift of divine love for which we cannot be worthy.
  - Jesus ate with sinners; in Communion the resurrected Christ meets us in all our failure and sin, and invites us to dine with Him.
- "**Open Table**": Christian hospitality welcomes others to our meal with Christ.

# Called to Ministry

- Baptism is our ordination into the general ministry of the church.
- All authentic expressions of ministry are those manifested in the “living out” of our baptism.
- All baptized Christians share this ministry.
- BOD (2004), “...all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free. ... This ministry of all Christians in Christ’s name and spirit is both a gift and a task. The gift is God’s unmerited grace; the task is unstinting service.” (126-127).
- “The priesthood of all believers” means not only that each of us has access to God in Christ, but also that each of us is to function as a priest to other people.
  - Too often we tend to define ourselves by our secular occupations. (But that’s not healthy!)
  - We all are missionaries commissioned by God!
- \*Those who are commonly referred to as ordained ministers are set apart by the church in response to God’s call on their lives. They serve in the ministry of representing Christ to the church and the church to the world.
  - Deacons: Word and Service
  - Elders: Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order.

# Marriage

- Marriage is both partners living out the identity and calling that they received in baptism.
- Marriage is a covenant relationship, and its fulfillment depends on the prior covenant between God and God's people.
- In the Old and New Testaments, the relationships between God and Israel and between God and the church are portrayed by using the metaphor of marriage.
- Rich and challenging opportunities for ministry will be found in the marriage and family life. Christian marriage is to be a place in which people experience and express the sanctifying grace of God as they grow in holiness of life. Strengthened by the grace received in their relationship, each partner will be able to serve more effectively those inside and outside his or her home.

# Death and Resurrection

- The call to Christian discipleship is a call to come and die. In living out our baptism, we fulfill that call.
- If we are faithful, we are constantly dying to the things that compete for our loyalty (cf. Deny yourself and take up the cross – daily.)
- Christians should be good at dying.
- Christians should be good at living.
- We are in a loving relationship with the One who not only gives life eternal, but also fills life with meaning and joy.
- Images of death and resurrection are among the most common ways of understanding baptism.
  - Baptism is the death of the old sinful self and the birth of a new spiritual life in Christ.

**SO WHAT?**

**WE ARE NOT CHRISTIAN ENOUGH!  
TO BE BAPTIZED IS TO HAVE ONE'S  
WHOLE LIFE CLAIMED AND USED BY GOD.**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK WITHIN YOU,  
THAT HAVING BEEN BORN THROUGH  
WATER AND THE SPIRIT,  
YOU MAY LIVE AS FAITHFUL DISCIPLES  
OF JESUS CHRIST.**