

## OPENING LITANY

We begin in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **The name in which we baptize.**

What is baptism? **It is water used according to God's command and connected with God's word.**

What gifts does baptism grant? **It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe.**

How can water do such great things? **The water does not do this alone, but the word of God with and alongside of the water, and faith.**

This is a grace-filled water of life. **A bath of new birth in the Holy Spirit.**

## MARTIN LUTHER'S

# The Marks of the Church

In 1539, Luther wrote "On the Councils and the Church" as part of the real possibility that the Roman Catholic church and the Lutheran church would not be reconciled in his lifetime. The third section of the book is to be studied during Lent. He identified seven marks of the church which can assure us of God's work in the world. Please join us for simple worship and meal during Lent and take home our litanies and Luther's words as part of your family's faith journey to Easter. PT

*"Well then, the Children's Creed teaches us that a Christian holy people is to be and to remain on earth until the end of the world. This is an article of faith that cannot be terminated until that which it believes comes, as Christ promises, "I am with you always, to the close of the age" [Matt. 28:20]. But how will or how can a poor confused person tell where such Christian holy people are to be found in this world?"*<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41: *Church and Ministry III*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 148.

# BAPTISM



Second, God's people or the Christian holy people are recognized by the holy sacrament of baptism, wherever it is taught, believed, and administered correctly according to Christ's ordinance. That too is a public sign and a precious, holy possession by which God's people are sanctified. It is the holy bath of regeneration through the Holy Spirit [Titus 3:5], in which we bathe and with which we are washed of sin and death by the Holy Spirit, as in the innocent holy blood of the Lamb of God. Wherever you see this sign you may know that the church, or the holy Christian people, must surely be present, even if the pope does not baptize you or even if you know nothing of his holiness and power—just as the little children know nothing of it, although when they are grown, they are, sad to say, estranged from their baptism, as St. Peter laments in 2 Peter 2 [:18], "They entice with licentious passions of the flesh men who have barely escaped from those who live in error;" etc. Indeed, you should not even pay attention to who baptizes, for baptism does not belong to the baptizer, nor is it given to him, but it belongs to the baptized. It was ordained for him by God, and given to him by God, just as the word of God is not the preacher's (except in so far as he too hears and believes it) but belongs to the disciple who hears and believes it; to him is it given.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41: *Church and Ministry III*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 151.