

The St. Matthew Messenger



St. Matthew Lutheran Church

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FROM PASTOR YEISER'S DESK:

In the second to last verse of Matthew's gospel we hear Jesus say: "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..." You know, sometimes people ask me what I like doing best as a pastor. While there are many things that I have enjoyed doing over the course of my twenty-seven years in the ministry, I must say that the thing I like doing best is baptisms. From the first infant that I baptized way back in the summer of 1983 through the nearly four hundred subsequent persons I have baptized, I have never grown weary of officiating at baptisms. Perhaps a reason for this is because of the incredible thing that happens in the waters of baptism. For it is there that we are made children/disciples of Jesus Christ. It is in baptism that we are united to Christ's death and resurrection and promised the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. It is there that the Spirit of God comes to us assuring us that the Spirit will be present for us throughout our lives, including in those times when we are not present with the Spirit. Yes, baptism as one of our two sacraments, is a marvelous act in which God's grace is showered upon us. Such is God's love for us that he takes us sinful, limited, and finite people and blesses us with immense privilege and responsibility as we live as God's special people in this world.

While baptism is an individual event (persons are individually baptized in the name of our triune God) we are also baptized into a community, into a body of believers or assembly of saints. This is really big stuff as they say. Thus in the baptismal liturgy parents and sponsors make some promises indicative of the fact that the candidates for baptism are becoming part of a community. They are promising to do such things as bring the newly baptized to the services of God's house and teach them to pray, read scripture, learn the commandments and creeds, share their God given faith with others, and work for peace and justice in the world.

Yes, being a Christian is not an every person for him or herself type of venture. In the sacrament of baptism we become part of the Christian community in this world. We, who are graced by God in the waters of baptism, are then called to live out our faith in the company of others. While what we say and do individually as Christians is important, together with others in Christ we significantly impact the world.

We gather or rally together in our church home to first and foremost worship our Lord. Here, together, we receive our Lord and Savior as he comes to us in word and sacrament. Here we praise and thank God while praying for guidance, care, and support for the people of this world.

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