



Water and Words

A Service of Scripture and Song Celebrating the Promises of Baptism

This service follows a familiar pattern of lessons and carols, but with a baptism twist. Select hymns that your community knows and loves; there are ideas provided to spark your imagination from many of the worship resources regularly used by congregations of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, including:

*ELW - Evangelical Lutheran Worship
LBW - Lutheran Book of Worship
LLC - Libro de Liturgica y Cantico
SBH - Service Book and Hymnal
TFF - This Far By Faith
WOV - With One Voice*

You will want water in your baptismal font for this service, and you might also wish to provide a bowl of small stones (rock, glass, etc) or another similar token beside the font as a tangible reminder of the promises we celebrate today. Leader parts can be read by as many or as few people as local context dictates; it will be simplest if the reader responsible for each scripture section also guides the congregation into the response and the next hymn.

Consider beginning with an introduction, such as:

Welcome to worship! You will notice that our service today is a little different. It is based on the promises of baptism, when we commit to live among God's faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth. We listen to these promises when children, grandchildren and sometimes even adults are baptized, and we affirm them at confirmation, when new members join, or sometimes at other times. Today, we explore them in scripture and song.

GATHERING

Opening Litany

In baptism, God names us.

We are children of God.

In baptism, God gives us new life and new birth.

We are a new creation.

In baptism, God grants us forgiveness, redemption, and salvation.

According to God's Word and promises.

We are children of God.

And we promise, too.

We hear and claim those promises today.

Thanks be to God!

God's command: Matthew 28:18-20

A reading from Matthew.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to [the disciples], "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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 ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

We sing the gathering song _____.

Gathering Song: *Go, Make Disciples* (ELW 540)
All Who Believe and Are Baptized (ELW 442, LBW 194, SBH 259)
Listen, God Is Calling (ELW 513, WOV 712, TFF 130)
Or another hymn about baptism.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Introduction

Jesus commanded us to go and baptize, but baptism is only the beginning of the life of faith. As baptized followers of Jesus, named children of God, we promise to live a baptized life in response to God's promises and gifts. God loves us whether we do it or not, whether we remember or not, and whether we mean it or not. God does not need our promises but our neighbors do, our world does, and we ourselves do, too. Today, we remember those promises and the gifts and challenges they bring.

PROMISES

Live among God's faithful people

Scripture: Micah 6:8 and Romans 12:4-8

A reading from Micah.

⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

A reading from Romans.

⁴ For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

In baptism, God names us children of God.

We promise to live among God's faithful people.

As God's faithful people, we sing _____.

Song:

We All Are One in Mission (ELW 576, WOV 755)

Built on a Rock (ELW 652, LBW 365, SBH 151)

One Bread, One Body (ELW 496, WOV 710, TFF 122)

Or another hymn about community, gifts, and connectedness.

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27 and Acts 2:44-47

A reading from Matthew.

²⁴ "Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"

A reading from Acts.

⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

In baptism, God gives us new life and new birth.

We promise to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper.

As God's listening people, we sing _____.

Song: *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil* (ELW 512, WOV 713, TFF 131)
 God's Word is Our Great Heritage (ELW 509, LBW 239, SBH 257)
 We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus (ELW 451, WOV 698)
 Or another hymn about God's Word.

Proclaim the good news of Christ in word and deed

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

A reading from Matthew.

¹ After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

In baptism, God grants us forgiveness, redemption, and salvation.

We promise to proclaim the good news of Christ in word and deed.

As God's proclaiming people, we sing _____.

Song: *Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises* (ELW 535, WOV 722, TFF 158, LLC 420)
 I Love to Tell the Story (ELW 661, LBW 390, TFF 228, SBH 326)
 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (ELW 674, WOV 754, TFF 232)
 Or another hymn about speaking.

Serve all people, following the example of Jesus

Scripture: John 13:2b-15

A reading from John.

And during supper³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God,⁴ got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am.¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

In baptism, God calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We promise to serve all people, following the example of Jesus

As God's serving people, we sing _____.

Song:

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (ELW 708, WOV 765, TFF 83)

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (ELW 712, LBW 423)

Take My Life, That I May Be (ELW 583, alt. ELW 685, LBW 406, SBH 510)

Or another hymn about Christian service.

Strive for justice and peace in all the world

Scripture: Isaiah 1: 2, 14-17 and Ephesians 4:1-6

A reading from Isaiah.

² Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth,
for the LORD has spoken:
¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed festivals
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
¹⁵ When you stretch out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove your evil deeds
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil;
¹⁷ learn to do good;
seek justice;
rescue the oppressed;
defend the orphan;
plead for the widow.

A reading from Ephesians.

¹ I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: ⁴ there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

In baptism, God names us children of God, partners in the stewardship of all creation.

We promise to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

As God's faithful people, we sing _____.

Song:

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth (ELW 538, LLC 415)

In Christ There Is No East or West (ELW 650, LBW 359, TFF 214, SBH 342)

When Our Song Says Peace (ELW 709)

Or another hymn about justice or peace.

Prayers

It is also appropriate to substitute locally created prayers, or the prayers of intercession for the day.

Let us pray.

God of new life, you walk with us on the journey of baptism. Be with us in our joys, and in our thanks, no matter how big or small: those in our hearts, those known only to you, and those we name aloud now: *(congregation may name thanks and joys, with care for privacy and consent when mentioning others)*

God of grace, **Receive our prayer.**

God of new birth, you walk with us on the journey of baptism. Be with us in our burdens, our struggles, and our illnesses, no matter how big or small: those in our hearts, those known only to you, and those we name aloud now: *(congregation may name cares and concerns, with care for privacy and consent when mentioning others)*

God of grace, **Receive our prayer.**

God of forgiveness, you walk with us on the journey of baptism. Be with us wherever we are at that journey: at the beginning, newly baptized or newly considering baptism; along the way, with steady or faltering steps; or, nearing the end of our baptismal life. We pray especially for the newly baptized in this congregation, those preparing to affirm their baptism, and those who completed their baptismal journey recently *(including those we name before you now)*.

God of grace, **Receive our prayer.**

God of our salvation, you walk with us on the journey of baptism. Be with us as we live a baptized life, learning to live, hear, share, proclaim, serve, and strive, guided by the prayer that Jesus taught us.

*(congregations pray the Lord's Prayer they know best, ending with...) **Amen.***

SENDING

Option A: Rite of Remembrance of Baptism (omitting the Lord's Prayer if previously prayed)
This rite can be found on the Northeastern Ohio Synod website at neos-elca.org/baptized-living

Option B: Affirmation of Christian Vocation (ELW, p. 84) or **Affirmation of the Vocation of Christians in the World** (LBW Occasional Services, p. 147-148)

We sing the sending song _____.

Sending Song: *O Jesus, I Have Promised* (ELW 810, LBW 503, SBH 515)
 Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song (ELW 808)
 Go, My Children, with My Blessing (WOV 721, TFF 161)
 Or another hymn about baptism and sending.

Dismissal

Go in peace, remember the promises of your baptism!

Thanks be to God.

All may dip their fingers in the water in the font and/or pick up a token of baptism, either at departure or when coming forward for baptismal anointing.

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