

From The Pastor

Baptism

When I was in Afghanistan way back when I learned to be careful when sharing my faith as a Christian, it could have cost me my life. To convert from Islam was to become outcast both from family and from society. The mark of conversion, as far as Afghans were concern, was baptism.

Baptism is what defines our identity as Christians in terms of culture and society. A sacrament for some, an ordinance for others, in truth a mystery (Romans 6:1-11), baptism is at the core of Christian faith. It also has become a litmus test concerning varying distinctives of theology and practice. Do we sprinkle, do we immerse? Do we baptize once and only once or is there more? When I pastored in Texas I became aware that one particular denomination required baptism with church membership. That meant if one had been baptized in another church and decided to move their membership they had to be re-baptized.

And what happens when baptism goes outside the baptismal tank and people experience what is referred to as being baptized in the Holy Spirit even to the evidence of speaking in unknown languages? For some groups even to mention this is to face being ostracized.

For me it's not the form or even the function of baptism that is important but its very essence. What is the essence of baptism and why is it important not only to our identity as Christians but to our ability to manifest God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven? The following are select passages of Scripture that give us an idea of what baptism consists:

"John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:1-4; Matthew 3:1-3)

Baptism of Jesus: *"Jesus answering said to John, 'Permit [my baptism] at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us [Father, Son, Holy Spirit] to fulfill all righteousness'."* (Matthew 3:15; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3: 21-22)

"Jesus answered and said... 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'." (John 3:3, 5)

Baptism from Jesus: *"As for me [John the Baptist] I baptize you with water for repentance, but He [Jesus] who is coming after me is mightier than I...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."* (Matthew 3:11)

"For John [the Baptist] baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:5; 11:16)

"Therefore we have been buried with Him [Jesus] into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become untied with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:4-5)

I have chosen to address the issue of baptism because I was approached by a mother inquiring about when the next baptism class was going to be so her son could be part of it. My response was that because of our small numbers rather than a class I wanted to "tutor" (mentor) anyone interested in being baptized one-on-one and go from there. But there was more involved in my response than low numbers. First, I am aware that for many classes (catechism) about baptism and the concluding baptism on Easter Sunday constitutes more of a rite of passage than it does baptism as ordinance or sacrament. Second, for some baptism is synonymous to salvation even to the fact they keep the "tank" full of water so that if one confesses Jesus as Lord they immerse him/her the same service to prevent loss of salvation due to any unforeseen accident. Third, for some baptism instruction, immersion and church membership are the trifecta of their faith which does not include being "born-again" or baptism as empowerment for ministry giving credence to nominalism at the expense of true Christian faith and practice.

I was baptized in water on Easter Sunday 1955 and it was a very important day in my life. But I also confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior 18 years later giving my life in service to Him and was re-baptized subsequently thereafter. I could go further in sharing experiences of a personal nature but the point is made. Baptism is complex and we need to follow what God has not only given through the Bible but in conjunction with His Holy Spirit. And, it doesn't hurt to get the advice and counsel of those mature in the faith as we enter into the baptism God intends for us.

If any are interested in studying this topic more or are interested in giving their lives to Jesus Christ leading to being baptized, please contact me at the church and let's talk.

Pastor Bud

THOSE SCHEDULED TO SERVE IN MARCH

ELDERS: March 6	Betty Jo Bernow	Ken Mishler
13	Scott Braumiller	Betty Jo Bernow
20	Maria Ford	Scott Braumiller
27	Kraig Gibson	Maria Ford

DEACONS: Amy Barkley	Mindy Bloomfield
Callie Boblenz	Laney Davis
Jamie Boblenz	Tammy Shirk
Colton Bloomfield	Carolyn Owen

CHILDREN'S TALK: March 6	Sheryl Reeve
13	Dorothy Kay
20	Jody Schertzer
27	Carolyn Owen

ACOLYTES: March 6	Allie Seckel
13	Alisha Large
20	
27	Micky Millisor

CHANCEL FLOWERS



Chancel flowers during March are being provided by:

Mar. 6	Available
13	“
20	“
27	“

SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2011

Last Sunday after Epiphany

VALET PARKING is offered by Kathie Sizemore at 8:30 a.m.

COFFEE HOUR begins at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall on the first, second and third Sunday. The fourth Sunday is community breakfast starting at 8:00 a.m. Sunday School follows worship.

FOOD PANTRY - offers a chance for you to help feed the area's hungry. Please bring food staples to help us continue our support of this community ministry.



THE PRAYER BLANKET GROUP will meet every Tuesday at 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. in the parlor. The group is open to everyone who knits, crochets or wants to learn one of these skills. We also welcome donations of yarn, patterns, knitting needles and crochet hooks.

EXERCISE CLASS will meet every Tuesday and Thursday 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

THEN SINGS MY SOUL will meet Tuesday, March 1st at 2 p.m. in the Social Room - hopefully the weather will cooperate! Come and learn about one of Eileen Stephenson's favorite hymns *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder!* We will also talk about two songs by Albert E. Brumley. Okay guys, be prepared and come March 1st and tell me what BOTH of the Brumley songs will be!! (I might even award the winners with a piece of CHOCOLATE!)

RUTH GROUP will meet on Thursday, March 3rd, 1:30 p.m. in the Social Room. All women of the church are invited.

Church Board Date Changed

Due to Mardi Gras being on Tuesday, March 8th, Church Board has been changed to Monday, March 7th, at 7:30 p.m.

Mardi Gras

First United Church of Christ is sharing this celebration with CCC on Tuesday, March 8th, 6:30 p.m. Wear a mask to hide your identity; take it off at the beginning of Lent to symbolize coming to Christ "just as you are." Masquerade...Food...Fun... and a short celebration to prepare us for Lent. Come in costume or you may make a mask when you arrive. Bring the little ones, as it is good wholesome fun and will end around 8:15 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Service

First United Church of Christ will be worshipping with CCC on March 9th; 7:00 p.m.

Gazette Deadline

Tuesday, March 15th; 11:00 a.m.

Articles received in the office AFTER this deadline will be included in the NEXT month's newsletter.

Elders Lenten Prayer and Solitude

During lent each Wednesday from March 16th - April 20th from 6:15 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., a time of prayer and solitude in CCC sanctuary with time to share issues and concerns.

Dialogue with the Truth (Jesus is)

Beginning each Wednesday starting on March 16th at 7:00 p.m. until 8:15 p.m. Pastor Bud will be hosting a unique style of Bible Study for all who wish to be discipled by the Word of God. The format will be to bring your questions, issues of import, open mind and heart for encounters with the Truth God will provide that will prepare you for what God has ahead.

Movie Night

Bring your snacks and enjoy the movie titled "Marmaduke" in the Fellowship Hall 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 17th.

CMF Breakfast

Saturday, March 19th; 7:30 a.m. at Marion Diner
All men of the church are invited.

FLY HIGH WITH BOOKS

We Have Been Blessed

During the past few years we have received bequests from the Bruce and Leffler estate, as well as endowments from the Patrick estate. The Hamilton Trust, as reported in last months *Gazette*, provides funds for use in maintaining our property. During last December and January of this year the Dorothy Thew bequest was received. This was for a \$100,000 endowment. The income from this endowment is to be split between scholarships and a yearly donation to Camp Christian. An additional \$130,000 was received for our “general charitable purposes”. Ms Thew would also like for Central Christian to consider additional donations and scholarships to Camp Christian from this fund. The above endowments and donations as well as commitments through your financial pledges puts Central Christian on a stronger financial foundation. As stated at the start of the Stewardship Campaign, we have three things to give **Time, Talent and Treasures**. We have come a long way in covering the Treasure part, now lets concentrate on **Time and Talent** by getting more active and committed members. Thanks for your support during the stewardship campaign.

Your Finance Committee

Utilities for January, 2011

Columbia Gas	\$1788.63
Ohio Edison	\$ 466.37
Frontier	<u>\$ 186 24</u>
Total	<u>\$2441.24</u>

ALMOST FRIENDS: A Harmony Novel (Philip Gulley)... The latest installment in this series takes the reader back to Indiana where Sam Gardner, the pastor of Harmony Friends Meeting, finds he must take a leave of absence. He isn't sure if the Quakers will want him back and the author tells the story in his usual humorous way.

HEAVENLY HUMOR for the CAT LOVER'S SOUL: 75 Fur-filled Inspirational Readings (several authors)... Two Devotions from this book, Facing the Giants and Early Morning Serenade, were written by Pleasant High School graduate Anna Aquino.

LIFE'S TREE: Lessons on Life (Tate Morgan)...a book of poems that describe lessons learned by the author, a Marion resident, during his journey through life.

-You can read more about these local authors in our library.-

SAVING THE ANTS and 58 other Kids Sermons from the Gospel of Matthew (Ruth Gilmore)...Short stories to use during children's time in the church worship service. Each is based on the texts for the day of the Revised Common Lectionary and many make use of a simple object to illustrate the story. A good resource that includes a CD-ROM.

Prayer Concerns

Members

Dorothy Besch
Joe Burns
Kraig Gibson
Esther Kingsley
Betty Leib
Charlotte Miller

Joel Reeve
John Roush
Earl & Hilda Smith
Kay Whitehead
Millie Zug

Non-members

Pam Arnold (*J. Schertzer*)
Carol Beegle (*Besch*)
Carolyn Bryant (*Tidd*)
Skip Collins (*Tidd*)
Vonnie Dendinger (*Obenour*)
Brenda Dye (*Ford*)
Tracy Graziani (*J. Schertzer*)
Leslie Hamilton (*Middaugh*)
Micki High (*Tidd*)
Simeon Hill (*Hill*)
Sue Hoover (*Middaugh*)
Derek Humbert (*Middaugh*)
Floyd Jones (*Middaugh*)
Thelma Knapp (*Middaugh*)
Sarah Mallory (*M. Holliday*)
Ryan Mann (*Reeve*)
Theresa Moran (*Willoby*)
Beth Nowlin (*Besch*)
Jane Ratterman (*Tidd*)
Pearl Rogers (*Besch*)
Helen Swinehart (*Frye*)
Evelyn Thomas (*Miller*)
Bob Walker (*Sizemore*)
Dan Weary (*Tidd*)
Jayne Williams (*Obenour*)
Pete Zimmerman (*Besch*)

Military: Jonathan Gorenflo (*Barnhart*), Kevin Kirk (*Kirk*),
Jason Knotts (*Owen*)

OUR SYMPATHY TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF . . .

Barb Lusch

who passed away February 16, 2011

THANK YOU TO . . .

- **Libby Davis and Brenda Reish** for helping in the church office.
- **All those who** for clean the sidewalks.

THANK YOU NOTES . . .

Many, many thanks for the wonderful cards for my 90th birthday, and that is me Gene, and we both loved every card for our 68th anniversary. We anxiously waited for the mail each day. Plans are for them to be put in two scrap books. Our church family is very important to us and we love every one of you.

Loads of Love and best wishes, **Gene and Charlotte Miller**

I would like to thank everyone for the cards, calls and prayers during my illness and surgery. A special thanks to Pastor Bud for his calls and visits, and to Brenda Reish and the kids for their many cards.

Yours in Christ, **Bob England**

Central Christian Church:

Thank you so very much for the hats, gloves and socks that you donated to Marion City school district. We appreciate your support, as so many of our students come to school without any gloves or hats.

Thanks again, **Becky Gilliam**

**CCC CELEBRATES
MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**

Happy Anniversary!

- 9 Frank & Janice Middaugh
19 Harold & Vickie Rorick
28 Tim & Amy Cantrell

Happy Birthday!

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Craig Schertzer | 20 | Rick Shirk |
| 3 | Marilyn Dillon | 21 | Jeff Beam II |
| | Jane Sharrock | 24 | Carolyn Owen |
| 5 | Janie Milligan | 26 | Anabella Votaw |
| 6 | Sabastian Fortney | 28 | Laura Miller |
| 7 | Terry Comstock | 29 | Genevieve Seckel |
| | Shanda Hecker | 31 | Wanda Jarvis |
| 10 | Michelle Markley | | Ronald Williams |
| 11 | Cheryl Obenour | | |
| 12 | Amy Barkley | | |
| 13 | Kim Kingsley | | |
| 14 | Brett McAllister | | |
| 15 | Jamie Boblenz | | |
| | Pat Mishler | | |
| | Erik Reish | | |
| | Dan Hord | | |
| 17 | Millie Zug | | |
| 19 | Kraig Gibson | | |
| | Savanah Butler | | |
| | Brandon Large | | |

*If you have a birthday and/or
an anniversary in March and
it does not appear on the list
above, please contact the
church office immediately so
we may update our files and
include it in the future.
Thanks!*

Why Ash Wednesday?

Traditionally, the Christian Church has observed the seven weeks before Easter as a time of penitence and spiritual self-examination.

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, derives its name from the unused palm branches of the previous year.

Ashes historically have had a dual significance. First, they are Old Testament symbols of sadness and humility. Job, in the midst of all his troubles, cried out to God from the ash heap. The second symbolic meaning of ashes is as a reminder of our mortality. Each of us faces the inevitability of physical death. Our bodies and material possessions eventually will turn to dust and ashes. This is a reminder that we dare not trust in things that crumble. But Lent does not leave us on the ash heap.

It begins with Ash Wednesday, but ends with Easter. And Easter proclaims that through Christ, God resurrects us from our dust and ashes, makes us new creatures, and brings life out of death!

“You are Dust and to Dust You will Return”

This ancient formula will be heard by Christians all over the world this Lenten Season.