

FLOWING WATER, LIVING WORD:

A BAPTISMAL JOURNEY OF DISCERNING GOD'S MISSION
FOR THE CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

LENT 1: LIVING WATER- YOU MAKE US YOUR OWN

BISHOP CANDEA

GOD WHO IS RICH IN MERCY AND LOVE, GIVES US A NEW BIRTH INTO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM . . . BY WATER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT WE ARE REBORN CHILDREN OF GOD AND MADE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

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We have been made God's own through the living waters of baptism. Our baptism is not a stagnate, one-time event that assures us of eternal salvation, like having a magic ticket that has been punched. It is the living, refreshing, renewing, hopeful, and powerful love of God poured in and over our lives every day, transforming who we are day after day, carrying us more deeply into our true identities as God's children and into God's mission and purpose for us as individuals and as a community.

Romans 6:3-5 ³*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* ⁴*Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.* ⁵*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

Titus 3:5-6 ⁵*he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.* ⁶*This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior . . .*

Questions for reflection:

- How are you being called to walk in "newness of life" this Lenten season?
- How is the church being called to walk in "newness of life?"
- Imagine yourself in a stream of gently flowing water – this is the Spirit flowing around you. How does this water feel? Where is this water carrying you? Where is this water carrying your church?

Prayer

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family, and through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you set us free from the power of sin and death and raise us up to live in you.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, the power of your living Word, that during this season of Lent we might turn to you and experience renewal in our identity as your children. Wash away all that keeps us from you and draw us ever close to your purpose and mission in our lives. To you be given honor and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

AMEN

Based upon Thanksgiving at the Font, ELW page 230