

Baptism is a gift from God, in Christ. There is nothing we can do to earn, deserve, or purchase baptism. The mystery of faith is that God's act of self-giving is offered to us freely, long before we begin to recognize, want, or understand it.

Through baptism we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. The power of sin has been broken and the power of death is overcome. In Christ we are cleansed, forgiven, healed, reborn. The signs of death and life represented in the water of baptism are to be remembered and celebrated with thanksgiving until, at the time of our own death, the promises are fully realized and we enter life beyond death.

Our age at baptism is not significant. Where we are baptized as infants or adults, we are as babes in the faith, called to grow and mature into full stature with Christ. We are children of the covenant. In baptism we are joined to the body of Christ, the church. We are anointed with the Spirit and appointed to be a royal priesthood, serving Christ and one another in the world.

At St. Giles, baptism is always a public event, administered during a worship service. It is an initiation into the household of God, a new family relationship is formed. While our true home is heavenward, but we give thanks to God for finding a home here on earth at St. Giles, a home away from home in the journeys of faith.

Christian marriage bears witness to the love and will of God for the whole of creation and for the social order. The covenant made between the two partners is private, but it is also a public covenant made before God and witnesses. It upholds the ideal of equality and mutuality between the marriage partners. It is a relationship rooted in faithfulness and self-giving love. In a Christian marriage, we are reminded of the faithful God who entered into covenant with a beloved people. As Christ loves the Church, the marriage partners are reminded to love one another, and to hold fast to God promises and blessings for them, as they look towards the coming kingdom of God.

Many couples have been wedded at St. Giles through the years. We are humbled and thankful to God that many of them are still going strong, and some continue be members of this caring community of faith. "The church is the family of God. Here all should be valued for themselves. We are one body in Christ: together rejoicing when things go well, supporting one another in sorrow, celebrating the goodness of God and the wonder of our redemption." (Living Faith 8.2.6)

(By the Rev. Paul Wu)