

*“Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.
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 water and your Word you claim us as your own children,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.”**
--Thanksgiving for Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, page 97*

When did you last consider your baptism as a matter of life and death? Holy Baptism, as a sacrament of the church, communicates God’s grace through the tangible, earthly element of water, making each person one with the Body of Christ and making us siblings of one another. We are connected to God and to our ancestors in the faith not by the blood of inheritance but by water and God’s Word.

That’s a lot for water to do! Being connected to God’s Word through the stories of Scripture means telling and re-telling the stories of our faith ancestors and how God saved them through water. This is why when we begin worship with a “Thanksgiving for Baptism,” we reference water stories like Noah, like the ancient Israelites passing through the Red Sea into safety, and like Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River.

The stories we tell about our ancestors remind us where we have come from and, to some degree, tell us who we are. Perhaps you have family stories about parents or grandparents, maybe they were people of faith in God or maybe not. It’s important to take time to remember who raised you in life and who taught you about Jesus.

Our culture celebrates Mother’s Day in May, which can be nice, but it isn’t specifically a holy day in our church calendar. Instead of a saying a blessing for mothers and those who provide motherly care, we’ll broaden the acknowledgement to all of our ancestors, giving thanks for those who raised us and who taught us the faith.

Can you name your first Sunday School teacher? Did you have baptismal sponsors, and did they play a role in your life? What’s the first hymn or song you learned at church, and who might have taught you? Was there anyone in your home who sang hymns often? Did you ever have a camp counselor or a retreat leader you really admired? Who’s a spiritual director who helped you discern the path where God has called you?

In this season of Easter, we will remember the “storied waters” of baptism, and give thanks for water and God’s Word, which is what unites us as a family of faith.

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