

With the placing of hands on each person reaffirming faith:

Name, the Holy Spirit work within you,
that having been born through water and the Spirit,
you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

RECEPTION INTO THE LOCAL CONGREGATION:

The pastor addresses candidate(s):

As a member of Christ's universal Church,
will you be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church,
and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?

I will.

As a member of this congregation,
will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers,
your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?

I will.

COMMENDATION AND WELCOME

The pastor addresses the congregation:

Members of the household of God,
I commend these persons to your love and care.

The congregation responds:

As members together with you in the body of Christ we renew our covenant to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness; that in everything God may be glorified.

The choir offers *Come By Here*, a sung blessing. Meanwhile, please exchange God's peace with all persons present.

Boulevard United Methodist Church



“I think one of the difficulties of living in our age is that we're offered a lot of things as substitutes for honest-to-goodness relationships, and while they may be pretty good at what they were designed for, they're finally not actual relationships.”

David Lose, Luther Theological Seminary

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Richmond, Virginia 23220
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THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (Matthew 28)

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

INTRODUCTION

A deacon or pastor addresses the congregation:

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

Through the Sacrament of Baptism

we are initiated into Christ's holy Church.

We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation
and given new birth through water and the Spirit.

All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Through the reaffirmation of our faith,
we renew the covenant declared at our baptism,
acknowledge what God is doing for us,
and affirm our commitment to Christ's holy Church.

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR HOLY BAPTISM

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

The pastor addresses parents and other sponsors:

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?

I do.

Will you nurture this child in Christ's holy Church, that by your teaching and example he may be guided to accept God's grace for himself, to profess his faith openly, and to lead a Christian life?

I will.

A deacon or the pastor addresses the congregation:

Do you, as Christ's body, the Church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ?

We do.

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?

With God's help we will live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

All may stand.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Eternal God:

When nothing existed but chaos,
you swept across the dark waters
and brought forth light.

In the days of Noah

you saved those on the ark through water.

After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow.

When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt,
you led them to freedom through the sea.

Their children you brought through the Jordan
to the land which you promised.

In the fullness of time you sent Jesus,
nurtured in the water of a womb.

He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit.

He called his disciples

to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection
and to make disciples of all nations.

All praise to you, Almighty God!

Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this gift of water and those who receive it, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in his final victory. **Amen.**

BAPTISM WITH LAYING ON OF HANDS

Water is administered as the pastor says:

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

With the placing of hands on the candidate's head:

The Holy Spirit work within you, that having been born through water and the Spirit, you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Here water may be used as the deacon or pastor says:

Remember your baptism and be thankful. **Amen.**



Crossing Boulevard

with Rev. Rachel

27 **CANDACE, QUEEN OF THE ETHIOPIANS** Acts 8

Much is inside out and upside down, here. Head into this text like you would the Tilt-A-Whirl and I'll pray this time: God grant us something other than nausea.

First of all, Candace *can't* be a biblical name. Candace, queen of the Ethiopians—what I else have I missed?

About this ride and rider: It couldn't have been normal for treasury department officials to go to Jerusalem for the day "to worship". Via chariot? All that talk of Jesus and the disciples walking from town to town...guess I lost sight of the fact that people did have wheels.

"So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah." He *heard* him. The one doing the reading was traveling solo. But Philip, who had to run to get close, could hear him.

How in the heck did this reading-out-loud-for-nobody character get his hands on a copy of the Book of Isaiah? This is pre-Bible, y'all. Scrolls weren't tossed to the masses.

Moving along, if Philip is taking orders from an angel and the Spirit...that's a lot. I have a hard time pleasing *one* entity. And if the Spirit really snatched Philip away after Philip proved obedient, well, that's not very nice.

Tell me, when's the last time the preacher preached Azotus? I must've missed that Sunday. It sounds like the name of a local spa and/or Chinese restaurant.

In case it is hard to tell, there's no resentment in my voice. I am profoundly grateful for a tradition that escapes mastery. Sweet are the moments that Scripture throws us for a loop.

I cherish the thought of promising two babies and three adults this Sunday that I will be faithful to the family that tells these sorts of stories over supper. And I love the fact that ministry often means reasonable, sensible people with 'you can't make this stuff up' written all over their faces.

Friends. we are people of Word and Table. Feast on~

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.