

From the ELCA's Executive for Worship



Christ is risen. Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

*Let the sound flow into our ears and the truth stream into our hearts.
And do not be afraid to cry.
If you are a new creature in Christ you will be happy in your tears.*
– Gerard S. Sloyan

This quote from Gerard Sloyan was true for me during the Easter Vigil that I attended this year. I felt my eyes swell with tears, not only at the beauty of the service and of the night itself, but the baptism of an adult. Those of us already baptized renewed our baptismal vows and deepened our commitment to our baptismal callings.

As the baptismal candidate was submerged and the water splashed all around, the look on his face was glorious. He smiled and was not afraid to cry. He was a new creature in Christ. Or as John B. Geyer says, "A new creation comes to life and grows as Christ's new body takes on flesh and blood." As the church gathered that evening for the Easter Vigil and stood in the liminal and even paradoxical space between Good Friday and Easter, between death and life, Jesus dying and rising, the presiding minister reminded the assembly: "The font is both a tomb and a womb of new birth."

Martin Luther reminds us what a gift baptism is for each of us: "What then is the significance of such baptism with water? It signifies that the old person in us, with all sins and evil desires, is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." What a gift baptism is for each of us, that daily we rise to live before God.

Baptism is a beautiful gift and shows forth God's grace for each of us. How is this gift made visible in your assemblies' worship? Not just in the Vigil, but throughout the liturgical year. Each and every time we are able to draw people to the water and give thanks for baptism, we give thanks for the water that nourished us in the womb, watery rescues that we recall from salvation history in Scripture, the water in this font, and for the water that has or will be poured onto the bodies of the baptized.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.