

Baptism Celebration of Karen S. Amspacher

Today we gather in this celebration of Baptism. Baptism symbolizes the renunciation of the past sinful way of life and the emergence of a new spirit living with Christ's mind and following in his footsteps. My view of our faith is the day to day living out of our commitment to the way of Christ that is our faithfulness to what we promise. I was baptized as an infant - as my parents' promises to the church were fulfilled and carried out; being brought up in the Christian faith. For some time I had doubts of who God really is, as I am sure all or most of you have had. But now I feel as though my faith has escalated into something more than I ever anticipated. Simply put... God is speaking and calling me. God and I had some long talks throughout this past year, as I experienced many ups and downs. It is true when someone said, you will know and appreciate God when you think you are at your lowest, and how true that is! God is amazing! God is an awesome spiritual presence among each and everyone of us! Matthew 3: 13-15 tells the story of Jesus's Baptism.

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

Scripture tells us, "to fulfill all righteousness", which means to accomplish what God gave Him to do. Jesus saw his baptism as furthering God's work.

Through this past Lenten season, I have become a stronger individual. I learned to pray and practice my faith on a regular basis. I learned that everyone that is standing here today to witness all play a vital and important role in my life. Because of you, I am here today....announcing my declaration and confession of my faith and furthering God's work.

It is simply asking God to bless us to go out and properly represent Jesus Christ. It is done in the spirit of 2 Timothy 1:6-7 (where Paul tells Timothy to stir up the gift that is within you), asking God to stir up our spiritual gifts, to send us forth again in his name to do a more powerful work. Our spiritual gift is that part of us that contains our life and our identity. It contains our beliefs and values. Beliefs are those, which we strongly hold. (Remember that every belief carries a value - the stronger the belief; the higher the value). These beliefs and values are consistently shifting and altering as I encounter new alternatives and experience the changing landscape of life; new directives of the spirit of God. I know now that our beliefs govern our choices and decisions, which then affect our response and actions in the world.

The Holy Spirit has moved me. Pastor John and I have had long talks about different ideas that I have brainstormed, all in God's work. Some of the ideas I construed worked, some failed. But Jesus' almighty love keeps reminding me to never give up, especially when he is bringing me to these different "points" in my life.

For me, our Christian walk is the process of becoming a better person, as I attempt to live in the way of Jesus Christ. With your help and support, I declare my decision of expressing my faith here today and I pray for your continual pledge of support through my journey of faith, love, and life with Jesus Christ my Savior. Amen.