

I Place my Heart in God
Reflecting on the Baptismal Covenant in Community
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In Baptism God gives us the gift of new life and invites us to follow Jesus in his way of loving service.

The promises we make in the Baptismal Liturgy can offer a “road map” for our life-long response to, and growth in, God's free gifts of faith and grace.

When children and other candidates are presented for baptism, their sponsors (including parents and godparents) promise to pray for them, care for them, help them take their place in the life and worship of the Church, draw them into friendship with God by example, and walk with them in the way of Christ. With each baptism, the whole Church is renewed in the Baptismal Covenant and promises to welcome, uphold, and accompany those baptized in a life-long journey of faith.

Reflection & Prayer Practice

Center Yourself

Place an object or symbol that reminds you of baptism in general or a particular baptismal promise (a bowl of water, a stone, a candle, a cross, a plant, etc.) somewhere you will see it frequently throughout the week (your desk, your bathroom counter, your kitchen table, your car dashboard.)

Use the phrase “I place my heart and trust in God” (or another phrase from the Baptismal Liturgy) as a mantra or “breath prayer” throughout the day. Pray the phrase as you deeply inhale. Pray the phrase as you deeply exhale. Repeat.

Give thanks for God's Gifts in Baptism. In baptism...
We are buried with Christ in his death.
We share in his resurrection.
We are reborn by the Holy Spirit.
We have been given the forgiveness of sin and raised to a new life of grace.
We are marked as Christ's own forever

Pray Pray for yourself and for your “god” child(ren). These may include your own children and godchildren, the children of our congregation and community, or any other children for whom you care, or any adults who consider you a spiritual mentor or friend. Consider using one of the prayers from the Baptismal Liturgy (attached).

Contemplate one of the Baptismal Promises

- **Week 1—Baptismal Promise:** *I place my heart and trust in God*
- **Week 2— Baptismal Promise:** *I will continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers*
- **Week 3- Baptismal Promise:** *I will resist evil, and forgive others as I am forgiven*
- **Week 4— Baptismal Promise:** *I will proclaim by word and action the good news of God*
- **Week 5— Baptismal Promise:** *I will seek and serve Christ in all persons, and loving my neighbor as myself*
- **Week 6— Baptismal Promise:** *I will defend the weak, and seek peace and justice*

Ask yourself What might/did I do today as a concrete expression of my growth in this promise?
What might/did I do to support others in this promise?

Journal Take time to jot down your experience of this week's practice. What did you think of?
What did you do? What did you notice? What do you want to remember?

Readings for Parents & Godparents of Younger Children & Youth

Suggested readings (specifically for parents and godparents of young children) come from [Taking the Plunge: Baptism & Parenting](#) by Anne E. Kitch and [Godparenting: Nurturing the Next Generation](#) by Nancy Ann McLaughlin and Tracey E. Herzer.

Week 1—Baptismal Promise: I place my heart and trust in God

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Introduction & Part I; McLaughlin & Herzer: Intro, Ch.1, 2, 8

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism “We place our heart and trust in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing when/where/how *you* place your heart and trust in God. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Week 2— Baptismal Promise: I will continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Ch. 7; McLaughlin & Herzer: Ch. 3

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism we promise, with God's help, to “continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing concrete opportunities in your everyday life to put it into practice. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Week 3- Baptismal Promise: I will resist evil, and forgive others as I am forgiven

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Ch. 8; McLaughlin & Herzer: Ch. 4

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism we promise, with God's help, to “resist evil and forgive others as we are forgiven.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing concrete opportunities in your everyday life to put it into practice. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Week 4— Baptismal Promise: I will proclaim by word and action the good news of God

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Ch. 9; McLaughlin & Herzer: Ch. 5

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism we promise, with God's help, to “proclaim by word and action the good news of God in Christ.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing concrete opportunities in your everyday life to put it into practice. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Week 5— Baptismal Promise: I will seek and serve Christ in all persons, and loving my neighbor as myself

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Ch. 10 ; McLaughlin & Herzer: Ch. 6

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism we promise, with God's help, to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our enemies as ourselves.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing concrete opportunities in your everyday life to put it into practice. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Week 6— *Baptismal Promise: I will defend the weak, and seek peace and justice*

Suggested Reading: Kitch: Ch. 11 ; McLaughlin & Herzer: Ch.7

Reflection/Prayer Practice:

- In baptism we promise, with God's help, to “pray for leaders, defend the weak, and seek peace and justice.” Spend the week meditating on this promise and noticing concrete opportunities in your everyday life to put it into practice. Reflect on how you might support the deepening of this promise: in yourself, in your “godchildren”, and in the children of our community. Jot down ideas and insights.

Prayers from our Baptismal Liturgy

Great for use in praying for yourself as well as children, "godchildren", and spiritual friends.

May Christ dwell in *their* hearts through faith, that *they* may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Amen.

May *they* shine with truth and love so that people everywhere may know God and be drawn to friendship with God. Amen.

May *they* continually grow in love and friendship with God, growing brighter and brighter as *they* turn into the image that *they* reflect. Amen.

God of mercy and love,
grant that *they* may grow into the fullness of Christ.
Fill *them* with the joy of your presence.
Increase in *them* the fruit of your Spirit:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of love, patience, and gentleness,
the spirit of wonder and true holiness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Heavenly Father/Mother,
Sustain *them* in your Holy Spirit.
Give *them* an inquiring and discerning heart,
the courage to will and to persevere,
a spirit to know and love you,
and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.