

## St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church

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### "Baptism – So what's the Big Deal?"

The Rev. Fr. Richard Molison, Preacher

June 11-12, 2016

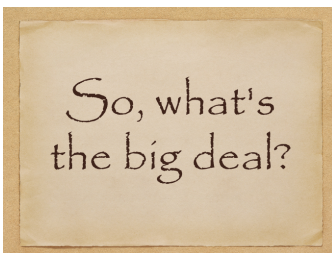
Today (Sunday) is a very special day for me, for I will have the privilege of baptizing my first great granddaughter, Allison Jo Chiaravalle. This occasion offers an excellent opportunity to briefly share the significance of Holy Baptism.

#### #2 "Baptism"



Baptism.

#### #3 "So what's ..."



So what's the big deal? It must be a big deal, for Allison Jo will have new clothes, a large contingent of family is (will be) present. Some members of the family will have traveled a fare distance to be here. Allison's home is decorated for an after service family and guest gathering. Many family members have accepted the

responsibility of preparing special foods to be served. Much fellowship to be enjoyed. So something is up. Apparently what is about to occur is a big deal.

#### #4 Water being poured



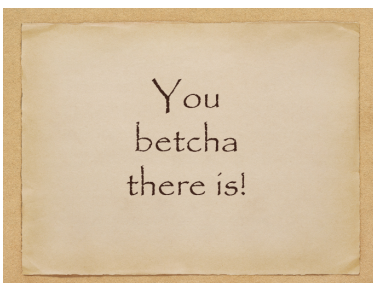
Is there something more happening than just water being poured over Allison's head, prayers to be said,

#### #5 Anointing



and anointing to be done?

#### #6 "You Betcha..."



You betcha there is.

And to begin to understand why, it is necessary to take a look at a brief history of this sacrament. It would be natural to assume that the sacrament of baptism as we have come to know it began with the Baptism of Jesus, or possibly with that of

John the Baptist. Neither is the case. How did John the Baptist know about baptism in the first place?

For centuries, before John the Baptist, the ancient Hebrew people formulated a ritual of baptism for those converting to the Jewish faith. This ritual was called **Tvilah**, a Jewish rite of purification by immersion into water. A major difference of this rite compared to what we know as a Christian baptism is that **Tvilah** could be repeated more than once. Baptism for Allison Jo, as well as for the rest of us, is not to be repeated. The baptism we experienced is indissoluble, not to be undone or repeated. Baptism is an indelible seal upon the soul of the baptized. A statement we read at the opening of the baptismal service is from the Epistle of Paul written to the Church at Ephesus and states we have:

#### #8 'One Lord...'



**“one Lord, one faith, one baptism,”**

For John the Baptist, a ritual of baptism was already in place in the Jewish tradition when he began his ministry. However, the major emphasis of John the Baptist’s ministry was not aimed at converting others to Judaism. His ministry was **to** the Jews. John’s baptism was a baptism of forgiveness, a baptism of repentance of sins. Remember John proclaimed to the Jewish people “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Messiah is coming! In other words, cleanse yourselves of sin, for the Messiah is coming. Get ready! Prepare yourselves!

The baptism of Jesus, however, changed everything.

## #10 Baptism of Jesus



When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John, who knew Jesus to be the Messiah, admitted that he, John, ought to be baptized by Jesus! Jesus responded that it is fitting for John to baptize him at this time.

Some of you may be thinking, “Wait a minute. Jesus never sinned. Then why baptism by John? A very good question. Jesus totally and completely identified Himself with sinners. He ultimately bore our sins on the cross. This first public act of Jesus’ ministry was a necessary part of the righteousness he secures for sinners, for all of us. Being immerse in the water symbolized His death. His rising from the water symbolized His resurrection. Jesus identified with those whose sin He would bear on the cross.

Ah, but the baptism of Jesus proved to be not just any run of the mill occasion.

## #11 The Presence of the Trinity



Coming up out of the water, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove lighting upon His head. A voice from heaven declared, **“This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.”**

The term **Trinity** does not appear anywhere in the Scriptures, but at Jesus' Baptism, all three person of the Trinity, all three persons of the Godhead, were present: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Wow! If all three persons of the Godhead appeared at the baptism of Jesus, then the sacrament of baptism must be a big deal, an event that ought to be given much credence and value. Tragically, this is not always the case.

All three synoptic gospels share the account of the baptism of Jesus, validating that event. We can read about His baptism in Matthew, Mark and Luke's writings. For Jesus Himself, baptism meant a great deal. For He stated in John's Gospel, 3:5: **"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (the repentance of one's sins) and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

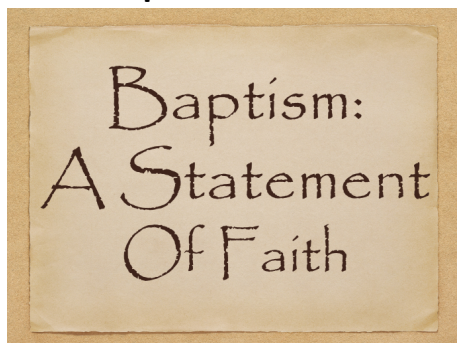
#### #12 "Baptized in the Name..."



Therefore, all are to be baptized the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

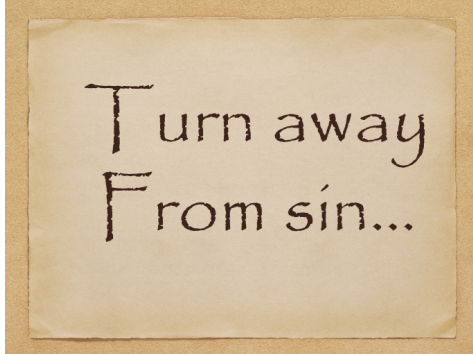
So, what does all this mean for us in the here and now?

#### #13 Baptism is a statement...



First of all, Baptism is a statement of faith.

**#14 Turn away from sin**



It is promised that we will turn away from sin, turn away from Satan, and from all that moves us away from God.

**#15 Commit to follow Jesus**



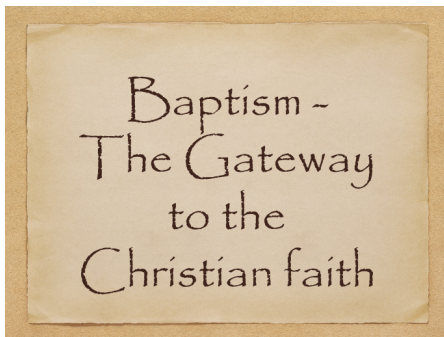
It is then promised that we commit ourselves to following Jesus and the apostles' teachings. Through baptism, we share in the new life of the Holy Spirit.

**#16 New Creation**



St. Paul writes that through baptism, we become a new creation. The gospel declares that we are born from above, which enables us to have a relationship with God, who is our creator, redeemer, and sustainer of the Church.

### #17 Baptism – gateway



Baptism is an initiation, a gateway into the Christian faith.

### #18 New Name



It is a matter of fact the newly baptized gets a new name – Christian! Allison Jo is to be known as a Christian first, worshipping in the Anglican tradition.

### #19 Baby

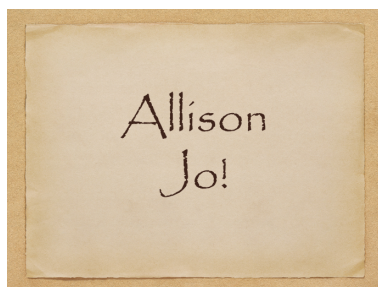


There are some who argue that baptizing infants is not appropriate. It is their argument that infants are not able to believe and therefore, to the baby, meaningless. Their question is, "Why not wait until the child reaches an age of

understanding and asks to be baptized?” If we were to follow this reasoning, then we would not inoculate or vaccinate the baby against diseases such as diphtheria until the child asks for it, which could prove to be tragic. God’s love for Allison Jo began at the moment of conception, before Michael and Janelle ever knew and loved her. From the prophet Jeremiah, we read: **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you;”** As we are wanted and loved by God from the very beginning, nothing shows the nature of God’s grace more than infant baptism.

During her baptism,

#### #20 “Allison Jo!”



Allison Jo is called by name, a sign of a personal family relationship with Jesus. Not only is she to be in fellowship with Christ, but Allison also is united to all of you, her body of Christ, the Church.

#### #21 We stated...



Remember, we are asked if we, the Church, will support her in her life and walk with the Lord. Everyone, then, is expected to participate in the life of not only Allison Jo, but for all the baptized here.

#### #22 Sponsors – God Parents

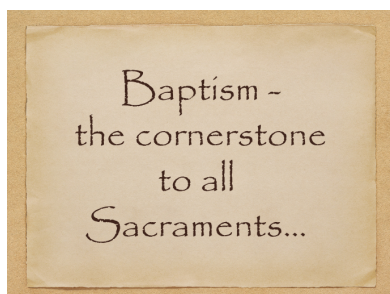




In this slide, seen are parents and sponsors, or also known as godparents, standing around the font. The history of god parents, or sponsors, dates well into the times of the early Church, during those cruel and horrible days of the Christian persecution. The term sponsor is derived from the root Greek word *spondere*, which means “to promise.” During the horrible years of Christian persecution, Christian parents were fearful for their lives. To assure that their children would be taught the Word of the Lord and brought up in the Christian faith, parents would seek those who promised and assured them that if they were to perish, the children would be taken care of.

Thanks be to God, we no longer fear persecution to the degree experienced by those of the early Church, yet! However, tragic instances of loss of parents do occur. Thus, sincere and loving sponsors, or god parents, are very important in the life of the baptized. It is expected that god parents will assume a profound interest and special interest in the life of, in this instance, Allisson Jo. They are to set an example of Christian life. God parents are expected to assist in the teaching of the faith, which include but not limited to the prayers, the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, the Ten Commandments, and especially in keeping the promises made at her baptism. All the baptized are expected to share in the mission of the body of Christ to which they belong. Being asked to sponsor, to be a god parent to Allisson Jo, (or to any one else) is an honor to be sure, but not a position to lightly enter. Being a godparent is a serious commitment.

## **#23 Baptism – Cornerstone**



Baptism, the first sacrament, leads to all the other sacraments. It is the foundation upon which our faith matures the foundation of all future participation and ministry. Baptism cleanses us from all sin, opens to us fellowship with Christ, makes us children of God, and most importantly, to share eternal life with our redeemer.

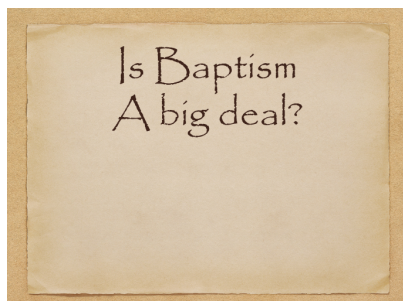
#### #24 Baptism - Gateway...



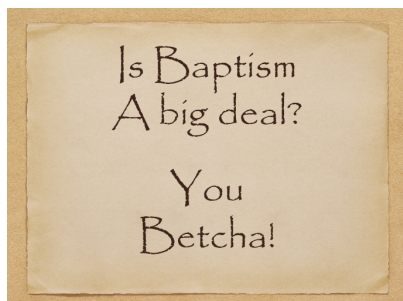
Baptism is called the gateway to life through the Holy Spirit.

Martin Luther wrote in 1529: "To put it most simply, the power, the effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince or princess, but as the words say, to be "saved." To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever."

#### #25 ?????



Is baptism a big deal? I respond with the same answer as before –

**#26 Response**

"You betcha!"