

On Sunday May 21, 2006 you are invited to participate with us in a service called Affirmation of Baptism. During that service the entire congregation will affirm that the waters of Baptism are still an important part of our lives. Together we will remember that God has reached out and touched us in a way that reminds us with certainty that we are loved and forgiven.

On that day, those who have completed this course of study we call Catechism will be invited to receive special recognition. Before you do so, it is important for you to understand what Affirmation of Baptism is, and whether or not it is appropriate for you to participate in such a service.

To help you decide whether or not to participate, we will get together as a group on Sunday, December 18 for an hour or so of conversation. During my time away this Winter, each of you will develop your personal faith statement. Then when I return, I'll get together with you individually to talk about your essays, and the role you imagine your faith will play in your life.

The following questions are to help you write a personal statement of faith. I am asking you go compose three essays. Each essay should be about 300 to 500 words. But more than length, I am most interested to see you articulate as clearly and carefully as possible what you believe about your God, your faith, and your relationship to the church. The essay questions will be due on Saturday, April 1st. You can leave them on my desk, or place them in my box in the Secretary's office.

Part One: Baptism and Faith

Write an essay on one of the following topics. Possible resources for ideas might include The Small Catechism by Martin Luther; conversations with your parent(s); the following Bible passages: John 3:16, Luke 15:11-32, Romans 6:3-11, Galatians 3:26-29.

Topics (choose one):

1. What does my Baptism mean to me?
2. How does a person become "saved"?
3. Can any person be forgiven? Why or why not? Can any sin be forgiven? Why or why not?

Part Two: Confirmation / Affirmation of Baptism

Write an essay on one of the following topics. Possible resources for ideas might include *Affirmation of Baptism* (Lutheran Book of Worship, pages 198-201); conversations with your parent(s).

Topics (choose one):

1. Why do I want to be a member of Christ's church?
2. What activities does the *Affirmation of Baptism* service commend to us?
3. What does *Affirmation of Baptism* have to do with Baptism?

Part Three: Adult membership in Jesus Christ's Church

Write an essay on one of the following topics. Possible resources for ideas might include conversations with your parent(s); and the following Bible Passages: Luke 10:29-37, John 13:1-20, Romans 12:1-8, First Corinthians 12:31-13:13.

Topics (choose one):

1. How will being an adult member of Christ's Church change my life?
2. How should an adult Christian relate to the world?
3. In what ways should an adult Christian support his or her local congregation?