

*We are so prone to forget, so quick to be distracted, so slow to repent. The ordinances give us an opportunity to declare to others and ourselves that the cross is our everything. Thank you God for the internal reality of grace that has changed us through the death of your Son that baptism represents. Thank you God for the ongoing reality of grace that daily changes us because of the death of your Son that communion represents. Never let us forget the glory of the cross and the blessings that overflow to us!*

*· Leroy Community Chapel Statement of Faith – Article VIII*

**“To commemorate the work of salvation, we celebrate two ceremonies (ordinances of the faith); (1) baptism, as a symbol of our cleansing and our new identity as Christians by entering into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and (2) the Lord’s Supper, as a symbol of our commitment to the work of redemption – secured through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 8:36-38; Rom 6:1-5; I Cor 11: 17-32)”**

• Historic Church Documents

- Belgic Confession (1618)

“We believe that our good God, mindful of our crudeness and weakness, has ordained sacraments for us to seal his promises in us, to pledge his good will and grace toward us, and also to nourish and sustain our faith. He has added these to the Word of the gospel to represent better to our external senses both what he enables us to understand by his Word and what he does inwardly in our hearts, confirming in us the salvation he imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. So they are not empty and hollow signs to fool and deceive us, for their truth is Jesus Christ, without whom they would be nothing. Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments that Christ our Master has ordained for us. There are only two: the sacrament of baptism and the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ.” [Article 33]

- Baptist Confession (1689)

“Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.” [Chapter 29, Paragraph 1-4]

“The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and showing to all the world the sacrifice of himself in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the cross, once for all; and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, in other words, the body and blood of Christ, albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.” [Chapter 30, Paragraph 1-2, 5]

*· Key Terms & Definitions*

**Sacraments** ® This word is also used to describe the ordinances, but most often in Protestant non-liturgical churches we use the term ordinances to distinguish these from sacramentalism (these and other activities as a means of grace). We do meet with God in a unique way through the practice of the ordinances, yet they are not a conduit by which we receive grace outside of the completed work of Christ and His Word. These are the two activities that the Scriptures commend to the Church to practice until the Lord returns. They both are outward signs of inward realities and are to be celebrated by God's people as public, corporate declarations of God's work in the individual life.

**Immersion** ® This describes the mode of baptism practiced whereby the baptismal candidate is completely put under the water, signifying the death of self and identifying with the death of Christ. Then he/she is raised out of the water, signifying the newness of life that has already occurred by faith and identifying with the resurrection of Christ that all believers will share in. The water is a picture of having already been cleansed from sin by the work of Jesus. We practice believers (those who have already expressed faith in Christ) baptism by immersion at Leroy Chapel. Salvation does not occur at baptism, but publicly displays externally the inward reality of regeneration. We believe this is the best understanding of baptism from the Scriptures based on the very definition of the Greek word 'baptizo' meaning 'to plunge, dip, immerse'. In addition this was the very mode by which our Lord and Savior was baptized by John the Baptist in Mark 1:4-11. You don't go down into a river (The Jordan River) to get a little wet (sprinkled or poured), but to be 'immersed'. I would note here that for a believer who for whatever reason was unable to get to water other modes (pouring) could be used because the inward reality of Christ's work is the central issue, not merely the external sign.

**Christening** ® In the Roman Catholic Church they 'christen' children believing that baptism is necessary for salvation and that this very act causes regeneration. They believe that baptism is a means by which the Church dispenses saving grace on people. They would say that even though the infant doesn't yet have faith that the faith of the Church replaces the child's faith. This is why only a priest can baptize. This and the other sacraments in the Roman Catholic perspective carry grace to individuals regardless of the actual faith of the individual. This makes sense then why many in the Roman Catholic Church participate but have no real, internal, personal faith in Jesus ... it doesn't matter so long as the Church imparts the grace and makes up where their faith is absent. We believe these teachings are foreign to the Scriptures as the Word makes clear the heart of the individual is what matters, not the practices of the Church or the works of men. [see Ephesians 2:8-9]

**Paedobaptism** ® The word 'paedo' means 'child' and this word means 'baptizing infants.' Please note that this is different that 'christening' as true believing Churches practice paedobaptism. The main distinction from christening is that paedobaptists don't believe that it saves the infant, but that the infant children of believing parents are baptized into the 'covenant community'. The main distinction from believer's baptism is that the child obviously is not a believer, having no personal faith in Jesus. Churches that

practice paedobaptism believe that baptism is the external sign of the new covenant (like circumcision was for the Old Testament nation of Israel under the old covenant). While certainly children born into believing homes have the blessing of parents who love the Gospel and are indeed going to be raised in the community of faith (the church), there is no indication in Scripture that this was practiced, was ever commanded, or fits the Pauline description of why one is being baptized in Romans 6:1-11. Circumcision had a role and place in Israel as an external sign for the whole nation, believing Israel or unbelieving Israel. But in the New Testament we are told circumcision of the heart is what matters (Romans 2:29). In the new covenant what matters is the internal reality of saving faith, not a covenant community of believing parents with unbelieving children. Baptism then is for those who have identified with the work of Christ and embraced it as their own. I do want to emphasize before I finish this section by stating again that there are true believers, lovers of the Gospel, and lovers of the Word who hold to this position of baptism and as wrong as I think they are, I love them **J** and so should you!

**Transubstantiation View** ® This is the Roman Catholic view of the Lord's Supper. They believe that the bread and the cup actually become the body and blood of Christ. When the priest (and only the priest) holds up the bread and pronounces, "this is my body" supposedly the bread is transformed from bread to flesh, the body of Christ. They have missed the symbolism in Christ's words "this is my body ... this is my blood". When Jesus first uttered those words, he was with them. In other words he was in his body holding the bread, using it to institute and teach a remembrance of what was about to occur – the death of Christ.

**Lutheran View** ® Moving away from the Roman view, here Martin Luther held that the bread and cup didn't actually become the body and blood of Christ, but that in some literal way the body and blood of Christ is present "in or with" the physical elements of bread and wine. They speak of the bread and cup as having the "very real, or actual, presence of Christ". Often times this is referred to as con ("with" in Greek) substantiation. This too, doesn't recognize what Christ meant through his words in the elements being symbols and not literal.

**Symbolic View** ® John Calvin, along with many other Reformers, rightly understood that the bread and cup do not become the body and blood of Christ, nor do they somehow contain the body and blood of Christ, but are spiritual symbols of the body and blood of Christ. This is the traditional Protestant view, and how we at Leroy Chapel understand the Lord's Supper. We take the bread and cup as a visible sign and symbol of the spiritual presence of Christ in the celebration of communion.

**Eucharist** ® This is what the Roman Catholic Church calls the taking of the Lord's Supper during the mass. The word eucharist itself means "the giving of thanks". They believe that every time the eucharist is done during mass the sacrifice of Christ is made again. They fail to understand the completed work of Jesus made once for all with ever present, ongoing reality.

**Communion** ® This term is most commonly used to describe the taking of the elements of the Lord's Supper, the bread and cup. We commune with Christ as we remember the work He did for us on the cross.

*· Foundational Biblical Data*

**Mark 1:5-11** ® “when he came up out of the water”

This is Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus. John the Baptist had been, yeah you guessed it – baptizing people. John's baptism was a step further down the progression of revelation from the Jewish 'mikvah' baths of ceremonial cleansing found at synagogues and the Temple. Mark describes people coming and being baptized in the Jordan River confessing their sins. John himself then describes the baptism he was doing was one of water (read – external), while one would come who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (read – internal). When Jesus, a good Jew, showed up on the scene he followed in the tradition of water baptism even though he had no sins to confess. When Jesus did this he elevated and completed the progression of revelation for a Biblical understanding of cleansing. It was to be an external reality of an inward change. It was a water (external) baptism that was a Holy Spirit (internal) baptism. Jesus baptism was so much more though. As he came up out of the water (obviously being put under the water) the heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and the Father spoke. This was one of the greatest public declarations of the deity of Jesus Christ. He was a man, obedient in the waters of baptism, but so much more than a man – He was God very God.

**Colossians 2:12** ® “having been buried with him in baptism”

The context of this passage is all about the salvation work of Jesus in the lives of the Colossian believers. Paul speaks of how they have received Jesus Christ as Lord (v6), meaning they are Christians. They are exhorted to walk, grow, and be built up in Christ (v7-10). He uses the Old Testament picture of circumcision, but that they have a circumcision made without hands (v11), meaning not an outward sign of being a part of the nation of Israel, but an inward change of the heart as children of God. Then Paul speaks of the death of Christ that they have identified with through baptism (v12). These are all pictures of a life that have been rescued by the work of Christ on the cross, and of the internal work the Spirit has done. Baptism then, in part, is a picture of identification with the death of Christ. Being put under the water is a picture of being buried. The old self (without Christ) has been put to death, and the new self (with Christ) is alive because of the death Jesus died. So then, there is a two-fold picture of burial, one the individual's; and two, that of Jesus'.

**Romans 6:1-11** ® “we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death”

Here in Romans Paul gives an even lengthier description than he did in Colossians of the picture of baptism signifying identification with the death of Christ. The specific context of this Romans passage has to do with being set free from sin. The key verse in this passage is Romans 6:7 – *For one who has died has been set free from sin.* The work of

salvation has brought release to the captives of sin through faith in Christ. When one embraces the death of Christ as their own, they are free. The picture of being dead to sin (v1) through the death of Christ (v3) and now free from the dominion of death (v9) is baptism (v4). The one who has had this heart reality take place is free to now say “NO” to the passions of the flesh and to stop presenting his members to sin (v12-13). Baptism, Paul teaches, is the outward picture of that truth.

**Matthew 26:26-29** ® **“Take, eat; this is my body ... this is my blood”**

Here, in the upper room, Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples ... and at the same time he changed it, fulfilled it, and set it on a new trajectory. This ceremony that had been instituted for the Hebrews as God delivered them from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, was celebrated by Hebrew families up until the time of Christ ... this was nothing new for these men. But here, hours before Jesus would go to the cross, He took bread and wine, while still alive and in the body, to use as a symbol of what was about to happen for a remembrance when he would indeed be away from them, out of the body. Jesus established a trajectory for His followers of now not merely looking forward to the coming Messiah (he was there and would soon be victorious), but to an even greater day when they would be with Him in the final fulfillment of the Father’s Kingdom. So, communion then, is a remembrance of what Jesus has done, and an anticipation of what He will yet do in the future.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** ® **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup”**

Paul understood what Jesus had done in the upper room the night He was betrayed. He also understood the symbolism, not the literalness, of what Jesus was teaching. Paul says in v26, *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes*. First of all, he spoke of eating bread and drinking wine, not eating body and drinking blood. Second, he points out the backward looking glance at the cross, and the forward-looking gaze at His return. The Corinthian church had made a mockery of their participation in the Lord’s Supper. They were being selfish, indulgent, and flippant about this God-ordained practice for the church. Paul corrects this, and then also adds to it a pastoral admonishment to not be guilty of profaning the body and blood of Christ (v27), but to approach it with self examination and a spirit of repentance (v28) so as to not be merely going through external symbolism without the reality of the internal substance. Here then, is a call to the Church as to how to approach this ordinance. 1 – With gratitude for the death of Christ, 2 – With anticipation of the return of Christ, and 3 – With repentance for the life we live in the middle.

· Frequently Asked Questions

1- Who should be baptized?

Simple answer: All believers. Anyone who has confessed with his mouth that Jesus is Lord, and has believed in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9) should be baptized. Longer answer: Over the generations how the church has sought to

practice this has indeed had variation. Some look for water the very moment of decision to baptize the professing believer. Others take a slower course of instruction, more deliberate about making sure the one being baptized is indeed a regenerate child of God. The one clear teaching of the Word (the passages we looked at in Romans and Colossians) is that baptism is an ordinance for *believers*. This being the case we should make our very best effort to only baptize believing people. How do we know who is a believer and who isn't? That my friend, is the issue ... We don't know, only God does. So a church is right is being thorough, careful, and discerning as to whom it baptizes. But the church must also not play the part of the Spirit making "religious hoops" for people to jump through in assessing the genuineness of their profession. I'm sure every pastor has baptized people who were not truly born again, believing the outward confession of an individual but time later demonstrating that the inward reality had not taken place. Let us hold fast the Word, and give loving attention to the souls of people.

2- When should kids participate in the ordinances?

Great question ... ask your parents **J** Oh, I suppose you are the parent and you want me to give you more than that. Well, as a student of the Word, pastor of God's Church, and parent, I have wrestled with this much, and have landed on my own personal **OPINION**. Did I make that clear enough? The caps ... should I italicize and bold it too? **OPINION**. Both of the ordinances are to be practiced by believers (period). It's not about church membership, not about spiritual maturity, not about giving, serving, leading, or anything other than being a regenerate child of the living God. This gets hard with children because children (particularly church kids) aim to please, and being around the Church they certainly learn the words of the Gospel. They often are able to speak about the cross before they have an all-encompassing affection for the cross in their heart. That said it is up to each parent to know the heart of their child, ask good questions regularly to determine the difference between words and heart change, between pleasing mom and dad and pleasing God. I don't want children to blindly participate in the ordinances, nor miss out on the worship of God and obedience to them. I feel that when a child makes a profession of faith and they have the capacity and desire to speak about the work of Christ on the cross, we should explain and encourage them to celebrate communion. Big clue – If they think it's a snack in church, they aren't ready. As far as baptism, my opinion would be that we wait a bit longer to see fruitfulness and faithfulness in the adolescent years giving evidence to the genuineness of their faith. Since baptism has a more public, declarative nature to it, be as sure as you can parent that God has indeed done a work of God in your child's heart. I don't think there is any harm done in being slow and deliberate in directing our kids toward baptism. But perhaps there can be harm in pushing them prematurely. And to defend that I go to Hebrews 6:4 where it warns of those who have been "enlightened" (a phrase used to describe baptism), have "tasted the heavenly gift" (communion), and have "shared in the Holy Spirit" (the blessings of being a part of a church). Here I believe the writer to the Hebrews is strongly cautioning those who have "been around" spiritual things (Christianity), and have given external obedience to it, but are not truly saved, that this a dangerous and makes it even harder later for them to see the clear truth of the Gospel and be saved. Be thoughtful, be discerning, seek the heart of your kids ... and the heart of God.

3- What happens when I eat the bread and drink the cup?

Nothing. You receive no spiritual power-boost, no glorious inner wisdom, and no closer connection to God. You are simply worshipping God in obedience to the work of the Gospel in your life. Don't approach it with magic, voodoo, or mysticism ... but do approach it with depth, focus, and spiritual zeal. Get excited about reveling in the work Jesus has done for you and repenting over the sin that has dimmed your love for that work.

4- Can someone get to heaven without being baptized and participation in the Lord's Supper?

Yes. They do not earn someone salvation, therefore not being able to be baptized (e.g.: the thief on the cross) or having the ability to get in the water (e.g.: perhaps some sort of disability) or access to taking communion (e.g.: isolated in a foreign country) do not keep one from heaven. Salvation comes by faith, apart from works, based solely on the completed work of Christ. Let's not, like the Roman Catholic Church, mix these clearly ordained things with the means by which someone is saved.

5- Does the Bible teach a second baptism, or a baptism in the Spirit?

The only baptism taught in the Scriptures in believer's baptism as identification and declaration of one's faith in Christ. This is often referred to as a work of the Spirit, and we are taught that we are baptized into one Spirit, but the idea of a subsequent work of baptism is foreign to the Bible. When we are born into the family of God through faith, we receive the Holy Spirit (period). God gives us everything we need for life and godliness when He saves us. He withholds nothing. Are all believers filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes. Do we need to be daily filled by the Spirit? Yes, of course, we need the power of the Spirit to run through our souls as we seek to live for Him and make a difference in the world. But this is not a second baptism, or a Spirit baptism different than salvation. This is God's empowering presence for a life of radical worship and mission! Thank you God that we have all we need, and all of us have free access to the same Spirit, same power, and same blessings of heaven.

*· What Do I Do With This?*

### **In My Head**

Study to know the "ins and outs" of the death of Christ. Inform yourself with just what it is you are to be thinking and reflecting on when you take communion. As a parent, think discerningly about how to teach your kids the Gospel and determine their grasp of these things in their hearts. Don't "float" through what can just become church traditions without thinking about what they mean and how you'll engage in them individually and as a family.

**In My Heart**

Be a person of deep repentance with great joy. Huh? Yeah, joy over the work of Jesus for you ... that leads to reflection and repentance where you haven't and aren't living out the Gospel consistently. Anticipate the bread and the cup with a heart to worship. Slow down, and magnify the grace of God that did what you could never do ... deal with your sin. Anticipate that great Day when you'll eat together with your Savior!

*· For Further Study*

Nine Marks of a Healthy Church. Mark Dever. Crossway. 2000.

The Deliberate Church. Mark Dever and Paul Alexander. Crossway. 2005.

*· For Family Discipleship***Questions for Discussion**

- (1) What simple, true statements can you make about baptism?
- (2) What simple, true statements can you make about the Lord's Supper?
- (3) Discuss why you should be baptized and when?

**Memory Verse**

*"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."*

*– 1 Corinthians 11:26*

**A Catechism for Young Children**

Q. How many ordinances are there?

A. Two.

Q. What are they?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. Who appointed these ordinances?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ.