

I pray all had a great summer and you are about ready for a new school year. I apologize for getting way behind on my confirmation assignments. It is time to get going again.

I hope to complete this class in early December. I also hope to continue to use email, but I would like for us to find two or three times during the fall when we can all meet together.

This week we need to talk about Baptism, and what you are wearing. That's right, what are you wearing? As I write this note, I am wearing dark green cargo pants, a plaid casual dress shirt, and tennis shoes. Actually, I am not writing about what we are wearing but who we are wearing; more about that later, but for now we need to think about Baptism once more.

BAPTISM

We may have covered this before, but I need to make sure I know who has and who has not been baptized?

Most folks who grow up in a Presbyterian Church are baptized as babies. I was baptized when I was an infant. The only reason I know I was baptized is my parents told me I was baptized.

Both my mother and father were Christians, and shortly after I was born they presented me at the church and told everyone that though I was their child, I was a child of God and belonged to His church.

Over my 61 years, I have belonged to many organizations. I have been on several baseball and softball teams. I once was part of a Boy Scout Troop. I am part of a family and have a wife, three children, a mother, four brothers, four sisters-in-law, and oodles of nieces and nephews. But most importantly I belong to Jesus Christ and his family, which is called the Church.

When I was Baptized, I was initiated into the Church, and for all my life I have belonged to God and been part of God's family.

IF YOUR PARENTS CHOSE NOT TO HAVE YOU BAPTIZED, THAT IS ALRIGHT. SOME PARENTS MAKE THE CHOICE TO WAIT UNTIL THEIR CHILD IS READY TO MAKE THEIR OWN COMMITMENT TO JESUS. IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN BAPTIZED, YOU ARE STILL PART OF THIS CHURCH, BUT HOPEFULLY AT THE END OF OUR CLASS YOU WILL CHOOSE TO BE BAPTIZED AND BE PART OF THE CHURCH.

One more thing about Baptism, our church believes that "**Baptism is a sign and seal of our engrafting into Christ.**" NOW WANT ON EARTH DOES THAT MEAN?

Let's start with the word "**engrafting**," which is a word from the world of agriculture. I once had a dogwood tree that produced white flowers on some branches and pink flowers on other branches. Someone skillfully took a branch from a tree that made red flowers and grafted it onto a tree that made white flowers. He or she actually cut a branch off one tree and made it grow on a different tree. In a spiritual way **we have been engrafted into Christ**, and become part of His family. **Baptism is a sign** that we have become part of Jesus' family. Like my wedding ring is a sign that I am married, baptism is also a sign. And once we become part of Jesus' family we are so tightly held by Jesus **(sealed)** that nothing can separate us from his love.

Please read and think about the following two Bible verses and write down what they mean to you:

First Corinthians 12:27: “**Now you are the body of Christ** and individually members of it.”

Galatians 3:26: “**For in Christ Jesus you are children of God through faith.**”

Answer the following and send your answers back to me:

1. Have you been baptized?
2. If you were baptized, do you remember being baptized?
3. What does it mean to you to be part of God’s family?
4. STUDY CATECHISM QUESTION 4

HOW DO YOU LIVE IN THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, I AM MADE ONE WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I AM BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST’S BODY, THE CHURCH.

AS A MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY, I TRUST IN GOD’S WORD,

SHARE IN THE LORD’S SUPPER,

AND TURN TO GOD IN PRAYER.

AS I GROW IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE, I AM LED TO DO THE GOOD WORKS THAT GOD INTENDS FOR MY LIFE.

READ THE ABOVE CATECHISM QUESTION AND ANSWER SEVERAL TIMES AND THINK ABOUT EACH SENTENCE. THEN WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST.

WHAT (OR WHO) ARE YOU WEARING?

If you were wearing denim overalls, people might think you are a farmer. If you were wearing a plaid flannel shirt, blue jeans, and boots, folks may think you are a lumberjack (GO JACKS!). If you are wearing scrubs, people may think you work at a hospital.

Have you ever watched the Academy Awards, Grammies, or other gala event? The celebrities are driven up to the event in a limousine and everyone anxiously waits to see what they are wearing. The movie star walks down a red carpet and at the door a reporter will often ask, "Who are you wearing?" What they are really asking is, who designed your garment?

For many teenagers what you wear is very important. What you wear often gives clues as to who you want to be, and with whom you want to spend your time. Sometimes we think that we have to wear the right things to fit in.

We have been learning about baptism, and one thing we learn from our baptism (or upcoming baptism) is that what we wear is not nearly as important as whom we wear.

Find the New Testament book of Colossians in your Bible and turn to chapter 3:12-17. In these verses you will notice that we are chosen by God (Imagine that!). I remember a time when no one wanted to choose me to play on their team, but God has chosen me (AND YOU). We are holy (God's special people), and we are dearly loved by God. Think about that for a minute--you are chosen by God!!!!

Read Colossians 3:12-17 slowly and carefully and answer the following questions:

1. How many attributes does the verse tell us to put on? (Oh, by the way, please list them.)
2. If the above area describes the clothes we are supposed to wear when we are wearing Jesus Christ, how might you be described if you were wearing these?
3. Would you sincerely like to be clothed with Jesus Christ? If so, what will you do to clothe yourself with Christ?
4. What one attribute, or "piece of clothing," described in the verses would you like others to see on you and in you?