

Grand Avenue

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

March 12, 2000

4:00 p.m.

Prelude

Responsive Call to Celebration

Leader: *We are a people of the water!*

People: **We worship a God whose love flows through water.**

Leader: *Love, like a rain shower, awakens the sleeping seed within the soul and lures it to blossom.*

People: **We worship a God whose love flows through water.**

Leader: *Love, like a wading pool, inspires the delight of children, jumping, splashing, spraying each other, shivering with wet joy.*

People: **We worship a God whose love flows through water.**

Leader: *Love, like a hot shower after a long day's work, cleanses us, reawakens us.*

People: **We worship a God whose love flows through water.**

Leader: *Love, like little drops, drips from fingertips to forehead; like a great depth, in which to sink in and immerse our entire body.*

People: **Through the waters of baptism, the family of faith always, lovingly, makes room for one more.**

Leader: *Through the waters of our new baptistry, we will offer God's love to future generations.*

Prayer

intended purpose

memorials

gifts

Hymn **"God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending"** #513

Scripture **Acts 16: 30 - 34**
Matthew 28: 18 - 19

Baptismal Memories

Consecration of Baptistry

For generations the previous baptistry of this congregation offered witness to the communal nature of God's church.

At each immersion over the last hundred years, this congregation was reminded that we are not individuals left to the whims and fate of isolation and loneliness in this world.

Rather, we are each children of God, brothers and sisters in Christ, members of one holy family, an indivisible portion of God's mightly cloud of witnesses who have gone before us and who will come after us.

In truth, we are never alone. The waters of baptism remind us of such.

Each person's moment of baptism confirms their inclusion into God's greater community of eternal grace.

Each time we witness another's celebration of baptism, we find new opportunity to claim our place in the indivisible family of God.

As we now step forward to pour our own personal waters into this congregation's new baptistry, may we be reminded of our unique identity as a child of God.

But as our waters are mingled with the gift of precious water which others also bring, may we be equally reminded of our celebrative companionship amidst God's eternal community of Christ's living church.

Never can we be separated from the people of God.
Never can we be separated from God's love.

The waters of our baptism tell us this truth.
The waters with which we will anoint this sacramental vessel uphold such a wisdom.

Our lives together, in Christian ministry, affirm this gift.

May we now consecrate Grand Avenue Christian Church's new baptistry to the unifying ministry of God's saving grace at work in the Grand Avenue Christian Church.

Hymn *“God, You Have Set Us in This Time and Place”* -see insert

Blessing

Today we are joyously reminded that in baptism no individual ever need be alone in this world, again.

Through God’s holy waters we are united with Christ’s one, holy, apostolic, and universal church.

In such liquid interment, we are buried with Christ, that we — like him, may be raised from the dead to walk in newness of life.

Through baptism into Christ we gain a new identity as daughters and sons of God, and receive a new life-purpose of Christ-like ministry in word and deed.

Thus it is, whether you have been baptised or still await your holy moment in the waters of God’s grace at sometime in the future, we invite you to come forward at this time to both —

receive a blessing of God’s hopeful love

and then offer this same blessing to the next person who comes after you.

As a sign of this blessing we will use the first communal waters poured into our church’s new baptistry to mark a cross on each other’s forehead.

Blessing: As you are marked with these sacred waters, know that God loves you and we affirm you as an important part of God’s faithful community. Each time you are witness to the sacrament of baptism in this place, be reminded of your own eternal place in God’s family,

Benediction

O God, give to we who find the first steps of our Christian faith in the waters of baptism — strength for life’s journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faithful living, the freedom to love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ who makes us one. Amen