

Refrigerator Notes 11 January 2015
'What Do Presbyterians Believe About Baptism'
Mark 1:4-11

1. We celebrated the Baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which is celebrated by the Reformed Churches on the first Sunday following The Epiphany of Our Lord (which was January 6, 2015)
2. Epiphany marks the end of the Christmas season and celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity.
3. Baptism of the Lord is than the feast day commemorating the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, by John the Baptist
4. Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ.
5. The water of Baptism symbolizes the waters of Creation of the Flood, and of the Exodus from Egypt. Thus the water of Baptism links us to the goodness of God's creation and to the grace of God's covenants with Noah and Israel
6. In the OT, circumcision was the sign and symbol of inclusion in God's covenant with Israel – In the NT, Baptism represents the sign and symbol of inclusion in God's grace and covenant with the Church
7. Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace to all people, as there is one body, there is one Baptism
8. One Baptism means both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love, the Presbyterian church recognizes all Baptisms with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit administered by other Christian churches
9. The Baptism of children, witnesses to the truth that God's love, claims people before they are able to respond in faith and Baptism of those who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith, witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness
10. The congregation as a whole on behalf of the Church universal assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized persons in Christian life.
11. When the Presbyterian Church speaks of baptism as a covenant, we emphasize the multiple commitments involved. First, there is God's commitment to us, Secondly, there are the commitments the community of faith makes to us, and last, there are the commitments we make to God, to our children, and to the church.
12. God's baptismal claim on us is corporate and communal, which is transforming (transforming power of the HS) and liberating (we die to all that is evil in both our common life and our personal lives as we are raised together to new life in Christ)
13. Baptism in itself has no saving power – The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by Grace have you been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not works, least anyone should boast."
14. Baptism is only a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ in which we must stand on – Baptism itself does not wash away sins, there is no magic in the water (common element) in the fount, and therefore, the purpose of baptism is that it identifies us openly and publicly with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord.
15. In and through our faith in Jesus Christ, it becomes a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Jesus, for our salvation as promised in our baptism
16. Finally, we renewed our baptismal vows as a congregation and each member who chose, removed a stone from the Baptismal Fount as a remembrance of Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan River