

Refrigerator Notes 01 January 2017
“What we Need to Know” (About the Sacraments)
Matthew 26:26-31 (Matt.28:19; Luke 22:14-20)

1. Unlike other denominations, Presbyterian Church (USA) recognizes two sacraments; baptism and the Lord’s Supper (there are some denominations that have as many as seven ordinances)
2. Sacraments are God’s gracious gifts given by Jesus Christ to the church, to establish and nurture our faith
3. The signs in these sacraments are the water in baptism and the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper
4. Sacraments are often said to be “visible signs of an invisible grace.”
5. Presbyterians believe sacraments are God’s way of reaching out to us in a visible way to convey God’s word, just as God also reaches out to us through hearing, as God’s Word is preached and proclaimed; therefore Sacraments are the “invisible words of God.”
6. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are signs of God’s covenant or special relationship with us and are seals of God’s covenant with us in Christ.
7. When we participate in the sacraments by faith, the benefits of Christ’s salvation for us are “sealed” in our hearts and minds by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit makes salvation real and effective to us, as our faith is nurtured in the sacraments.
8. As we gather around the baptismal font or communion table, we are brought together as a community, a family defined by water baptism, the Lord’s Supper and not by blood relationships
9. Presbyterians believe that in the Lord’s Supper we experience a fullness of time in which the past, present, and future come together. ***In the Past:*** Jesus commands, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Our Supper celebration looks back to Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection as the events that have decisively shaped our lives by bringing us salvation. ***In the Present:*** Jesus proclaims, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1Cor.11:25). All God’s covenant promises, throughout the OT, are fulfilled in Christ who is the fulfiller of all God’s promises (2Cor.1:20). ***In the Future:*** We celebrate the Lord’s Supper remembering, as we do, that we “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” again (1Cor.11:26).
10. The primary Presbyterian belief is that “body and blood” refer to the death of Jesus. By eating and drinking in the Lord’s Supper, we are receiving the benefits of what Christ’s death on the cross has brought us. The purpose of the Supper is to enable us to remember and receive the great gift of salvation that Jesus’ death makes possible for us. Jesus said, “This is my body that is for you (1Cor.11:24) and “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood (Luke 22:20).”
11. The elements in the Lord’s Supper, the bread and the wine, which represent the body and blood of Christ in a symbolic way
12. In the early church baptism became a way for Jesus’ followers to identify with Christ. The Apostle Paul portrays baptism as immersion into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, writing that we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to “walk in re-newness of Life.”
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 of works, lest anyone should have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. We are saved through faith in Christ alone, not through baptism

14. Presbyterians believe there is only **one Baptism**; *(I believe, that if the first baptism did not take, it was because of your lack of faith)*