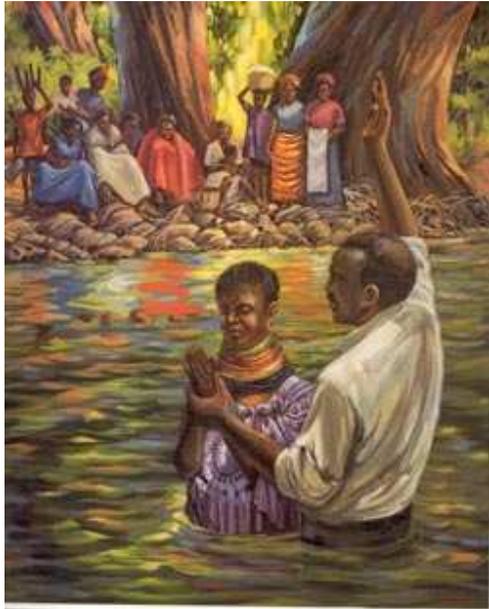


Community of Christ

THE SACRAMENTS

Disclaimer: While the content of this file is based on church materials, this PDF is not an official resource of the church.

Baptism



Baptism is a covenant entered into between the individual and God. It is an expression of our faith and trust in God. For us, baptism means that we are baptized into Community of Christ and become members of that particular fellowship. Baptism also signifies

commitment to the universal task of Christianity to which the contributions of other Christians are acknowledged and appreciated. Community of Christ requires that persons reach the "age of accountability" before becoming baptized. This became identified as at least eight years of age as early as the spring of 1831. The term "age of accountability" means more than a

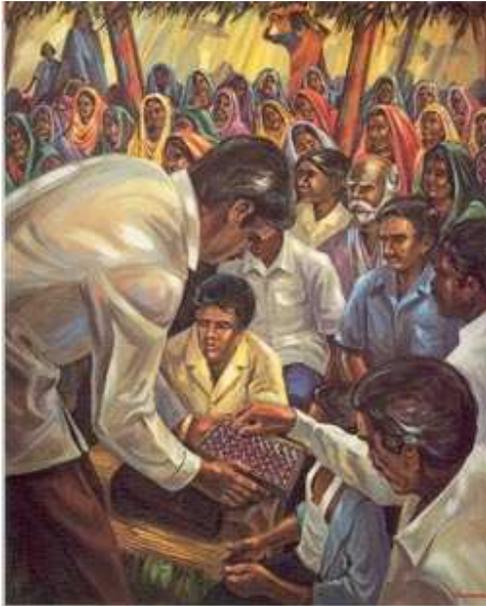
minimum age for baptism; it also suggests that we are accountable to God for our decisions, our resources, our whole lives. In the Community of Christ tradition, we baptize by immersion. Emerging from the water symbolizes resurrection and the rising to a new life.

Confirmation

Confirmation, otherwise known as baptism of the Spirit, follows baptism by water and completes a person's initiation into the church. The only prerequisite for the rite of confirmation is that a person is baptized into Community of Christ. Confirmation sometimes occurs immediately following baptism in the

same service of worship. More often, however, several days or weeks elapse between baptism and confirmation. Confirmation is administered by the laying on of hands. The candidate sits in a chair and two elders lay their hands on the candidate's head, one offering the prayer of confirmation. There are no prescribed words that must be included in the prayer of confirmation.

The Lord's Supper



The Lord's Supper is the most frequently and widely observed of the sacraments within the church. Usually celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, it is unique among the sacraments in that each member participates directly on a repeated basis

rather than only once in a lifetime as with baptism, confirmation and blessing.

Blessing of Children

The blessing of children recognizes the entrance of a new life into the church community. It is based primarily on the Gospel accounts of Jesus receiving and blessing children and symbolizes and

demonstrates God's love and concern for the child. Children from birth to the eighth birthday are eligible for blessing. Normally children of members of the church are brought for blessing some time during the first six months after birth. It is not unusual, however, for older children and children of friends of the church to be blessed.

Ordination



The sacrament of ordination is the procedure by which "calls" to specific ministries in the church are both recognized and accepted in the lives of individuals. It is the rite by which certain ecclesiastical privileges and responsibilities are conferred.

Ordination grants the authority to perform certain duties. This authority is given to the individual by God and also by the church. Although God's call is primary in the ordination process for the church, the individual's own sense of call is also important. Some persons accept the call to be ordained only after they feel personal assurance that God has indeed called them. Others accept as

a result of faith in the process by which calls originate or out of a sincere desire to serve.

Marriage

The church recognizes that marriage is subject to legal provisions established by various nations and states. This aspect of marriage makes it unique

among the church's sacraments.

Marriages within the church should be solemnized in public meeting of some kind. This usually occurs in the context of a service of worship. Marriages within the church are to be performed by members of the Melchisedec priesthood or by Aaronic priests. The church also recognizes the marriages of persons who choose to be married by authorities

outside the church, such as civil authorities or ministers of other faiths.

The Evangelist's Blessing



The evangelist's blessing serves as a sacramental vehicle for God to affirm and support persons in their life ventures. It is an experience

of laying on of hands and prayer focusing on God's accepting and creative love in the life of the person, family, or congregation. The blessing is a defining experience to help persons know who they are, their value and giftedness, purpose and meanings of life. It helps persons to refocus their lives according to the purposes of God and God's call to them. The sacrament is

extended to individuals, families, or congregations. There are no age, race, gender, membership, or life conditions that restrict persons from sharing in this sacrament. Recording of the blessing is optional. The sacrament of the evangelist's blessing is not a one-time experience but is available at different junctures of a person's life. Sharing with the evangelist as a spiritual companion

is an integral part of the total blessing experience.

Administration to the Sick

The sacrament of administration is available to members and nonmembers alike. A person who is physically ill, emotionally strained, or sick in any other way may request administration.

The purpose of this sacrament is to provide assurance of God's care and concern and also of the church's interest in that person. Administration is usually done in the privacy of the church, a person's home, office, or hospital room. On occasion, however, administration may be performed while other persons are present or even as part of a formal service of worship.