

# Sacramental Practices during the Lent/Easter Cycle

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
you that have no money, come, buy and eat!  
—Isaiah 55:1

Approved by the 217th General Assembly, “Invitation to Christ: Sacramental Practices” ([gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/sacraments](http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/sacraments)) invites every congregation to participate in five shared practices and encourages congregations to engage in intentional reflection on these practices. They are:

1. Set the font in full view of the congregation.
2. Open the font and fill it with water on every Lord’s Day.
3. Set the cup and plate on the Lord’s Table on every Lord’s Day.
4. Lead appropriate parts of weekly worship from the font and from the table.
5. Increase the number of Sundays on which the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.

You may have already begun the five practices in your congregation. I hope that you also take time to study and reflect on their importance in our lives as a community and as individuals. The inexhaustible mysteries of the faith cannot be explored fully in one’s lifetime. The Holy Spirit is constantly doing new things in our lives as we grow in faith and as the world around us changes.

The Lent/Easter cycle is a wonderful time to accentuate different aspects of the sacraments. During this holy time we should pay special attention to how God’s Spirit is shaping and forming us through our shared engagement as we gather around the Word, water, wine, and bread. Traditionally, the Lenten season is a time of intense preparation for baptism (which is encouraged to be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday). As we journey through Lent toward Easter there may be ways in which we engage in practices 1, 2, and 4 (see above) that accentuate the depth of baptismal life. Each Sunday a different part of the worship service may be led from the font. In this way the congregation can reflect on the many different aspects of the baptismal life. For instance, the first week try leading the call to worship from the font, accentuating that we are claimed by God as children of the covenant through water and the Spirit (baptism). An example may be adapted from Ephesians 4:4–6, as found in the *Book of Common Worship* (pp. 403–404).

*First pour water into the font and then begin the call to worship:*

There is one body and one Spirit,  
Just as you are called  
to the one hope of your calling,  
**One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**  
One God and Father of all,  
**Who is above all and through all and in all.**

You may choose to lead the confession by the font (pour or lift up water before or during the declaration of forgiveness), accentuating that in baptism we find grace and forgiveness. Especially during Lent use the declaration of forgiveness to remind people that they made vows at their baptism (or perhaps reaffirmation during confirmation) to live a life of discipleship.

On another Sunday you may wish to call for the offering while standing by the font (and perhaps pouring or lifting water). By doing this and carefully choosing your words, you can accentuate that our best offering is of ourselves as we try to live into our baptismal vows each day. A call to offering might be:

Let us bring before God our offerings:  
the blessings we share for the ministry of the church  
and dedicating our lives each day to the way of Christ.

As the community is sent out into the world, lead the charge and blessing from the font, encouraging congregants to live into their baptism each day.

Those making the journey toward baptism, as well as seekers, will have an opportunity to contemplate through liturgy and reflection how baptism is central in one’s life as a follower of Christ. Intentional reflection outside of worship helps people engage more deeply in these practices. This rhythm of practice (liturgy) and reflection is helpful for people who are candidates for baptism or for parents who will be presenting their children for baptism.

You are encouraged to continue these practices during the Easter season and throughout the year. You may wish to have communion each Sunday during Easter, if this is not already your practice. Through this season explore how we are one people through the one loaf we share through baptism of water and the Spirit. We are nourished to live into the life of faith, offered grace for our failures, and joined with Christ and one another. We are sent out to be the body of Christ where we live, work, and play. You might accentuate one aspect of these mysteries, as well as the connection between baptism and the Lord’s Supper, each Sunday during Easter.

Article written by Rev. Chip Andrus.

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For more information on sacramental studies, go to [gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/sacraments](http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/sacraments), or contact David Gambrell at 888.728.7228, ext. 5311.