

And yet the elements do factor into our Christian tradition quite prominently, particularly water. We have two sacraments: communion and baptism. Water is important to both: water is used to grow the wheat that makes our bread and our juice; and water is the primary element when we baptize, whether it's a little sprinkle on the head or a dunk in the river.

Water is a common element threaded throughout the Bible, and often plays a prominent, if not the dominant role, in stories. Some stories that come quickly to mind:

- Creation: the Spirit of God moves over the water and created life out of those waters;
- Moses as a baby floating in a basket of reeds in the river
- God parting the Red Sea
- The flood and Noah in his ark
- Jesus being baptized by John in the River Jordan
- The woman at the well from whom Jesus requests a drink
- The disciples and Jesus on the boat when the storm comes up
- Jesus walking on water

For Christians, water is symbolic of our relationship with God, carrying the image of renewal, promise, and hope. It is through water that we are baptized and welcomed into the Christian community.

Water is essential to all life: it connects us with the rest of Creation, and it is a gift from God. As a gift from God, it is meant to be shared.

Water is life! God called Creation out of water. We begin our lives cushioned in the water of our mother's womb. Our lives are sustained by water. Jesus called relationship with God "living water" saying that all who drank of it would never be thirsty again.

Today we celebrate Hudson's baptism with water, as God baptizes her with God's Spirit.

- Water to represent the washing away of sin and the promise of new life made possible for us through Christ.
- Water to indicate Hudson's inclusion into the family of faith and to signify her union with us as part of God's family in God's great creation.
- Water to remind ourselves of the incredible gift of grace that God gives us in Jesus Christ, grace not earned but given freely by a God who loves us dearly.

I invite Jon and Jess to Bring Hudson forward...

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# WATER IS...

**Sunday, August 30, 2015**

**Worship in the Park, Fergus Falls, MN**

**John 4:13-14**

When asked how much water we use each day or what effect water has on our lives, most of us would probably answer that it's a pretty significant amount.

Let's just take a typical morning as an example.

- I wake up in a bed made up with cotton sheets – water's needed to grow that cotton.
- I brush my teeth, shower, and flush the toilet – all things that require water.
- I get dressed in clothing that I wash in my washing machine on a fairly regular basis.
- I make coffee (for Karen); not only do I use water in the brewing process, but the coffee plantations depend on massive amounts of water to grow their product.
- I eat breakfast, most likely oatmeal, made from grain on a farm that depends on good irrigation. Maybe I have a little bacon or sausage – meat products that use a LOT of water to produce.

So clearly water factors into our daily, earthly lives.

But what about our spiritual lives?

In many world religions and cultures the elements of the natural world – wind, water, fire and earth – are held in high regard. In astrology, each star has a corresponding elemental sign (Aries is a fire sign, Pisces is a water sign, etc.). Some religions worship gods of these elements, while other people simply uplift them as the four core parts of nature.

Christianity, on the other hand, is sacramental, rather than elemental. We like to see ourselves as being more about the unseen, intangible things like grace or the Holy Spirit, and about the rituals of communion and baptism.

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