

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Though Vacation Bible School has ended for another year, I have been thinking about our VBS theme, the "River of Life." We see examples of water in creation--rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water. We recognize the need for water for the survival of every living thing. But as Christians, we understand the words, "River of Life," to mean much more than physical water. It includes the water that God provides through God's word and Jesus' baptism. This water is life-giving and life-sustaining. It is indeed, holy water.

There is a beautiful sculpture at the Great River Landing in downtown Onalaska, that I would like to share with you. The sculpture conveys a creation message. I took a photo of it, recently. (See attached.) What do you see as you look at the sculpture?

The sculpture shows a bird soaring above. The motion of the sculpture suggests the journey that took place--the bird descended from the sky, touched the waters, and returned to the sky. In so doing, it made a complete circle, which could suggest a "cycle of life."

In a way, the sculpture reminds me of Jesus' journey. Jesus came from above, touched the waters of creation in his baptism, continued his journey as the Son of God to the cross, died, and was resurrected, making a complete circle. And the waters of creation, the waters of baptism, the life-giving water that Jesus provides, are all a part of this "cycle of life."

Today, our gospel reading moves us beyond water to thinking about Jesus as "the bread of life." Like the water images, this image is a tangible one. But our gospel reading calls us to think beyond physical bread. For Jesus provides for our physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual sustenance. We live lives of faith, because of the life-giving sustenance that only God can provide. Thanks be to God.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy