



SUNDAY
JUNE 11
9:30AM

LET'S GO
SWIMMING!

“Let’s Go Swimming!”
June 11, 2023 | 2nd Sunday after Pentecost
Charlie Berthoud | Revelation 22:1-2

One of the best things about summer, if not the best thing, is swimming.

We swim in pools, in lakes, and in oceans.

I love swimming. Since I was a little boy, I’ve been bodysurfing any chance I get in the Atlantic Ocean, and in high school and college I was on the swim team. I love the feel of water.

Water is obviously vital to our existence.

But did you realize that the Bible is filled with water?

Genesis tells the creation story and in the first sentence of the first book of the Bible we see there is water, amidst the chaos before God acts.

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. - Genesis 1:1-2

And then the last chapter of the Bible focuses on the River of Life. After all the chaos in the book of Revelation, it ends with the beautiful imagery:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. - Revelation 22:1-2

So, the Bible starts with watery chaos and ends with the beauty of the river of life. In between, a variety of stories and teachings involve water, helping us to learn who we are and how we're called to live.



Martin Luther King Jr. famously cited biblical water imagery from the Lincoln Memorial. Seeking an end to racism and poverty and exploitation, he echoed the words of the prophet Amos calling for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness in like an ever-flowing stream.

Our Bible is filled with water.

Our Vacation Bible Camp starts tomorrow, and the theme is water. The kids will gather here Monday thru Thursday for Bible lessons, crafts, music, snacks, and fun.

They will be learning four Bible stories about water.

While the kids are learning, I hope we can too.

We assembled a four-day devotional, which was included as a pdf in our weekly CONNECTIONS email, and we have hard copies available. I hope you'll make time this week to reflect on the stories and to pray for the kids, their families, and all the VBC

volunteers.

From the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, the kids will learn about Noah's Ark and about baby Moses in a basket—two stories that remind us of the power and danger of water and about God's presence with us.

From the New Testament, they will learn about Jesus meeting a woman at a well. This woman was ostracized by her community, but Jesus welcomed her and offered her the water of life.

And finally the kids will learn about Jesus calming the storm, when he was in a boat with the disciples, by calling for peace.

When I think about these stories together and when I think about water in general, I think of three impacts of water:

Water **cleanses** us. We wash our hands, we take showers, we clean our clothes.

Water **sustains** us. The food we eat needs water, whether plant or animal based. And while we could go days or even weeks without food, we can't last long without water.

Water **refreshes** us. If we're tired, we might splash a little water on our face. If we're hot, we might jump in a lake or the ocean or take a shower. For the really hearty souls in winter time, a polar plunge seems very refreshing. If you were sleeping in church and I poured a bucket of water over your head, you'd wake up fast. Water can wake us up.

In this month of June, I've encouraged you to pray for five minutes a day. Maybe your five minutes of prayer could involve water. Maybe you could pray in the shower, or in the pool, or standing in the rain.

The water of baptism reminds that because of God's great mercy, we are **cleansed** from sin.

As you experience the water, pray that it would **cleanse** you and lead you in righteousness. Some people make a habit of praying in the shower or praying as they wash their face, asking God to clean their hearts and make them ready to live that day.

As you experience the water, pray that you will be **sustained** and strengthened, and pray for the people around you and the people of the world, that we all might be sustained.

As you experience the water would refresh you and help you to realize what a gift your life is, what a gift today is. Pray that the water wakes us up and helps you to live with purpose.

With water, God cleanses us, sustains us, and refreshes us. Happy summer!

Let us pray...