

GRACE IN ACTION

Discussion Guide: Theology 2

Grace, Salvation, and the Heart of Christian Faith

A central and significant focus within the ELCA is God's grace. Why is God's grace something that all of us need?

The concept of original sin reminds us of brokenness in the world. Where do you see God's grace shining amidst that brokenness?

In baptism, we acknowledge the death of our old selves and resurrection into our new life in Christ. Another example of death and resurrection comes with the changing of the seasons. The trees lose leaves and the grass turns brown. Yet, in spring, we see new life begin again. What other ways do you see death and resurrection happen in your daily living?

Holy Baptism is not transactional. It is not based on "I do this so I can get this." Baptism is a relational sacrament that brings people together as the Body of Christ. Promises are made by those surrounding the font. Promises are also made by the congregation that is gathered. How do you see individuals and congregations fulfilling those promises made on behalf of those being baptized?

There are often mysteries within faith that we can't explain or fully understand. Jesus is fully human. Jesus is fully divine. Both of these statements are true at the same time. As human beings, we learn and grow over our lifetime. How do you imagine Jesus learned and grew throughout his life? In what stories from scripture do you recognize Jesus' divinity?

The panel talked about heaven and hell in a relational way, naming each as the experience we have with the fullness of God's Kingdom. Over the centuries, art, music, literature, television, movies, and even cartoons have shaped the modern stereotype of what heaven and hell are. What examples can you think of that depict a stereotype, versus what descriptions are in scripture?

How does God continue to guide the church through relationships?