Baptism: the first day of the rest of our lives!
22/23 Pentecost C
(Preached 8 am 10/28 and
9:30 am 11/04 Services).
"You are (mine), the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1:11

Have you ever seen a baby born? I have and it's both frightening and wonderful at the same time! I was a coach at both of my children's birth. Nothing happened the way the book said it was supposed to. It was messy but it was life!

That's baptism my friends. For those of us who were immersed, plunged into or dipped into a large amount of water it was frightening and wonderful. We Episcopalians are a bit tidier about it. This rite or initiation into the life of Christ is about the messiness of that life. That messiness includes dying with Jesus Christ being buried with him in his death. To be buried you have to get wet and maybe get dirty!

One of the messiest baptisms I ever had the privilege of performing was just off the Susquehanna River in central Pennsylvania. Ralph was in his 20's and he convinced me he had to be baptized by plunging him into the most silt laden, muddiest, darkest waters I could imagine. I was grateful the water did not smell that day. That river was the embodiment of death for me. I was nervous. I didn't want to be in that dirty river. And when I baptized him into the family of God I nearly got baptized for the third time! It was a hoot! We got stuck in the mud and had to pull each other out of the river.

What has stuck with me all those years were the words I used to baptize him: "Buried into Christ's death. Raised with him from the dead in new life!" That's good theology! That's exactly what happened at the tomb and that's what happens to us on the day of our baptism.

From that day forward we live into that faith by our baptism. We begin our journey as disciples being nurtured by the Church, taught to obey everything Jesus commanded us and remembering that he is with us always to the end of our lives. Our children have become acquainted with some of the heroes of the Christian faith. And they would like to share with you now how these saints lived into their baptism….(9:30 baptism-Nov. 4).

Today as we baptize Lucille Carlson we remember what was done for us by Christ himself. Today we

remember what was done for us by our parents and pastors. Today we renew our vows as members of God's family in this sacrament of belonging. Amen!