

# THE MEETING HOUSE TIMES



The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ  
**January 2015**

Services: Sundays at 10:00 a.m.  
 Worship & Communion, 1st Sunday of the month at 10:00 a.m



30 Main Street, P.O. Box 392, Salisbury, Connecticut 06068 ~ 860.435.2442 ~ www.salisburycongregational.org

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!*

## FAITH FORMATION

*... begins with the children*

We will tell to the coming generation  
 the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,  
 and the wonders that he has done.

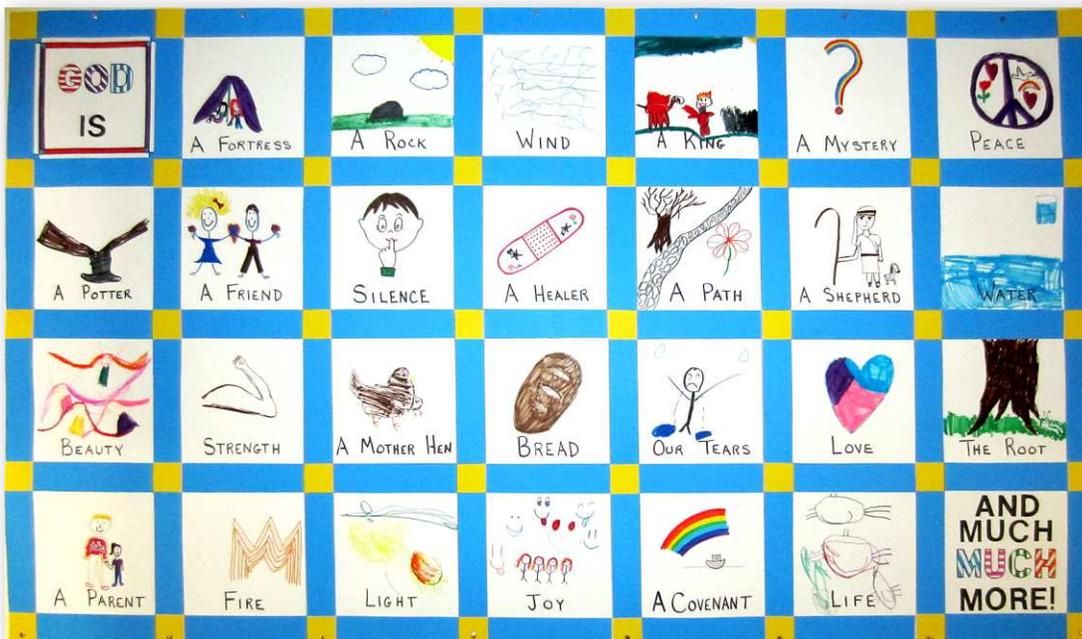
He established a decree in Jacob,  
 and appointed a law in Israel,  
 which he commanded our ancestors  
 to teach to their children;

That the next generation might know them,  
 the children yet unborn,  
 and rise up and tell them to their children,  
 so that they should set their hope in God,  
 and not forget the works of God,  
 but keep his commandments.

*Psalms 78:4b-7*



Christmas Pageant - 2014



### WHAT DOES GOD LOOK LIKE?

The Bible describes God in many different ways - as shepherd, king, rock, light, parent, potter, love. The children have created a paper quilt that includes 26 Biblical images of God and they have learned that God is like all of these and much, much more! Be sure to stop upstairs and see the quilt.

What do **you** think God looks like?



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# Growing in Faith Together

## FORMING OUR FAITH, TOGETHER

One of the great joys of ministry is watching people's faith develop. Seeing the growing awareness of God's presence in one's life is a rewarding experience. It is important to think of our faith as ongoing and ever changing. Faith is not a goal that we attain or a place that we get to. Faith is a relationship and as such requires our daily attention and investment. One of the dynamic changes in the church in recent times has been an awakening to this idea of lifelong faith formation. Just as in other relationships, we make a commitment to exploring new ways of knowing, understanding and worshipping God. We embrace the idea that scripture can speak to us over and over again, each time offering a new message or insight. Elsewhere in this newsletter Barbara Collins writes about the evolution from 'religious education' to 'faith formation.' Faith is not something that we give or get, it is always growing, developing and changing.

January is one of the times in the year that we accept the idea of starting anew. We make resolutions to do more (or less). We open ourselves up to possibilities that we might shy away from at other times of the year. Here in our church we are transitioning from the 45-year tenure of Al Sly as our music director. This creates an opportunity for us to reimagine our

music program – to resolve to worship God in ways that might be new or different. As we welcome guest musicians and eventually a new Minister of Music to our community, we will be challenged to balance tradition and innovation.

This month, I invite you to examine your own faith formation. Take some time to reflect on your own faith story. How did you get to where you are today? Did someone influence you? Is it study, story, music or prayer that feeds your soul? How has your relationship to God changed over the years? These questions are an important part of any faith development. Our journeys are defined not just by where we are going, but also by where we have been.

This year, let's make a commitment to share our faith with others. Let's unabashedly proclaim the Good News to all! Why not start the new year with inviting someone to church or telling someone why you love going to church.

Let 2015 be the year that has everyone talking about *that vibrant church on the corner!*

Grace and Peace to you on your journey,

*Pastor Diane*

Email: [pastor.diane@salisburycongregational.org](mailto:pastor.diane@salisburycongregational.org)

## SIMPLY SMILES VISIT

On **Sunday, January 25th**, we will welcome Bryan Nurnberger, founder of Simply Smiles, and his wife, Kristen Graves, singer and activist, to our worship service.

Bryan will share some of his experiences with us and Kristen will provide music and a children's message.



The Sunday school children will be working throughout the month of January on a banner to present to Bryan and Kristen for the Community Center in LaPlant, South Dakota.

To catch up on the important work of Simply Smiles, please visit their website [simplysmiles.org](http://simplysmiles.org). And to learn about Kristen, Connecticut's 15th State Troubadour, visit [www.kristengraves.com](http://www.kristengraves.com).

## VERY SPECIAL HELP WANTED

Our church has an opportunity available which we would like to share with the community.

While this job is integral to the life of the church, we are seeking candidates who are not members of our congregation.

### Administrative Assistant:

**Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 - 3:00**

Responsible for:

- production of monthly newsletter and weekly bulletin;
- management of building use;
- administrative and office support, including answering telephone and greeting visitors.

If you know anyone who might be interested in this opportunity, please have him or her contact Pastor Diane.



Have you traveled to Mexico? Do you still have coins and pesos from your trip? There will be a special container for your pesos near the coffee display in the Parish Hall. The collected funds will be donated to Simply Smiles.

Muchas Gracias y vaya con Dios. ~ Deb Mark

## A Reflection on Being A Christian Educator

Barbara Collins

Lee and I and our young family moved to Lakeville in the fall of 1970 and we joined the Congregational Church of Salisbury the following spring. Two or three years after that, I was elected to the Board of Religious Education where, as the "token youth" on the committee, I was petrified that my ignorance of theology and the Bible would be discovered. I coasted along under the radar for a year or two and then the inevitable happened - I was enlisted to teach Sunday School. It should come as no surprise that as I prepared to teach the children, I ended up learning things about the Bible and the Christian faith that I had forgotten or never knew.

This may suggest to you that I was unfamiliar with church. Not so! I grew up in a Methodist church, attending worship and Sunday School regularly. I was in the youth group, went on retreats, participated in work parties, served at church suppers, and sang in choirs from age 5 through high school. Here's what I remember most from those years:

- God, Jesus, Holy Spirit
- Church was something my family did
- I felt welcomed and loved and comfortable at church
- G. Bromley Oxnam was the Methodist Bishop at the time of my Confirmation (it took me ages to learn his name but I've never forgotten it!).

Historically, from the time of my childhood to the time of my young parenthood and even to the present day, the church experience for children changed very little. Sunday School was based on an educational model with teachers and classrooms, lessons and workbooks, tables and chairs. It was more about faith information than about faith formation. Please don't

misunderstand me. Yes, information is important. Yes, children experienced meaningful faith formation in the past. But for many, for too many, the information didn't stick and the faith wasn't strong enough to last into adulthood.

My long-time journey as a Christian Educator has taken me outside Salisbury to the Associate in Christian Education program, (Connecticut UCC and Hartford Seminary, 1986) to Silver Lake as a counselor and dean, to my present role as a member of the Connecticut Association of United Church Educators Coordinating Committee. I am energized by my colleagues from around the state who lead faith formation programs in their churches. I find myself hungry for books and workshops and conferences and retreats and conversations that inspire me to "tell the old, old story" in ways that reach today's children and to provide them with opportunities to practice their faith, not just learn about it.

I understand that faith formation is a life-long experience which requires constant care and nurturing whatever our age or experience. I forgot much of the information I was taught in Sunday School as a child, but I was blessed to be provided with other opportunities to grow in faith by a loving congregation.

Here's what I would have today's child remember:

- God, Jesus, Holy Spirit
- Church was something my family did
- I felt welcomed and loved and comfortable at church
- I don't have to remember G. Bromley Oxnam's name.

*"[Kids] don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are." ~ Jim Henson*



### NURTURING FAITH WITH A NEW GENERATION

The Connecticut Association of United Church Educators (CAUCE) recently held its annual statewide event in West Hartford, **From A to Gen Z: Nurturing Faith with A New Generation**. The keynote speaker of the day was Ivy Beckwith, the National UCC Faith Formation Team Leader. Ivy is a widely-recognized leader in faith formation and Christian education practices today and has authored and co-authored several books on children's ministry in the 21st century.

Stephanie Tierney, long-time teacher and friend of our Sunday School, and Jennifer Clark and Judith Frost, young parents and members of our Board of Religious Education, accompanied Barbara Collins to the event. Here are some reflections on the day.

**Stephanie:** I really enjoyed the CAUCE event, the camaraderie, the church in West Hartford, the worship, the luncheon, the workshops and the ride with Jennifer and Barbara. Early on the keynote speaker, Ivy, made the point that there is no certain formula for a church's success

“ The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope. ”

in keeping children active in church as they grow older. But the message was that they need to be more part of and welcomed at our hour of worship. This faith formation practice helps develop the life-long connection to our faith. We talked

about exciting, new ways to do this by having an accepting and loving attitude toward our kids in church and toward all our generations as a key for success.

**Jennifer:** What has stuck with me from the day is the idea that we, parents as well as children, don't have the language to talk about how God works in our everyday lives. We make choices every day to "do the right thing," but we never stop to reflect on how often "the right thing" is "the Christian thing." I am making an effort now to connect the choices I make to my own faith practice, and to name it. Our family gives to food drives not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the Christian thing to do. Ivy Beckwith had a great line: "Live like you believe that God wins." And, as important, name it.

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## LIFE-LONG LEARNING - A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

The other day Linda Estabrook and I (Theresa Carroll) had a conversation over a shared breakfast. We talked about the theme of January's MHT – faith formation and the importance of lifelong learning. She and I spoke of some of the more structured forms faith formation takes: Bible study, book discussions, and sermons, to name a few. That led us to thinking about the new and sometimes less formal ways of learning and expanding our faith: the thought of the day, the Advent Lenten evening prayer sessions, and new this year, leaving the church open as a quiet, sacred space to reconnect with God.

Somehow, the conversation moved to reminiscing about our childhood Christian education. I was raised Catholic, and Linda, Methodist. Something we had in common was the expectation that we would go to church every week, and that there was no skipping church school.

“When I was growing up,” Linda recalled, “I would get three pairs of new shoes every year. One would be for school, one for every day after school, and a pair of patent leather shoes. The patent leather shoes were so special, and they were only for church. I realized church was special.

“I was a member of MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship), and our group went to

Sioux City, Nebraska, where I met people different from me — Native Americans and Gypsies. As a young adult, I was a co-leader for a town-wide group labeled Christian Connection that included Catholics, Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Methodists. It was interesting how some things were done differently from Methodists. Still, as an adult I continued to go to church as a Methodist, and was a superintendent of Sunday School. It was not until years after I



married John that I joined the Congregational Church. I had learned faith has many expressions and all are acceptable to God.

“An important part of faith foundation is learning to pray. Pastor Diane began a prayer list just about the time my nephew, and you, Theresa, fell ill. I prayed for those on the prayer list. I believe prayer is powerful, and I got to see it in action. My nephew is not on the path we hoped, but compared to the place we expected him to be he is doing great...all I can say is how amazing prayer is.”

We talked a little bit about what it was like to be the person on the prayer list. Linda and I both learned a lot from being on the list, she, while recovering from her knee operation.

“I was just coming back from a physical therapy session, going into my room at Geer, and there on my chair was the prayer shawl and a blanket from the congregation. I just burst into tears because I felt directly the power of prayer. I may have needed a good cry anyway, but the love in the blanket and shawl opened my heart to the power of prayer and the infection the doctors were concerned about cleared in just a few days. I know prayer works,” Linda said.

It seems to me (Theresa) there are many ways to experience prayer. The first is saying the prayers we learned in church school individually or in a group. The second is witnessing the power of prayer. The third (and there are probably more) is to personally feel the physical sensation of being held up by prayer.

So, no matter which experience you have of prayer, prayers are your shoes on your faith journey. Sometimes every-day, sometimes “after school,” and sometimes patent leather, but always prayerful experience is an opportunity to grow in faith.

~ Theresa Carroll & Linda Estabrook

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### CORNELL GLEE CLUB

Concert Friday, January 16th at 7:00 p.m.



The Cornell Glee club will be performing at the SCC Meeting House on January 16th as part of their 2015 Northeast Tour.

The Glee Club was founded more than 125 years ago and has brought music to millions all over the world, sung in more than a dozen languages.

The Cornell University Glee Club is recognized as one of the premier collegiate ensembles in the United States. For tickets or more information, visit: [www.gleeclub.com](http://www.gleeclub.com)

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### Nurturing Faith with a New Generation

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**Judith:** Ivy pointed out that “the kind of church you are influences the faith formation your children experience” and exhorted us “to be an un-anxious presence in an anxious world.” The practical aspects of this goal were to turn toward a formational model of youth ministry rather than a schooling model of it. While she stopped short of suggesting that we eliminate Sunday School, she encouraged a more inclusive model of worship, in which all generations are pulled together instead of stratified.

She encouraged us to give children the language of our faith, show them how God breaks into our lives, allow children to engage with the Bible, and to train parents to be the primary spiritual nurturers of our children. Although Ivy did place a lot of the responsibility on the shoulders of the parents, her message was also clear that it is the responsibility of the whole church to engage with the younger generations. She closed with the quote, “the future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope.”

## FROM THE DEACONS

### HOW PARTICIPATION IN MUSIC HAS ENRICHED MY SPIRITUAL LIFE

Since I was a small child, I have participated in church music. When I was six years old, my elementary school teachers declared that I was musical and advised my mother to start me with piano lessons. She became my first piano teacher. I was a boy soprano in the St. Thomas Episcopal Church choir in Mamaroneck, N.Y. and continued singing with them through high school. (I was offered a spot in the St. Thomas Boy's choir in Manhattan, but I did not want to leave my friends at home in the fourth grade). It so happens that we sang Stainer's "Crucifixion," probably annually. That piece contains the well-known movement "God So Loved the World," beloved by many church choirs, and a regular piece here in Salisbury.

In my senior year in high school I won the place to accompany the New York All State Chorus. The music was Randall Thompson's The "Last Words of David. (Samuel XXIII)"

Once in college, I had the good fortune to win a spot to sing in and accompany The Harvard Glee Club. There my musical education continued. The club, which started as a Banjo and Song club in the late 1860's transformed to a

serious musical organization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and began to sing much more serious classical and eventually modern music. Probably nearly 50% of its repertoire came from liturgical music. As a freshman I accompanied Berlioz's "L'EnFonce du Christ," and later Handel's "Israel and Egypt." In my sophomore year, however, I met my wife, Louise, and we had one of the most transforming musical experiences of our lives.

The Glee Club and The Radcliffe Choral Society performed the Brahms "German Requiem" with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall under Erich Leinsdorf, one of the pre-eminent conductors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Maestro Leinsdorf was a prodigy, and was in charge of the entire German repertoire performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York at age 25. Brahms wrote this Requiem after his mother died, and it is not based upon the classical church Requiem Mass, but rather upon passages of the Bible that Brahms loved. He was raised as a Lutheran, but was not a churchgoer in adulthood. Like most Germans of his day, he knew his Bible inside out and upside down.

Louise and I will always remember

singing under Maestro Leinsdorf. With his operatic background he knew how to make the most of drama. He was an imposing figure, although not tall. He moved like a ballet dancer, and seemed to have disproportionately long arms. He was dressed all in a black. When he conducted the funereal Second Movement, I Peter 1:24, (Denn Alles Fleisch es ist wie Grass, und alle Herlichchkeit des Menchen wie das Grasses Blumen) (For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass--- and will wither away)---it seemed as if Leinsdorf's powerful eyes and body movements were focused upon every individual on the stage. You knew you were damned and hoped for redemption. Brahms gave it to you, because he thought he had found it in his favorite Bible passages.

All this is the tip of the musical iceberg for me as I have performed much more church music by this time in my life. The composer's work is to marry the music to the words, and when that is done successfully, the result can be overwhelmingly powerful. Listen to your church music, appreciate its beauty and power, and ponder upon the composer's intent and the overall meaning.

~ Malcolm Brown

### FAITH FORMATION: STEP BY STEP

*We will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. Psalm 78:4b*

*At the recent CAUCE event, "From A to Gen Z: Nurturing Faith with A New Generation," Amie Giguere, Director of Christian Education at United Congregational Church of Tolland, reflected on this verse from Psalm 78. She used LEGOs to illustrate the lifelong experience of faith formation.*

Three lessons that emerge can apply to both LEGOs and to our Scripture lesson for today, as it relates to our ministry of faith formation.

#### 1. Connecting builds a strong founda-

**tion.** Our role as Christian Educators includes forging connections. We connect teachers, parents and congregants to resources, children to other children and to the stories of our faith, families and individuals of all ages to one another and we even connect ourselves to colleagues and events like this one... all while we stay closely connected to God. We connect with our faith tradition through worship and ritual. We cannot do this work alone, and the connections we foster inward, outward and upward are our building blocks as we connect with the past, the present and the future generations.

#### 2. LEGO bricks are reusable. We can take them apart and rebuild some-

thing new. The LEGO products on the shelf today are being built into very different things than they were 50, 25 or even 10 years ago, the traditional LEGO brick remains the foundation. Likewise, the principles of our Christian tradition remain the same, we are only limited by our imagination in the ways we can repurpose our people, our church and our ministry to better fit our future. By remaining open to new possibilities without compromising integrity, we can continue to accomplish the task set before us by Psalm 78 to teach our children. Perhaps we can imagine ways to appreciate and celebrate the

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# JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25						
				1 <i>Happy New Year!</i> New Year's Day	2	3  5:00-7:00 p.m. Retirement party for Al Sly
4 10:00 - Worship with Communion. Church School & Youth discussion group 11:30 - Board of Trustees 2:00 - Noble Horizon's Worship	5	6  <i>Epiphany</i>	7  7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	8	9 8:00 - Men's Ecumenical Bible Study group	10
11 10:00 - Worship. Church school & Youth discussion group 11:30 - Christian Action	12	13	14  7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	15  4:30 - Women's Bible Study	16 8:00 - Men's Ecumenical Bible Study group  7:00 p.m. - Cornell Glee Club	17
18 10:00 - Worship. Church school & Youth discussion group. Salisbury School students celebrate Martin Luther King Day. 11:30 - Church Council	19  <i>Martin Luther King's Birthday (Observed)</i>	20	21  7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	22  "Feel The Warmth" Dinner - United Congregational Church, Bridgeport	23 8:00 - Men's Ecumenical Bible Study group	24
25 10:00 - Worship. Simply Smiles Founder Bryan Nurnberger and Folksinger Kristin Graves-guests at worship.* No church school; crib & toddler care available.	26	27	28  7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	29  4:30 - Women's Bible Study 5:30 - Deacons Mtg.	30 8:00 - Men's Ecumenical Bible Study group  2:00 - Worship Service at Geer Village	31  * Article in this MHT



## January Birthdays

1st	Don Mayland	21st	Anna Beck
2nd	Joy Fitting	21st	Dick Taber
2nd	Ron Jones	23rd	Janet Offensend
6th	Tim Hughes	23rd	Caleb May
15th	Ashley Allyn	27th	Edith Blodgett
16th	Owen Beck	30th	Rick Morrill
19th	Lee Collins	30th	Bob Newman
19th	Constance Frost	31st	Kate Pastore
20th	Jeanette Weber	31st	Sam Pastore

If your birthday has been omitted from the list, please contact the church office.

## VIDEO ASSISTANT NEEDED

Lee Collins would like someone to help video parts of the Sunday service when he is involved with the choir. Training provided, and no previous experience necessary. Please contact him: 860.435.0051.

## STAY IN TOUCH

You can stay in touch with Sunday services, sermons, events and activities on our website: [www.salisburycongregational.org](http://www.salisburycongregational.org), and on the church Facebook page (log into Facebook and enter Congregational Church of Salisbury or access it through the FB button on our website's home page). Please make sure we have your email address so you also stay in touch by receiving our weekly eblast. Questions? Please contact the church office.

The Deacons encourage everyone to pick up a green "The Essentials" booklet to fill out and have on file. You'll find them on the marble table.

ability to learn from one another across the generations, even the children yet to be born.

**3. No matter what you are building you have to do it one brick at a time.** As we read in Matthew, when Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees as to which of the laws was the most important, he answered to first "Love God" and second to "Love Neighbor". Following these commandments may be understood more simply or may be more involved depending on our age and stage in life. Just like in building with LEGOs, we begin with the larger and more easy-to-handle DUPLO bricks, and our structures may be more simplistic. As we are farther along in our development and level of maturity, we can use smaller and smaller LEGOs with more complex and creative designs. Loving God and Loving neighbor may be understood more simply when we're younger and the way we live those commandments out at later ages and stages may require more of us... but either way, when we faithfully use these "bricks", one at a time, to put our confidence in God, we model this for ourselves, for one another and for the generations to come. Amen.

**FAITH FORMATION AT SUMMER CAMP**



**Silver Lake Conference Center** is the home of the Outdoor Ministries of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. Each summer, Silver Lake

continues the proud tradition of being the vibrant church camp for up to 1300 fourth graders through high school-age young people. These week-long "conferences" offer "once-in-a-lifetime experiences, over and over" to several generations of youth, helping to shape future leaders and spirited community-builders everywhere.

Silver Lake has become a sacred place to so many people, young and old. We invite you to come away from the busyness of everyday life and find out what is so special about this ministry of God's love.

**REMEMBER THE CORNER FOOD PANTRY**

Please remember those in our communities in need of the basics. Non-perishable food is always welcome, and can be left in the baskets in the narthex.

Wondering what to do with your plastic grocery bags? The Food Pantry could always use them.

[www.thecornerfoodpantry.org](http://www.thecornerfoodpantry.org)



# One Baptism

The "one" theme of Ephesians 4:4-6 assures us that we need to be baptized only once. Yet a relationship with God involves approaching him with a humble heart each day.

*Directions: Inside the 1, fill in words using the spaces as a guide. Then unscramble the circled and boxed letters to reveal John's message about baptism in Mark 1:4.*

hope		<input type="checkbox"/>
Spirit		_____ n _____
body		<input type="checkbox"/>
baptism		_____ v _____
Lord		
Father		
God		

Answers: body, Spirit, hope, Lord, baptism, God, Father, repentance, forgiveness

