Water & Roots’ Next Steps

*If your congregation held a Reaffirmation of Faith Service*

1. **Share your pictures**. As you post your pictures on social media, be sure to tag them with #waterandroots You may also email them to ­­ gyeske@gnjumc.org as GNJ plans to use local church pictures to highlight this movement of the Holy Spirit at this May’s Annual Conference.
2. **Tell your story**. Share how Water & Roots impacted your congregation. Josh Kinney, GNJ’s Editorial Manager, is looking to highlight your experiences (jkinney@gnjumc.org).
3. **Engage with the companion materials.** Consider offering the Water & Roots companion materials in your congregation which covers a variety of small groups, mission and more!
4. **Reconnect with the baptized**. Over time people in our churches are baptized and we lose track of them, so let’s help them reconnect with the body of Christ. Invite a few congregants to write cards or make calls inviting them back to church for Easter. Or plan a reunion day, where everyone who has been baptized at your church is invited back for a special service, and make a special invitation to those families baptized in the last 10 years.
5. **Tap into your creativity.** Did you enjoy the altar design and hands-on “take ways” from the Water & Roots series? How will you and your congregation creatively engage in worship this Lent and Easter Season?
6. **Connect with those who missed it.** How can you reach out to those who were not a part of the service and invite them into a time to reaffirm their vows? Small groups are great for this!
7. **Share a baptismal invitation.** Include an invitation to learn more about baptism regularly in worship and preaching. Reminding people it is always the right time to come to the waters of grace.

*If you did not partake in the Reaffirmation Service*

1. **Its not too late.** There are plenty of times in throughout the year that Reaffirmation fits perfectly such as Lent, confirmation, a summer worship series, Rally Day, or whenever a baptism is celebrated.
2. **Make reaffirmation part of Easter Service.** What could be a better Sunday to reaffirm our faith then on Resurrection Day.
3. **Engage in the reaffirmation in small groups.** Consider doing a short reaffirmation of baptism as the devotion at the beginning of you next church council meeting or small group meeting.

*But wait there’s more…*

When we baptize we expect it will affect how we engage in ministry in our churches.

Here are a few questions to consider?

1. **What’s your visitor plan?** How we welcome first time visitors affects their likelihood of returning and making your church their spiritual home. What ways does radical hospitality extend to visitors beyond Sunday worship and fellowship hour?
2. **How are the newly baptized nurtured in the faith?** What clear next steps are in place so that the baptized know that the sacrament is not a one-time event, but an important part long the journey of faith.
3. **As a church, are you living out your baptismal vows?** In what ways does your church support the baptized by their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.
4. **What other rights of passage does your congregation engage in?** In what ways does the church celebrate and honor them? Consider Confirmation not just a practice for teens but a important practice for adults too.

*Baptism Conversation 101*

There is no right or wrong way to have a conversation with someone about baptism.

As you talk consider some of the following:

* Share your story about baptism, how you became involved in the church and your leadership in the church you are serving.
* Invite them to share their story about their relationship with God and the church.
* Let them know that baptism is an initiation to a life of faith. Baptism does not require you know it all (none of us do!). As one’s faith matures they have the opportunity to respond to the grace offered in Baptism with a personal decision to commit to Christ.
* Review the service of baptism from the hymnal with them and share the meaning of each section.
* Explain that the congregation pledges to support them through prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. Give examples as to the ways this takes place in your particular congregation.
* Introduce them to a member of the church, who can be a connection point to the congregation.
* Consider asking them to share a statement of faith about their beliefs and hopes for themselves or their child that they or you can read at the baptism service. (See resource kit.)