

## Baptismal Watershed Assignment

HT 567 Theology in Place  
Ghost Ranch 2022

“Baptism into Christ has always been an entrance into water. [...] All the waters in the world are even now a saving flood of mercy flowing from God.”

Benjamin Stewart, “Water in Worship,” *The Christian Century* (2011)

At Ghost Ranch, one of our Evening Prayer liturgies will include a time to give thanks for baptism and for the gift of water, which nourishes, blesses, and sustains creaturely life. During this liturgy, you will be invited to stand, name, and give thanks for the waters in which you were baptized and for the watershed from which those waters were drawn.

Your assignment is to research and compose a statement describing your “baptismal watershed,” which you will read during our liturgy.

### Research

In what waters were you baptized? Trace the waters used in your baptism to their source in creation. If you were baptized in a river or lake, this will be simple. If you were baptized in a church font, research where the tap water of that church comes from. *What watershed is the water from? Which rivers and glaciers feed that watershed? What natural landforms or geological events shaped the land that forms the watershed?*

The following will aid your research. Use the address of the church where you were baptized:

- **How’s my waterway?** <https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/how-my-waterway>
- Try googling “what’s my watershed address” and the name of your state. States keep their own searchable GIS watershed maps.

### Compose

Using the template below, compose your Baptismal Watershed statement in 3-4 sentences. Conclude your statement with the thanksgiving: “I give thanks for the waters of my baptism.”

#### Template

I was baptized into the Body of Christ at *(name of church or community)* in *(place name)* in water from *(name of local river, lakes, streams – the local sources of drinking water pulled from the tap to fill the font)*. These waters were drawn from the *(name of watershed)*, which is formed by the *(landforms and geological events that shape(d) this watershed)*. I give thanks for the waters of my baptism.

You may adjust the template as needed to fit the story of your baptismal waters. Feel free to add anything else interesting that you discover about your baptismal watershed, keeping your statement to 2-4 sentences. See Dr. Duba’s **Model** on reverse.

Please bring a **hard copy** of your statement (printed or written in your journal) to Ghost Ranch.

## Course Outline

### **Week 1: Introductions and Orientations: Theology and Place**

### **Week 2: Deep Time: Theology, Geology, and the Story of Earth**

- Watch: "Awe and Wonder," AAAS/DoSER
- Lecture: "Introduction to the Geological Timescale" with Dr. Easley
- Read: "A Slow Womb," by Dr. Larry Rasmussen

### **Week 3: Deep Wounds: Are we in the Anthropocene?**

- Watch: "The Anthropocene: Has the Earth Shifted Out of its Holocene state?," ABC Science
- Watch: "The Trinity Bomb Test," PBS Documentary 2005
- Read: "Sacred Blood, Transformation, and Ecowomanism," Dr. Melanie L. Harris, 2019
- Read: selections from "Laudato Si," Pope Francis
- Class Discussion: *What is the Anthropocene and why does it matter? What are the theological questions raised by the Anthropocene? In what ways is the ecological crisis also a theological/spiritual crisis? What is the nature of the conversion to which people of hope, faith, and love are called in light of the Anthropocene?*

### **Week 4: Deep Incarnation: The Difference Jesus Makes**

### **Week 5: Deep Wisdom: Learning from the Pueblo Peoples**

### **Week 6: Deep Inhabitation: Living as Church in the Anthropocene**

- Read: "Water in Worship," Dr. Benjamin Stewart
- Read + Research: "How's My Waterway?" EPA Website
- Assignment: Baptismal Watershed Assignment (due May 6)

### **May 7-14 Trip to Ghost Ranch**

- Itinerary includes: Geology and Paleontology museums at Ghost Ranch