

Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

—The Book of Common Prayer

MONDAY, MARCH 6

There is a ceremony among the Lakota People of South Dakota called the “Hunka” ceremony. Hunka is used as an adoption rite, a public acknowledgment that one has become a brother, a daughter, grandson or just about any form of family relation one can imagine. These adoptions are viewed in the same way as biological family members. The Lakota exercise great devotion to family and make no distinction between close or distant relations. When an individual adopts someone as a brother through the Hunka ceremony, both families become joined as one.

It should come as no surprise that we approach the sacrament of baptism the same way as the Hunka. Jesus adopts the baptismal candidate, becoming our elder brother, and Jesus’ father becomes our father. The new connection goes much deeper: Now all of Jesus’ relatives become our relatives. This includes all Christians – including all of those with whom we may disagree. There may be discord and tensions in all families, but within God’s family, we are called to make peace and to give love no matter how difficult. Together as a family, we can work toward God’s peace and love.

—Paul Sneve