

What is Baptism?

Baptism is one of the sacraments of the church: that is, Baptism is a 'visible sign of an invisible grace.' That grace is the creating, sustaining and saving love of God.

What happens when a child is baptized?

Baptism is a time to celebrate and recognize that our children are gifts of God, who loves them and intends for them to receive all the blessings God would give.

As parents and congregation, we recognize that our children belong to God and the community of faith – they belong because we belong.

Baptism is a time when parents reaffirm their faith and once again choose Christ as the centre of their lives. At Baptism, promises are made by both the parents and the members of the congregation to do all we can to provide a 'Christian' home for our children, and that all the members of the Church will support the parents while, at the same time, accepting our own responsibility to provide the children with security, Christian nurture and the examples of our lives.

What are the Requirements?

When our children are baptized they are welcomed into the Christian Church. They belong to the Church because they are part of a family within the 'family of faith'. Therefore, it is desirable that one or both of the parents (or sponsors) be active within the congregation.

If you are not now such an 'active member', you will want to discuss this requirement with the minister. If it is important for you that your child be baptized, then you will be glad to find your own place in the church family.

If you are not now active members

The arrival of children is one of those times in our lives when we think about some of the 'big' questions: about God, faith, and the kind of values we want for our children. This is also a perfect opportunity for you, as the parent, to think more seriously about what you believe and desire for yourself. Your spiritual life can be a great resource to assist in the raising of your children. Now is an appropriate time for you to renew or establish your faith. The minister will be glad to outline how this can be a reality for you.

If you do not live in Peterborough

Since it is the sacrament of welcoming into the church family, Baptism normally occurs in the congregation where the child will live and grow. However, there may be good reasons for holding the Baptism elsewhere. When this happens, it is with the understanding that the people of Grace Church are acting on behalf of the people of your church family where you now live. Accordingly, you will want to speak with the minister of the church you now attend. He/she may wish to personally describe the meaning of the sacrament with you and then announce to the people there that the Baptism is taking place on their behalf.

What about Godparents?

In the United Church all members of the church become your child's 'Godparents' when they make their vows in the service. However, you may wish to include others who have a special relationship with your child. They are welcome to stand with you in the service, but have no special duty. **Note:** *Their participation in the service is not recognized in law. Any arrangement concerning custody of your child in the event of death should be discussed with a lawyer and included in your will.*

The Service of Baptism

Introduction

After the parents come forward with their child(ren), the minister offers a brief explanation of the meaning of this sacrament.

The parents profess their faith

The parents are asked: **Do you profess your faith in God, your Creator, in Jesus Christ, your Saviour and Lord: and in the Holy Spirit, your Teacher and Guide?**

The parents answer: **I do.**

The parents make their promises

Will you bring up your child(ren) in the knowledge and love of God, teaching them the truths and duties of the Christian faith?

The parents answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you make a Christian home for your child(ren), so fashioning your lives that they will come to know Christ as Saviour and Lord?

The parents answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

Will you encourage your child(ren) to seek confirmation, so they may be strengthened in faith by the Spirit and nurtured at the table of the Lord; then to go forth and serve God faithfully in their own lives?

The parents answer: **I will, God being my helper.**

The people make their promises

The Minister asks the congregation: **Beloved in the Lord, it is our responsibility to receive these children in Christ's name, even as we were once received: and to support them with constant love; wholesome example, Christian teaching and faithful prayers. Are you willing to accept this great responsibility?**

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The people answer together: **We do so promise, God being our helper.**

Pouring of the water

Water is poured into the baptismal font symbolizing the new life we received In Christ.

Baptism of the child(ren)

One by one, the children are baptized and blessed.

A candle is lit

Remembering that the light of Christ in the world reflects on every one who is baptized, a candle is lit from the Christ Candle for each of the children.

Presentation of the Certificate

A baptismal certificate will be given to the parents of each child, recognizing this event in their child's life.

Prayers of the People

The congregation prays for the parents and for all who will care and teach the children about Christ and our faith.

To arrange for the Baptism of your child:

Consider and Discuss

Read through this pamphlet and think about the meaning of the sacrament and the requirements. Is this what you want for your child? Are you really willing to be a 'family within the church family'? Make sure you discuss it with your spouse. He/she may be willing to leave this decision to you, but they need also to support your intention.

Contact the Grace Church office

You are invited to visit or call the administrative assistant during office hours, 705 742-5846, or e-mail her at graceadmin@nexicom.net. She will arrange for you to receive our Preparation for Baptism package. Along with a DVD and additional information for you to read and consider, you will find a Baptism Request form in the package if it has not yet been completed. Fill it out and return it to the office. Your request will then be passed along to the minister who will contact you to set up a time when you can meet.

Set the Date

Since the whole congregation is involved in the Baptism of your child, the sacrament is normally held during a regular service of worship. The dates are chosen in consultation with the minister and family.

Taking The First Steps



Information for those thinking about Baptism



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