

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

A QUICK REFERENCE BEING BAPTIZED AND GUIDE FOR HAVING YOUR CHILDREN BAPTIZED

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

1. Before setting any dates – you need to talk with the church secretary and to the pastor. This is the first step.
2. You can fill out the informational sheet online at <http://stpaulwesterville.org/#/worship-sermons/baptism> or fill it out in the church office.
3. You will need to read the following information
4. Set up a time to meet with a Pastor who will explain the logistics of the service to you. (When you come forward, what to say, etc.)

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE BAPTISMAL PRACTICE:

1. The normal pattern for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is that it takes place during the worship service.
2. During the Baptism at worship, please no flash photography. Pictures can be staged and taken following the service.
3. When an infant is baptized, please remove his/her hat before the sacrament starts.
4. When the sacrament is complete, you will receive a baptismal candle, a baptismal towel, and a baptismal certificate. (If there are any errors on the certificate, please let us know).
5. There is NO financial charge for a baptism.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOLY BAPTISM:

Q: Is being baptized the same as being “christened” of “dedicated?”

A: It Depends. The confusion sometimes occurs with the word “christened.” Often times the Catholic Church refers to baptism as being “christened.” In this case the word would have the same meaning as baptism. However, sometimes non-mainline denominations use the word “christen” and/or “dedication” to refer to an event that their particular church does NOT mean baptized. “Dedication” is NOT the same as baptism. Such churches often practice “Believers Baptism” meaning that the individual needs to be old enough to understand what is happening.

The Lutheran Church does not practice “Believers Baptism,” Instead, we baptize infants because:

1. Baptism is something God does for us – it does not depend on us earning it.
2. The earliest church after the resurrection of Christ, baptized entire households.
3. Jesus said to baptize all nations, using a word that connotes a meaning of “all people”.

Q: Does baptism mean that the baby or person being baptized joins the church?

A: ABSOLUTELY. We are baptized into a community of faith, (the congregation). In the case of infants and young children, they will be put on the membership roles of the church until they are 21 years of age unless they are confirmed at the congregation. In that case their membership is permanent unless it is ended due to death, resignation, transfer, or removal from the roll due to inactivity as defined by the Constitution of this church.

Therefore, when someone is baptized they are making a commitment to the congregation. When infants are baptized, the parents are promising to raise the child in the Christian faith. This is done by the Church playing a key role in the child's faith development.

Q: What am I saying by bringing an infant/young child to be baptized?

A: Again, you are promising to include the life of the Church/congregation as a key part in the child's faith development. **If there is no intention to do anything with the Church or congregation after the baptism, one would need to rethink whether to baptize their children. Parents are also promising that they themselves will teach the child about God and the faith.** If you are living out of town you are encouraged to seek a church in your location. (At times there are understandable exceptions). If you do not attend a church, where you are living, you are highly encouraged to seek one out.

Q: Do I (the parent (s)) need to join the church in order to have my child baptized?

A: Since you are promising that the child will be brought up in Church, and the child is being baptized into the congregation, this community of faith, it would seem to be a contradiction if the parent (s) were not also members. If one is not a member, one could deduct the following: "I feel that it is important that I make the promise that I will bring up my child in the faith, keep him/her close to the church, but as for myself, I don't see it as a priority."

Q: What is the meaning of the baptismal candle?

A: The baptismal candle that is received is lit from the Christ Candle (also called Easter/Paschal candle). This candle represents the life, death, and resurrection, and the gift of eternal life from God. The baptized receive this candle as a symbol of their new life in Christ and in the Christian Church.

Q: What about God parents/sponsors?

A: The term "God-parents" is not used with frequency in the Lutheran Church anymore. Instead, we use the word "sponsor," though both mean the same thing. The sponsor is someone that is chosen by the individual/or parents, as someone who will contribute to the child's upbringing and faith development in the church. It is usually a member of the congregation OR a member of the family who is a Christian.

WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT:

It is not a magic potion that protects a child from hell.

It is not something to do so that the “religious” part of their upbringing is complete.

It is not protection against life’s difficulties.

It is not something to do simply because we have a new birth in the family.

WHAT BAPTISM IS:

It is the act of **joining** a community of faith. (The church/the congregation)

For adults being baptized, it is a **commitment** to the Christian church and the congregation.

It is a **promise** made by the parent(s) that they will raise their child in the Christian faith.

A QUOTE: “Having a child baptized and not attending church is like working and working to join a club, and as soon as you are declared a member, you have no intention of returning or participating in the club. Why bother in the first place?”

THE OFFICIAL LUTHERAN DOCTRINE ON BAPTISM:

The following is original teaching of the Lutheran church that still stands today. It was written in the 16th century. This is from The Small Catechism of Martin Luther.

Q. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water contained within God’s command and united with God’s word.

Q. Which Word of God is this?

A. The one which our Lord Christ spoke in the last chapter of Matthew.

“Go into all the world, teaching all nations, and baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Q. What does Baptism give? What good is it?

A. It gives the forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the Devil, gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, just as God’s words and promises declare.

Q. What are these words and promises of God?

A. Our Lord Christ spoke of them in the last chapter of Mark.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be damned” (Mark 16:15-16)

Q. How can water do such great things?

A. Water doesn't make these things happen, of course. It is God's Word, which is with and in the water. Because, without God's Word, the water is plain water and not Baptism. But with God's Word it is a Baptism, a grace-filled water of life, a bath of new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul said to Titus in the third chapter.

“Through this bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, which was poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that we, justified by the same grace are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.” (Titus 3:4-8)

Q. What is the meaning of such a water Baptism?

A. It means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and die with all sins and evil lusts, and in turn, a new person daily come forth and rise from death again. They will live forever before God righteousness and purity.

Q. Where is this written?

A. St. Paul says to the Romans in chapter six. “We are buried with Christ through Baptism into death, so that in the same way Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, thus also must we walk in a new life.” (Romans 6:4)

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS/QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK THE PASTOR.

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