

MEMBERSHIP / FAITH COMMUNITY

Since baptism is the beginning of life in the Christian community, it is desirable that families planning to baptize a child choose and become members of a congregation in which they will regularly participate. It is preferable that the baptism be held at that congregation since the members of the congregation share the responsibility for nurture of the child. It isn't membership alone that is central; it is important that the parents begin attending the congregation so there is a relationship with this particular community of faith. We prefer to not rush the baptismal process. There is not a specific ideal age to baptize an infant or young child. We recommend that you begin attending Holy Spirit for a number of months before beginning the baptismal process. If you do not live in the area, but have family connections to the congregation, it is possible to be baptized at Holy Spirit. However, the expectation is that the family is active in a congregation where they reside. The membership of the child will then be transferred to that congregation.

MEETING

Please call or e-mail the Pastor to arrange a date to meet and discuss the baptismal process. The meeting usually takes about 45 minutes to an hour. The baptism of a child is a unique and opportune time for parents to grow in their own spiritual lives and commitment

BAPTISMAL DATE

Since baptism is seen as initiation into a community of faith, the common practice is to hold baptisms during the Sunday morning service. Baptisms may happen at either the 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. service, and all parties participating in the baptism (those being baptized, parents of children, and sponsors) are all asked to be at church at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the service.

ADULT BAPTISM

Adults desiring to be baptized participate in a period of spiritual formation, joining with a sponsor and other members of the congregation for study of scripture and reflection. This process can be deeply meaningful for both the person preparing for baptism and the congregation.

PICTURES

We request that flash pictures not be taken during the actual baptismal service; we are happy to repose scenes from the liturgy following the service. If a video camera is used, we ask that that it remain in one place during the liturgy.

INFANT BAPTISM

Since Lutherans believe that God's grace is offered before we can understand or respond to it, the sacrament of Baptism can be offered at any age. When infants are baptized, the parents, baptismal sponsors and congregation make promises to provide Christian nurture and instruction for the child. A mutual accountability is involved. In the

early centuries of Christianity, adults were baptized. The norm, therefore, was baptism followed by catechesis (instruction) and spiritual formation. Later, the baptism of infants become common for children born into families of active Christians. The baptism of infants means that catechesis follows baptism rather than precede it. The parents, sponsors and congregation take responsibility for this nurture in the following ways:

- nurturing the child's relationships with God and with the members of Holy Spirit
- bringing the child to worship
- teaching the child to pray at meals, bedtime and other occasions
- bringing the child to Sunday School (9:40am during the school year)
- providing instruction prior to first communion (usually in 1st or 2nd grade)
- providing Confirmation instruction and the opportunity for the child to affirm his/her own baptism (6-8th grade)
- celebrating the anniversary of the child's baptism
- providing an example of a Christian life
- giving the child a Bible and other religious books/gifts (this happens at various times in a child's development).

Since baptism is the beginning of lifelong growth in the Christian faith there is not a strong reason for infant baptism if parents are not committed to the spiritual nurture and education of their child within the life of a congregation. In such a case it may be preferable to celebrate a naming or blessing of a newborn. The child may choose to be baptized later as a child or adult and subsequently participate in the life and ministry of a congregation.

METHOD OF BAPTISM

The most common method of baptism at Holy Spirit is to have water from the font poured on the head of the baptized. The generous use of water signifies baptism as a bath in which we are cleansed and refreshed by the Spirit of God. If an infant is small enough, immersion may be requested. However, the font is not large enough to allow for the immersion of older children or adults.

SPONSORS

Normally two (though in some cases more) baptismal sponsors (also known as godparents) are chosen. These sponsors are baptized and practicing Christians. Otherwise it would be difficult for them to take responsibility for the promises that they and the parents make at baptism. As parents choose sponsors, they should consider individuals who would be role models and would take seriously the Christian nurture of the child. When at least one sponsor is a member of the congregation a special relationship with the parish community can develop. Though this is not required, it is an option to carefully consider.

In addition to sharing the responsibilities above, the sponsors could help make the anniversary of the child's baptism an important occasion by giving cards or gifts or doing something special on that day.

GIFTS GIVEN TO REMEMBER THE DAY

On the day of baptism, the person being baptized is given a baptismal candle (useful for lighting on "Baptismal Birthdays" each year), a cross or other gift from the congregation, and the small baptismal cloth (known as a purificator) that was used to dry the person's head. Certificates of Baptism and Sponsorship are also given to the baptized and their sponsors.



Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
7234 Fenton Rd.
Grand Blanc, MI 48439
Phone: 810.424.6707
Email: info@holyspiritlc.net
Web: www.holyspiritlc.net



BAPTISM

LIVE

among God's faithful people

HEAR

the word of God & share in the Lord's Supper

PROCLAIM

the good news of God in Christ through word & deed

SERVE

all people following the example of Jesus

STRIVE

for justice & peace in all the earth

