

THE UNITED CHURCH IN MEADOWOOD

BAPTISM GUIDELINES

The United Church in Meadowood is pleased that you are thinking of having your child baptized. As one of two sacraments (the other is communion) celebrated by the United Church of Canada, baptism is a very significant event in the nurture of your child's spiritual life. It is an equally important event in your calling as a parent, as it draws upon your commitment and faith. The Christian upbringing and spiritual nurture of your children are exciting adventures.

Baptism, like marriage, should be approached thoughtfully. If your faith and the church play a vital role in your lives, and in your life as a family, then in all likelihood they will be important to your children.

To help you make this decision, we offer you this brochure to:

- Ensure you are aware of the meaning of baptism and why it is so important in faith and life;
- make clear the commitments you take on, should you decide to participate;
- and to inform you of the steps needed to prepare for baptism.

We hope that with the help of this brochure, a baptism preparation meeting, and personal contact with one of our ministers, you will be equipped to decide if baptism is for you or your child. You may decide that you are not ready to make the commitment - that is quite all right. However, if you are ready, then we are here to support you in that decision.

WHAT IS BAPTISM? Baptism is a rite by which people signal their desire to be identified with Jesus and Jesus's ongoing body in the world (the Church). Baptism is a celebration by Christians of their belief in the love of God for the world and the people whom God has created. It is an occasion of joy in the church, as we enact the story of the beautiful gift of life and love which God has bestowed on us and our children over and over again. Water is a central element of this celebration, symbolizing new life: at the birth of creation where God's spirit hovered; at the birth of the freedom of the people of Israel as they crossed through the sea; at the birth of Christ's ministry where Christ was baptized in the Jordan River; and in our lives, as each of us is born in the waters of birth and in the Spirit flow of faith.

HOW DO WE BAPTIZE? A small but visible amount of water is used on the person's head. As baptism means identification with Jesus and Jesus's body (the Church), the sacrament happens, in the presence of the whole church community—adults and children. Adults and parents of children are asked to make oral promises in the service to the church and community.

WHO DO WE BAPTIZE? Any person, at any age, who has not been baptized, may be baptized. From the very beginning, the Bible indicates that adults and children were both baptized. In our culture, baptism often takes place at a young age, in childhood or infancy. In that case, the young are baptized not because of their decisions, but on the strength of their parents' faith. This is encouraged so that, during their early formative years, children may experience the loving environment of the church and begin to learn the stories of our Christian faith. At a later age, they are invited to confirm the vows made for them. At that time, they can make firm their intention to continue walking the Christian path, from the basis of knowledge.

It is expected that at least one parent be a baptized and confirmed member of some Christian denomination. If you are not a member, preparation for church membership is available to you and we invite you to consider it. If you are a member, but have not been active, please give some thought to renewing your commitment to Christ and the Church. Our minister would be happy to discuss this with you.

WHAT ARE THE PROMISES? Baptism marks the formal beginning, of the Christian faith journey. During baptism, promises are made by parents that indicate:

- A desire to identify with the Christian way;
- seeking to grow in understanding of the Christian faith;
- a commitment to do one's best to live out this faith in one's home and daily life e.g. modelling for children, what Christian faith looks like in the modern world;
- a promise to participate in the life and work of the church as it gathers and as it goes into the world.

The congregation also makes promises to help raise the child in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus. It is, therefore, our understanding that the child will attend church/church school regularly, to enable the congregation to keep these promises.

STEPS TO BAPTISM. The Council of The United Church in Meadowood (acting on behalf of the congregation) is responsible to oversee the Sacrament of Baptism. Here are the steps for you to follow:

1. Please **CALL** the church office and speak to the office administrator and tentatively select a baptism date; at least two months' notice is required. There is a limit of four baptisms per service.
2. **REVIEW** this brochure, **AND SEND** your completed information form to the church office if you decide to proceed.
3. **MEET** with the Baptism Team (one of the ministry staff and a member of our Worship Committee), and other parents, to review the meaning, commitment and choreography of the baptismal service.
4. The Baptism Team will present your request for baptism to the Worship Committee and Council for approval, and will let you know of that approval.
5. **SEND** three to four digital photographs of your child and one with your child's immediate family, to the Office Administrator who will assemble images for display on our overhead screens during the service just prior to the baptism, and on the Cradle Roll display of baptized babies. (This is a way to help the congregation meet and connect to you and your child in order to begin fulfilling the promises of mutual support).
6. Ensure that you **ARRIVE at least 15 minutes** prior to worship on the day of the baptism. We insist on no photography of any kind during the worship service. Pictures can be staged after the service with family and the minister at the font if desired.

Our minister will guide you throughout the service, so you do not need to be anxious about remembering details. It is our hope that you will stay at least for a while **AFTER** the worship service, to meet other congregants. You and your guests are invited to take flash photographs after the service, rather than during the liturgy.

You are invited to begin immediately to become involved in the life of the congregation as you approach the day of baptism and on the day itself. The more connections you make, the more support you will find in the congregation.

Unsure about anything? Don't hesitate to **ASK!** Phone our minister, who will gladly assist you.

WHAT ABOUT PARENTS FROM OUT OF TOWN? The usual practice is to encourage parents to have their children baptized in the congregation where they attend church—this is the congregation that must accept responsibility for that child. However, circumstances sometimes warrant the Baptism of an out-of-town child to be held in this church. This request would be presented to the church Council which must give final approval for the baptism. If you do not live in our community or have moved from our community, we would be pleased to write a letter of introduction to a church in your community.

ARE GODPARENTS REQUIRED? No. The responsibility of saying vows to support parents and children in nurturing their faith is taken on by the congregation. If you wish to include other participants, please discuss their roles with our minister.

STILL HAVE SOME QUESTIONS..?

What are the reasons that underlie your request for baptism?

Are you seeking baptism as a response to what you know and understand of God and God's love or out of social or family pressure?

Do you and your children want to explore what relationship to God in Jesus Christ and to the Church mean for your lives?

Are you now, or do you intend to become involved in the life and worship of the church?

Will you, with God's help, be faithful in living out the promises you will make?

Do you have questions or concerns about belonging to the Church, or fulfilling the baptismal promises?

All of the above are offered as a way to open conversation. Accept this brochure as an invitation to dialogue. The congregation of The United Church in Meadowood is eager to share with you the joy of baptism. God's love is for all people and will, we trust, bring meaning and fulfillment for all people.

THE UNITED CHURCH IN MEADOWOOD

MINISTERS

REV. HA NA PARK

REV. DR. GORDON TAYLOR

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

ANDREA HURST

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Reviewed and approved by the Worship Committee of The United Church in Meadowood 2015 -04-21

Reviewed and approved by the Council of The United Church in Meadowood 2015 – 05-19

THE UNITED CHURCH IN MEADOWOOD
BAPTISMAL INFORMATION (*Please print clearly*)

DATE REQUESTED FOR BAPTISM: _____

CHILD'S NAME (in full) _____
Date of Birth (D/M/Yr) _____ Place of Birth _____
Has the birth been registered? _____ Where? _____

PARENT'S NAME (OR GUARDIAN'S NAME) (in full) _____
Address _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____
Are you baptized? _____ Confirmed? _____ Home church: _____

PARENT'S NAME (OR GUARDIAN'S NAME) (in full) _____
Address _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____
Are you baptized? _____ Confirmed? _____ Home church: _____

OTHER CHILDREN: Have you had other children baptized before? _____
Name: _____ Age (now) _____ Where baptized? _____
Name: _____ Age (now) _____ Where baptized? _____
Name: _____ Age (now) _____ Where baptized? _____
Name: _____ Age (now) _____ Where baptized? _____

What motivates you to request baptism at this time?

How do you see yourself helping your child grow in Christian faith and life?
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How do you see yourselves becoming involved in the life and worship of the United Church in Meadowood?
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NOTE THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:
Parents' baptism preparation meeting _____ Time _____
Baptism Sunday _____ Time _____

Return to the United Church in Meadowood Office: 1111 Dakota Street, Winnipeg, MB., R2N 3T7
Or email to : ucm@ucim.org