



BAPTISING YOUR CHILD AT THE UNITED CHURCH IN MEADOWOOD



Baptism is a very significant event in the development 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 children are exciting adventures for you and the UCiM congregation.

Baptism is an opportunity to reflect thoughtfully on your faith and the role the church plays in your life, and in your life as a family. When faith and belonging to the community are important, parents want their children to experience them as well. It is not necessary to be baptized to participate in the church, but it is a way to make your intentions visible and to invite the support of others. We invite you to prayerfully consider baptism for your child.

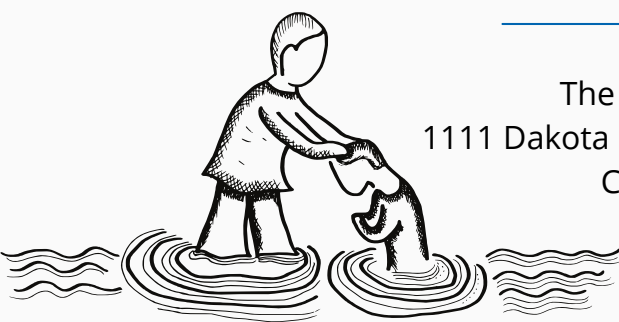
WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is a rite (sacrament) by which people signal they are followers of Jesus and become members of Jesus' ongoing body in the world (the Church). Baptism is a celebration of the Christian belief that God loves the world and every person God has created is a beloved child of God. It is an occasion of joy as we symbolically mark the ever present and enduring gift of God's love and grace. Water is a central element of this celebration. Water symbolizes new life throughout the Christian story: at the beginning of time God's spirit hovered over the waters of creation, as the people of Israel crossed through the sea they were liberated from slavery to freedom, at the birth of his ministry Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, and in our lives, each of us passes through the waters to birth.

HOW DO WE BAPTISE?

As baptism means identification with Jesus and Jesus's body (the Church), the sacrament happens in the presence of the whole church community. A small amount of water is used on the child's head. Parents of children are asked to make oral promises in the service, promises to God and to the church community.

Jesus said,
"Let the little children come to me, don't stand in their way.
The world of God is made up of people like them."



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WHO DO WE BAPTIZE?

Any person, at any age, who has not been baptized, may be baptized. We do not practice re-baptism because, like other Christian churches, we recognize baptisms done in other denominations. From the very beginning, the Bible indicates that adults and children were both baptized. In our denomination, baptism usually takes place at a young age, in childhood or infancy. The young are baptized not because of their decisions, but on the strength of their parents' faith and desire to nurture their children in the church. As children experience the loving environment of the church and begin to learn the stories of our Christian faith, they are prepared to confirm the vows made on their behalf at a later age. At Confirmation they can make their own decision to continue walking the Christian path.

It is expected that at least one parent be a baptized and confirmed member of some Christian denomination. If you are not a member of The United Church, preparation for church membership is available and we invite you to consider it. Our minister would be happy to discuss this with you.

The usual practice is to baptize children in the congregation where they attend church, within the community that is committing to help nurture the child. However, circumstances sometimes warrant the baptism of an out-of-town child. 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.

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;
- interest in growing in understanding of the Christian faith;
- a commitment to do one's best to live out faith in one's home and daily life, modelling for children what Christian faith looks like in the 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. As you and your child participate in the life of the church, the congregation endeavours to keep these promises by building relationships with you and providing nurture and Christian Education.

STEPS TO BAPTISM

We encourage that your first step toward the baptism of your child is to become involved in the United Church in Meadowood. If you are not already participating in Sunday worship or one of our church programs we encourage you to do so. Next step is to contact our minister Caryn Douglas to discuss your interest. (204.256.7002 or minister@ucim.org).