

Making Arrangements for a Baptism

If you desire baptism for yourself or for your child, you are asked to contact the Pastor they would like to administer the sacrament. The pastor will work with you to determine the most suitable date.

You may also choose a member or family in the church to be the child's baptismal sponsor. Baptismal sponsors are representatives of the congregation who present the child for Baptism and participate in the sacrament. They promise to help grow and nurture your child as a follower of Christ.

It is required that the Session approve baptisms and all baptismal sponsors in advance. The Session meets on the third Tuesday of each month. Therefore, you should normally begin your scheduling at least a month in advance.

You will want to meet with the pastor some time before the baptism to discuss why you desire baptism for yourself or child, and what baptism means.

Those eligible to perform the sacrament of Baptism at United Presbyterian Church are

Rev. Dr. Stephen McKinney-Whitaker
revmcwhit@unitedpc.org

Rev. Patricia Stetson-Warning
revpasw@unitedpc.org

Karen Miller, Director of Children and Youth
karen@unitedpc.org

Who May Be Baptized?

Baptism is available to adult believers and to their children. When we baptize younger children we are reminded of the truth that God's love claims us before we are able to respond in faith.

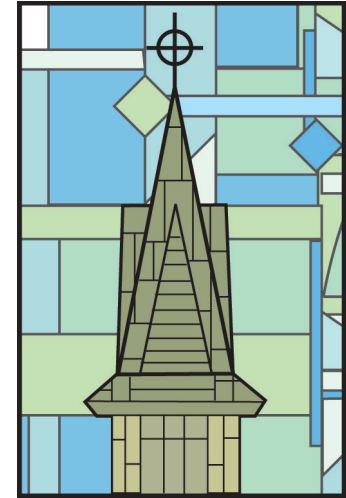
Through baptism, we are publicly received into the church to share in its life and ministry. When infants are baptized, the congregation, as well as the parents, has a special obligation to nurture the child in the Christian life. Therefore, the presence of the worshipping congregation is a necessary element in the full meaning of baptism.

The congregation's commitment to nurture the child is best realized when the parents of the child are active members of the congregation. The congregation promises to pray for child, and provide nurture and guidance within the community of faith until the child is ready to proclaim the faith proclaimed for them at their baptism.

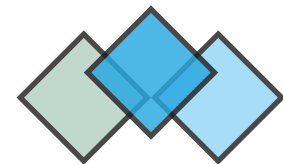
The baptism of older children and adults reminds us that God's grace is a free gift that calls for our personal response. Adults and older children are usually baptized at the time when they make their own profession of faith through confirmation, or are received as active members of the congregation.

We encourage children of believers to be baptized without delay, while respecting the wish of some parents to delay their children's baptism until the child is older. Ordinarily the parent(s) shall be an active member of this congregation (though the child of a Christian parent who is an active member of another congregation may also be considered).

BAPTISM



EVERYTHING TO KNOW
ABOUT BAPTISM AT UPC



UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We grow and nurture followers of
Christ in a welcoming community.

What Do Presbyterians Believe About Baptism?

United Presbyterian, like all Presbyterian churches, celebrates two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. baptism is the sacrament that marks our entry into new life in Jesus Christ, and our belonging to the family of faith. Communion is the sacrament that nourishes us along the journey as we follow Jesus Christ.

As Christians, we baptize because, after His death and resurrection, Jesus gave His followers this commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19).

From the first days of the Christian Church until now, the invitation to all who want to belong to Christ is just as Peter first proclaimed it: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Paul tells us that in baptism we participate in Jesus' death and resurrection. We die to what separates us from God, and are raised to new life in Christ (Romans 6:1-4). Baptism reminds us of God's grace and faithfulness, the washing away of sin and our rebirth, being adopted into the family of faith, resurrection, and new life in Christ.

There is one body of believers and one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all baptisms with water administered by other Christian churches. Baptism is received only once, and there is no need to be "re-baptized" in a Presbyterian Church.

What Happens in the Service of Baptism?

Baptism involves the entire church, and so it is celebrated (except for extraordinary circumstances) in a service of corporate worship. Persons to be baptized come to the front of the church and are presented, along with their immediate family members (if desired) by their baptismal sponsor.

Those receiving baptism profess their belief in God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and promise to follow Christ as active disciples. Those presenting children for baptism make the same profession of faith, and then promise to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord toward the end that the children will one day confess Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The congregation, children of the church, and sponsors, promise to love those being baptized and to assist them to be faithful followers of Christ.

After prayer, the pastor sprinkles or pours water on the head of the one being baptized and proclaims the baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The pastor offers a prayer for the newly baptized. We then anoint the baptized with oil and offer a blessing. Following the anointing, we introduce the newly baptized to the congregation. In the case of children, the newly baptized are walked around the congregation to symbolize the child's entrance into the church as the congregation sings "Jesus Loves Me."

We finish by confessing our faith together using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

Baptismal Gifts

United Presbyterian celebrates with you for your baptism and the baptism of your child, because you are being given new life! The old life of sin and death is left in the water, and you are raised to newness of life in Christ. We live into our baptism every day of our lives, as we confess our sins and are assured of God's grace. We live into our baptisms as we grow and are nurtured in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We live into our baptisms as we participate in the life of the family of God that God has welcomed us into.

We mark this celebration with gifts to remind you and your child of this special day and the promise that God is with us and for us. Every child receives a blanket made by a member of the congregation, and a hand-stitched baptismal napkin. Children also receive a stuffed lamb that plays "Jesus Loves Me" and a photo frame made out of olive wood from the Holy Land. These frames are Christmas ornaments that you can hang on your Christmas tree in order to remember your own birth into new life as you celebrate Christ's birth into the world. Older children receive a special picture book about the meaning of Baptism.

A certificate of baptism is prepared for each person receiving baptism, and presented during the service. The baptism is recorded in the official minutes of the Session of United Presbyterian Church. This data in our permanent record ensures the certificate is legally correct to serve as a source of proof of identity.