

## Baptism @ St. Andrew's

Are you considering having your child baptized at St. Andrew's? Please speak to one of the ministers so that they can arrange a time to meet with you. Baptism is a special celebration not only for the parents but for our congregation too. We remember our baptism and give thanks to God for this visible sign of God's love. The ministers can be reached at 822-4772.

*From The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Book of Common Worship:*

Baptism is a gift from God. There is nothing we can do to earn, deserve, or purchase baptism. It is first of all a sign that God, in Christ, has done all that is necessary to redeem us. The mystery of faith is that God's act of self-giving is offered to us freely, long before we begin to recognize, want, or understand it.

Baptism is initiation into the household of God; a new family relationship is formed. The promise of God's faithfulness supports us even while we are infants in the faith. Our age at baptism is not significant. Whether we are baptized as infants or adults, we are as babes in the faith, called to grow and mature into full stature with Christ. We are children of the covenant.

In baptism we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. The power of sin has been broken and the power of death is overcome. In Christ we are cleansed, forgiven, healed, and reborn. The signs of death and life represented in the water of baptism are to be remembered and celebrated with thanksgiving until, at the time of our own death, the promises are fully realized and we enter life beyond death.

In baptism we are joined to the body of Christ, the church. We are anointed with the Spirit and appointed to be a royal priesthood, serving Christ and one another in the world. The implications of baptism for a life of discipleship should not be minimized or sentimentalized. Baptism is the beginning of a new life in the world where ethical, social, and political decisions are made in the light of our response to God in Christ. Baptism is not a protection from the world but an initiation into the love and justice by which God seeks to redeem the world.

God in Christ gave water as the sign or symbol of baptism. Water is a sign of birth, life, death, cleansing, and refreshment. It binds all people of the earth together in common need. It is the sign of God's new creation.

Baptism is administered only once. It should not be repeated. Other services and celebrations occur throughout life which interpret the meaning of baptism in the life of the individual and the congregation and these should be planned at regular intervals. The Easter Vigil or Pentecost are two natural times to remember and celebrate the meaning of baptism.

## **An Order for the Sacrament of Baptism**

**The Invitation** The invitation announces briefly the purpose of baptism and invites all present to consider the benefits of the sacrament, giving thanks for their own gift of baptism.

**Sponsors** Appointed by the session, sponsors may assist in relating the newly baptized person to the church community and sharing in the continuing nurture of the person.

**The Presentation** When the candidates for baptism are presented by an elder, the responsibility of the session in both receiving and providing nurture for the new member is demonstrated.

**Renunciation and Affirmation** The renunciations and affirmations, adapted from an ancient liturgy, remind all participants that the repentance required at baptism, as in the whole of the Christian journey, is both a turning away from evil and a turning to Christ. It is an act which is both individual and corporate.

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** The prayer over the water, like the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving in the eucharist, begins with a thankful recitation of the mighty acts of God in creation, covenant and redemption. Finally, the prayer invokes the Spirit to accomplish that which God has promised in the sacrament.

**The Act of Baptizing** The use of water in the name of the triune God is the central and essential act in the sacrament of baptism. Whether the water is administered by sprinkling, pouring or immersion, it should be used in generous quantities as symbols of God's free grace and cleansing, healing powers.

**The Triune Names** Baptism is celebrated in "the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). In using the Trinitarian formula, we respond to the command of Christ as recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew; we express our historic continuity with the apostolic church; we demonstrate our unity with Christians everywhere.

**Naming** Only the given or Christian names are used in the act of baptizing. The family name is not used. The naming of God and the personal name of the baptized point to the covenant that is established between God and each person who is received into the community of the new covenant.

**The Blessing** According to the tradition of this Church, the baptism is concluded with a prayer for the gift of the Spirit. With words, joined to the laying on of hands, it points to the promise of God which is received and claimed in the sacrament. Although not essential to the act of baptism, the blessing provides an important link between baptism and other occasions in the life of Christians. Whereas baptism is administered once, and not repeated, the blessing is repeated many times.

**Declaration and Welcome** The newly baptized persons are declared to be members of the household of God and charged to live as priests of Christ, serving one another. The declaration is followed by a welcome from the congregation.

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated during the public service of Worship because it is a gift to the whole church and is administered by the church.

A minister of Word and Sacraments, acting on behalf of the universal church, and in the name of Jesus Christ, presides at the baptism. Elders or others may be appointed to assist but the minister only is responsible for the act of baptizing.

The order for baptism is outlined below.

The Sacrament of Baptism

The Invitation

The Presentation

Renunciation and Affirmation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Act of Baptizing

The Declaration and Welcome.