



## BAPTISM INFORMATION

In baptism, God welcomes us into the Christian family. We would love to celebrate this special occasion with you and support your family going forward in your faith.

### **Why should I have my baby baptized?**

When we baptize, we fulfill Jesus' command, "Go therefore... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) In response to this command, we baptize.

As Christians, we believe that there are two beginnings in life. The first beginning is the miracle of birth. Life is a gift from God and though we claim to understand its process, it is nevertheless, a great miracle.

The second beginning is Holy Baptism. Listen to this opening address in the service of Holy Baptism: "In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God." (ELW, pg...)

In birth, we join a fallen and needy human family. In baptism we are brought by God into God's family, there to be loved, cared for and nourished by God. Through Water and the Word of God (coupled together in Baptism), God makes our new life a reality.

### **What are my responsibilities as a parent?**

Baptism is the beginning of a lifelong experience of God's loving care for God's people. Baptism has a follow through to it called "nurture". Living with God and God's people, "we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God."

As parents, you are cautioned that your responsibility does not stop when your child is baptized. On the contrary, God has great plans for parents! You are thereafter partners with God in an educational and guardianship enterprise. Your child belongs to Christ and you are to watch over your son or daughter on God's behalf.

Your responsibilities are clarified in the service:

"As you bring you child to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

to live with her or him among God's faithful people,  
bring her or him to the word of God and the holy supper,  
teach her or him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,  
place in his or her hands the holy scriptures,  
and nurture his or her in faith and prayer,  
so that she or he may learn to trust God,  
proclaim Christ through word and deed,  
care for others and the world God made,  
and work for justice and peace. (ELW pg.

It is a staggering responsibility. But God does not ask us to do anything beyond our ability or without help. We pray for parents and sponsors regularly in worship:

"O God, the giver of all life, uphold these parents with loving care, that with wise counsel and holy example they may be faithful to fulfill their responsibilities both to their child and to you, Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**"

As a congregation, we are prepared to offer a comprehensive program of Christian education as your child grows older. This will include several years of confirmation instruction leading to the day of Confirmation, now called Affirmation of Baptism.

We want to support you as parents by providing opportunities for you to grow in your parenting skills and your own relationship with God. Classes are available for you to attend and other opportunities are provided.

### **Who should we choose as sponsors?**

There was a time when sponsors were chosen with the understanding that they would care for the child in the event the parents would die. This is no longer the case.

The major responsibility of a sponsor today is to assist the parents in providing a model of faith and a Christian community as an aid to the child's growth and development. Sponsors should be chosen with care and thoughtfulness. They **need** not be Lutherans, but they should be members of a Christian church, hopefully, active and committed members with the spiritual welfare of your child at heart.

There is no rule about how many sponsors you should choose but commonly there are 2-4. If they are unable to attend the baptismal service, they may still be sponsors by proxy. You will receive a certificate which can be mailed to the sponsors.

Many people choose relatives to be baptismal sponsors. We support that, but also invite you to consider that the relative, like an aunt or uncle, already has a special relationship with your child. Because it takes a village to rear a child, and help them weather the storms of life, we encourage you to expand the community of caring people in your child's life.

### **How do I schedule a baptism?**

The first step is to call the secretary at 507-228-8380 or email her at [secretary@fieldsofgracemn.com](mailto:secretary@fieldsofgracemn.com) to schedule the baptism, and the earlier the better. Try to allow at least two months prior to your desired date. The secretary will check the church calendar as well as the pastor's availability.

### **Do I have to attend any meetings?**

At least one month before the baptism, our pastor will meet with you to get acquainted, and to respond to any questions you may have. She will help you understand why we do baptism, what will happen on that day, the role of the one being baptized, and the role and responsibilities of parents and sponsors. This visit can be in your home or at the church. The pastor will contact you to schedule this visit.

### **What do we do on the day of the baptism?**

Parent(s) and sponsors, and those being baptized, will gather with the pastor the day of the baptism as early as possible given the morning's worship schedule. We will meet near the font at the front of the church.