

More on Baptism

- Any flexibility or exceptions to the guidelines laid out in this brochure are subject to the discretion of the pastor and other leadership of PPUCC formed through prayer, the Scriptures, and the example of the greater Church. If you have questions, please call or email the church or speak with the pastor in person.
- Baptisms will typically be performed during Sunday morning worship services, though other venues and times may be considered. Since baptism is for the Church community, private ceremonies are not normally practiced.
- Baptism candidates and parents (if infant baptism) will be asked to meet with the pastor to discuss their faith and baptism's meaning. This is so the baptism is as personal and meaningful as possible.
- Typically, baptisms are done by "sprinkling," but pouring or immersion are other possible modes.
- Photography and/or videography during the baptism is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the worship atmosphere.
- Godparents or sponsors can be a part of the ceremony if the baptism candidate or parents of the infant so desire. These should be people whom you trust to provide Christian love, teaching, and encouragement to the baptized individual.
- Christian baptism is a requirement for membership at PPUCC, but we recognize and celebrate baptisms performed by other local churches.
- Parents considering infant baptism will be asked to consider the potential spiritual benefits to their child of both infant and believer's baptism before making a decision.
- If parents choose not to baptize their infant child, they are welcome to speak to the pastor about conducting a dedication service or some other alternative to celebrate their new child.
- If you have been baptized as an infant and are wondering about being "re-baptized," please speak to the pastor.

Christianity is *about* water:

"Everyone who thirsteth, come ye to the waters." It's about baptism, for God's sake. It's about full immersion, about falling into something elemental and *wet*. Most of what we do in worldly life is geared toward our staying dry, looking good, not going under. But in baptism, in lakes and rain and tanks and fonts, you agree to do something that's a little sloppy because at the same time it's also holy, and absurd. It's about surrender, giving in to all those things we can't control; it's a willingness to let go of balance and decorum and get *drenched*.

Anne Lamott

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**POINT PLACE
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To care for others...

...as God cares for us.

Celebrating Baptism at Point Place UCC



**WHAT IS BAPTISM?
WHAT DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE?
WHY GET BAPTIZED?
WHO GETS BAPTIZED?
MORE ON BAPTISM**

What is Baptism?



Baptism, along with the Lord's Supper, is one of the oldest and most cherished traditions of the Christian Church. These two "sacraments" draw us into the heart of the Gospel, what Jesus has done for us.



Baptism is a symbolic ritual, or "an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace."* After Jesus' resurrection, he instructs his disciples, "When you go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."** In other words, **baptism gets at the core of what it means to believe in and follow Jesus.**

Baptism is a time for all God's people to reflect on their own baptisms, to celebrate anew the grace of God, to ask ourselves what difference it makes to our lives that we have immersed ourselves in the Gospel through baptism. **Baptism is a gift God has given to the Church for the Church.**

Baptism is commonly misunderstood to be a person's "ticket to heaven." This is not the case. Rather, it is the realities and events symbolized in baptism that give a person hope of eternity with God, not the ritual itself.

Baptism is also not a family tradition. Since its symbolism is soaked in the work of Jesus and the faith of God's people, baptism is a celebration and symbol for the Church.

*A widely used quote from St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD)

**Matthew 28:19

What does Baptism symbolize?

The symbols of baptism are rich and multi-layered. Here are some of the core Christian realities baptism can symbolize:

- 1) Repentance/turning from a life lived apart from God and his will to God (Lk. 3:3, Acts 2:37-41)
- 2) Forgiveness/cleansing from sin (Lev. 14, 1 Pt. 3:20-21)
- 3) Pledging our allegiance to God (Rom. 6)
- 4) Entering into the community of God's people who have experienced his grace (Ex. 24:3-8)
- 5) Having God's Spirit poured out onto us for guidance and strength (Lk. 3:21-23, Acts 1-2)
- 6) Beginning a relationship with Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20)

Because baptism is given to us to be such a meaningful gift, it is important to practice baptism in a way that brings out its fullest meaning and fits with the purposes for which God has given it to the Church.

Why Get baptized?

...To experience in a physical way what God has done for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus

...To proclaim to the world that you have received God's love and have committed your life to Jesus

...To give your brothers and sisters in Christ an opportunity to celebrate their own faith as well as yours

...To join the Church community in all times and places by taking on this symbolic mark of Jesus' love

...To pray for and anticipate the Spirit's work in a child's life as he/she grows up in a Christian community

Who gets baptized?

1. Anyone who has made a decision to receive God's grace, follow Jesus, and join in worship and mission with God's people, the Church. This is called **believer's baptism.**

2. Besides believer's baptism, the Church has long practiced **infant baptism.** This is done when the parents/guardians of a child desire to raise their child in a local church community. In the interest of allowing infant baptism to have its full significance, only children of active PPUCC members will be baptized as infants. **Why?**

- Infant baptism is primarily a symbol for joining and living as part of a Christian community. Children are most likely to be a part of the community if their parents are an active part of the community.
- During the baptism vows, the parents promise before God to live out and teach the Good News of Jesus as best they are able. We believe that being an active part in a Christian community is key to fulfilling this promise.
- In a baptism ceremony, the congregation is asked to promise before God their love and support for the child. If parents are active members, we can be confident that the congregation will have the chance to fulfill this promise.

If you are not an active member of PPUCC and would like your child to be baptized, you are invited to spend some time with us and consider whether you would like to be a part of this faith community. Because baptism isn't a "ticket to heaven" thing, we believe there is no spiritual danger in waiting to baptize your child until you have found a church family that will help both children and parents grow in their faith.

Parents will be asked to consider the benefits of both types of baptism before deciding.