



## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM at Bethel Lutheran Church

*The Sacrament of Holy Baptism* is a wonderful gift God has given to his people. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther wrote in his Small Catechism in May 1529,

**“In baptism, God forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil,  
and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what he has  
promised.”**

**BAPTISM IS OUR LINK** to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus who gives salvation as a gift of his grace. *There is nothing magic about baptism.* Instead, we see it as God’s promise for forgiveness of our sin and eternal life made real in our lives.

In baptism, *God adopts us as his children* and gives us all the gifts available to his heirs. In baptism, *we are made members of the family of God* and just as we will never deny the DNA of our natural parents received in conception and birth so can be not deny the family heritage of God as he claims us and makes us his own.

Christian parents who want their children to grow up as disciples of our Lord gladly obey Christ’s command to make disciples by:

baptizing their children, and  
*teaching them to observe all that God commands* (Matthew 28:19).

**Request Form for Baptism**

**Making Arrangements for the Baptism of a Child**

**Making Arrangement for the Baptism of an Adult**

**Parental Commitments**

**Date and Place**

**Baptismal Service**

**Sponsors**

**Sunday School, First Communion, and Confirmation**

**Photography**

**Cost**

# MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

## FOR THE BAPTISM OF A CHILD

1. **Attend a PRE-BAPTISM PREPARATION CLASS**

We ask all parents to attend so you will be properly prepared and better able to understand the meaning of this important rite in the church. As Pastor Flatt says, “there is nothing more important or more valuable for you to give your child than to have them baptized. Throughout their lives you will want to give them gifts and trinkets of all kinds, some very costly, but in baptism you give them eternal life with God through Jesus Christ.”

These classes are held on *the SECOND SUNDAY, every other month at 12:00 noon* in the sanctuary by the baptismal font. Parents are welcome to attend before or after their child is born.

2. **Choose the date you prefer in consultation with the church office** and those who will serve as sponsors. See more on these below.
3. If you attend the Pre-Baptismal session before your child is born, **call the church following the birth** to give the full name and verify the date of Baptism. (586-778-0021)

## FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

1. **Contact the church office to arrange a meeting with one the pastors.** At this session baptism and the Christian life will be discussed. Other sessions may be scheduled as the candidate and pastor decide necessary.
2. **In consultation with the pastor, choose the date** you would prefer and those who will serve as sponsors in the Christian faith. If you would prefer, sponsors from the congregation will be chosen for you.
3. **Make arrangements to attend** our THIS IS BETHEL! Class when next offered to continue the process of spiritual growth and discovery of God’s purpose in your life.

# PARENTAL COMMITMENTS

Baptism is only the first step in a life-long journey of walking with the Lord and being part of the family of God which is the church.

**At the Baptism of an infant or child**, the parents and sponsors *each promise* to teach the child about God and bring the child to church regularly. This question is asked as part of the Baptismal service:

*PASTOR: In Christian love, you have presented this child for Holy Baptism. You should therefore faithfully **bring** her/him to the services of God's house, and **teach** her/him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments. As she/he grows in years, you should **place** in his/her hands the Holy Scriptures and **provide** for her/his instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of her/his baptism and in communion with the Church, he/she may live a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ. **Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?***

*PARENTS AND SPONSORS: **IDO.***

1. **bring her/him to the services of God's house** – bring them to church regularly. Families that worship together have a richer and broader family life. Children who see their father pray and worship treat each other and the world around them with more respect and appreciation.
2. **teach her/him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments** – this is all about teaching your child the important parts of the faith. Teach them to pray by saying bedtime prayers. And of course, if they are in church regularly they will come to know the Lord's prayer. The Creed is the Apostles' Creed, a grounding hallmark of our Christian faith. It is recognizing God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Ten Commandments are about living in relationship with God and one another. Following the law is important in society.
3. **place in his/her hands the Holy Scriptures** – during the baptism service we give an age appropriate bible to the parents to give to their child. Then in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we repeat the process as our commitment to journey with the child and the parent.
4. **provide for her/his instruction in the Christian faith** – bring them to Sunday school, Vacation Bible school, other learning opportunities so they will grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Of course, there is no better example than the parent's own participation in learning, Bible study and reading.

Clearly, parents are best able to fulfill these promises when they themselves also are members of the congregation. **Parents who are not members of Bethel Lutheran Church, yet want their child to be baptized, are certainly welcome to have their child baptized at Bethel**, but should be prepared to discuss their own plans for church involvement and/or membership with the pastor at the preparation session or shortly thereafter.

This is important since *all children baptized at Bethel become members of Bethel Lutheran Church*, and the congregation assumes spiritual care and oversight for those children who are members of the Church family. The church needs and will expect the cooperation of parents in helping these infant members of the Church grow into mature discipleship.

## DATE AND PLACE

**The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is celebrated during the worship services** of the congregation. Unless other special circumstances or emergency dictates, parents may request Baptism during the following worship times.

**Saturday - 5:00 pm    Any weekend.**

**Sunday – 9:00 am        The 2nd Sunday of the month.**

**Sunday - 10:30 am    The 3rd Sunday of the month.**

Occasional conflicts in the church calendar through the year may make certain worship services unavailable for the celebration of the baptismal sacrament. Feel free to speak to the pastor if you have questions.

## THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE

Parents and sponsors are to be at church no later than 15 minutes prior to the service.

**Saturday evening** - parents, sponsors and baptismal candidates are asked to check in with the pastor prior to service. You may sit wherever you desire and come forward at the appointed time.

**Sunday 9:00 am** - parents, sponsors and baptismal candidates are to check in with the ushers and sit in the back pews. Remaining family and friends are welcome to sit wherever they prefer. After the Baptism, candidates, parents and sponsors may join their family members. The Liturgy for Holy Baptism is located on pages 121-125 in the front of the Lutheran Book of Worship.

**Sunday 10:30 am** - parents, sponsors and candidates are welcome to sit wherever they feel most comfortable. Please see the pastor before worship. You will be invited to come forward to the font at the appropriate time.

Details about the service will be provided at the Pre-Baptismal Session.

## SPONSORS – GOD PARENTS

Sponsors promise to fulfill the obligations asked of the parents. *Therefore, sponsors must be baptized Christians* who are living as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is preferable that they be confirmed Lutherans, but they may be members of any denomination that shares our faith and practice concerning Baptism. Traditionally, there is one man and one woman for each child, but that is not required. There may be any number and they may be of either gender.

Sponsors:

- a. Witness that the Baptism has taken place and present the child for baptism.
- b. Pray for the newly baptized.
- c. Show the baptized an example of the godly life and encourage them in Christian living through their own example and life.
- d. Assist the parents in bringing the baptized child to church and teaching them about the Lord Jesus.

### **WHAT IF A CHOSEN SPONSOR IS UNAVAILABLE?**

In the event that your chosen sponsor cannot be present at the Baptism, you may designate a “proxy” who can stand in for the chosen sponsor at the Baptism ceremony. If you have no one to fulfill the role of sponsor, you as parents may assume this responsibility yourself without sponsors, or you may ask the pastor or the Board of MemberCare to choose a member of the congregation to serve as sponsor.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL, FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION**

On going instruction in our Christian faith is provided by the congregation for all people.

*Sunday School* is available for children age 3 through adult. Families are encouraged to make worship *AND* education a Sunday morning priority.

*Instruction about the Sacrament of Holy Communion* is also available for baptized children. Upon completion of this course the child is welcome to receive Holy Communion.

*Catechism* is for children in grades 6 through 8. This is a three year period of confirmation instruction. During these years the youth study the Scriptures, the Small Catechism, and aspects of Christian faith and life. Upon completion of this study the youth publicly affirm their Baptism and promise continued faithfulness as disciples of Jesus. This ceremony is called *Confirmation*.



## PHOTOGRAPHY

**Flash pictures are *not* appropriate during a worship service.** Should you desire, the pastor(s) would be available for reenactments of the Baptism following the service. If someone would like to videotape the service, this may be done unobtrusively from the pew or a side aisle or corner. Please respect fellow worshippers and the dignity and reverence of the occasion.

## COST

Since Baptism is the free gift of God's grace, there is no fee, nor should parents or families feel obligated to give the pastor an honorarium. If you would like to respond to the gift of Baptism in some way, a thank offering to the church would be appropriate.

GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR CHILD!