

A sacrament is a symbolic action, or ritual, by which people of faith encounter the presence and goodness of God. In a sacrament, ordinary things like water, bread, and wine are used to point us to God and God's love, reminding us of the sacred in life. In the United Church, we celebrate two sacraments: baptism, the ritual that formally recognizes we belong to the Christian community, and communion, a symbolic meal initiated by Jesus. These sacraments are of central importance to our faith.

*In company with the churches
of the Reformed and Methodist traditions,
we celebrate two sacraments as gifts of Christ:
baptism and holy communion.
In these sacraments the ordinary things of life
—water, bread, wine—
point beyond themselves to God and God's love,
teaching us to be alert
to the sacred in the midst of life. (A Song of Faith)*

Baptism

Baptism is a symbolic action that signifies the new life God gives us as we join the church community. Baptism uses water as a symbolic cleansing that signifies the acceptance of new life within the church family. The sacrament of baptism is the single rite of initiation into the Christian community, the church.

The United Church offers baptism to all ages. We believe the gift of God's love doesn't depend on our ability to understand it, so we baptize people as infants right up through adulthood. With children, instruction is given to parents or sponsors to equip them for the child's Christian nurture. During the ceremony, which usually takes place as part of a regular worship service, everyone in the congregation pledges support for the child and their parents.

If you are seeking baptism for yourself or your child, please speak to your minister or contact a [United Church near you](#).

*Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity
is the means by which we are received, at any age,
into the covenanted community of the church.
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith
and cleansing by the power of God.
Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,
and transforming power of God's love
and our grateful response to that grace. (A Song of Faith)*

Baptism is not a requirement for God's love. We believe people who die without baptism are in no way condemned, lost, or damned.

Baptism in the United Church is recognized by all denominations of the Christian church that practise infant baptism. Similarly, if someone has already been baptized in another church at any age, the United Church recognizes their baptism and welcomes them as Christians.

If you are interested in Baptism at St. Paul's please call 613-267-2973