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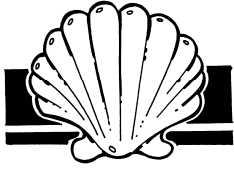
*The Sacrament of Holy Baptism*  
*Lutheran Church of the Cross*

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. ~ Matthew 28: 19-20*

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baptism





## *Questions about Baptism at LCC*

### **Why is Holy Baptism so important?**

Baptism is the means God uses to claim us as His own. Through water and God's Word we are freed from the power of sin and death, welcomed into God's family, and are made members of the priesthood of all believers. Baptism is important to God and also important to us.

### **Why is Holy Baptism called a "Sacrament" by Lutherans?**

A sacrament takes place at the command of Jesus Christ, conveys the grace of God through the forgiveness of sin, and includes a visible element as a sign of God's activity. Baptism is commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:19), is a means of grace and includes water as an earthly element.

### **Is Holy Baptism God's act?**

Yes, God is the one who creates the new relationship with us. God declares, "I will be your God, and you will be my people." God is making a promise and claiming us as His own. In the Small Catechism, Luther writes that through Holy Baptism, God "forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what He has promised."

### **What does the Bible say about Baptism?**

The New Testament uses many descriptive images to help us understand what Holy Baptism accomplishes:

In Romans 6, Paul describes Baptism as a burial with Christ in His death in order to be "raised" with Christ to "new life." Paul writes, "Therefore we have been buried with Christ by Baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (live a new life).

In Titus 3 Paul calls Baptism "the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." (Baptism is to be "born again".)

“As many of you as were Baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Galatians 3:27) Baptism is like putting on new clothes. The early Church Christians placed a new white garment on each candidate immediately following his or her Baptism.

Baptism is entry into the Church. In I Corinthians 12:13, Paul writes, “For in the one Spirit we were all Baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free...” The Church is the Body of Christ.

Peter (I Peter 3:20) writes of Baptism being a rescue. “In the days of Noah...eight persons were saved through water, Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you...”

### **Do Lutherans Baptize infants?**

Yes, we believe Baptism is God's initiative and action, and God desires all to be saved. In our reading of the *Book of Acts*, we believe that from the time of the early Church, the baptism of infants has been the practice of the church. When addressing this issue, Luther writes, “Everything depends on the Word and commandment of God.” We call this unconditional love and acceptance demonstrated during infant baptism “GRACE.” Just as all people can do nothing to earn God's grace, an infant has done nothing to earn the promise of salvation nor is the infant capable of believing! Therefore, it is simply God's act in the life of the infant and the Holy Spirit working through the water.

### **What about older children?**

The Pastor will meet with the family and discuss the meaning of baptism in an age appropriate manner with the child and family when a child is between the ages of four and twelve. After instruction, the family can set a date and time for the baptism.

### **What about adults?**

Yes. We also Baptize adults. The same teaching applies as above. The adult would meet with the pastor for instruction related to the meaning of Baptism. The adult may also receive the Lord's Supper following Baptism.

### **What is our response or involvement in Baptism?**

Baptism is God's gracious action in our lives. God invites us into a new covenant relationship with Him. In the Service of Baptism, the Pastor marks the baptized with the sign of the cross, "Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." God's promise and intent for us is an eternity of letting our light so shine that others may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Living in the light of Christ and sharing in the priesthood of all believers does call for a response on our part.

### **Now that my faith has grown, I would like to be Baptized again.**

#### **Is this possible?**

Scripture clearly calls for "one Baptism". If a person senses renewal and the Holy Spirit is in her/his life in a new way, there is a service of Affirmation of Baptism to celebrate such occasions. In this service, we give thanks for the gift of Baptism in our lives. You can be assured that you are growing through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's gift to you in Baptism. Affirming your Baptism is celebrating what God began in you long ago.

#### **Is Baptism a "name-giving" ceremony?**

It is only a name-giving ceremony in that God gives us His family name, the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But more than just a name, baptism gives the baptized person identity as a child of God!

#### **What about Membership?**

At the time of Baptism, the baptized person is added to LCC's roster of membership. If that person becomes part of another congregation, or another Christian church, the membership will be transferred to that congregation for spiritual care.

#### **What happens before a baptism is scheduled?**

The Pastor will meet with the family to discuss what happens at baptism, go through the liturgy for baptism and answer any questions about baptism that family members may have. This normally takes about an hour.

### **Do I have to join the church in order to have my child baptized?**

Since part of the liturgy asks the parents and sponsors to “make public your commitment to raise the child in the faith,” we ask that the family make a commitment to join the congregation. If new member orientation is held after the desired date of the baptism, then we certainly will baptize the child before the family joins! If the family is from out of town, then we ask that they be a part of a worshipping community. (It does not have to be Lutheran but it does have to be Christian).

This will allow us to send the transfer to that particular congregation after the baptism takes place.

### **When are Baptisms celebrated?**

Baptisms are normally held in the context of a worship service. The Baptismal liturgy is not really intended for use by itself. It is important that the congregation, who is both the Baptizing Church and the receiving community of faith, be present. Except in emergencies, private Baptisms contradict the community or family character of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and keep it from having its full impact as an invitation into the priesthood of all believers. Baptism involves the entire congregation, so we encourage families to have the baptism in the worship service.

### **When are Baptisms normally scheduled?**

Baptisms can be scheduled for any of our worship services. If there is another baptism scheduled for the date and time requested, we will ask the family of the first scheduled baptism if they would mind having another baptism at that service. In the New Testament and throughout the history of the Church, there were many baptisms held at the same time. To schedule a baptism, please talk with one of the pastors by calling the church office, 525-8364.

### **What do we do if our child was Baptized on an emergency basis?**

#### **Can we still schedule a Baptism at church?**

Yes. The service is adjusted slightly to affirm the Baptism that has already taken place in the hospital or home. We are happy to celebrate the Baptism so that the whole congregation can be a part of God’s gift of new life to your child.

## Questions Regarding Sponsors

### **What is the role of sponsors or godparents?**

Baptismal sponsors have a distinct responsibility when young children are Baptized. They are to work with parents on behalf of the child to assure the child receives Christian upbringing. They are to be supportive and encouraging to parents to fulfill the promises they have made before God on behalf of their child. Sponsors remember the child regularly in prayer and thanksgiving and remember the child on their Baptism anniversary each year with a card or gift.

### **Who may be a sponsor?**

A sponsor may be any practicing Christian who has been Baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Sponsors should understand the importance of Baptism and the serious nature of their responsibility, as they desire to fulfill this responsibility.

### **How many sponsors are selected for a baptism?**

Most parents select two sponsors. If it is a family tradition to include more than two, that is fine.

### **Do sponsors have to be Lutheran?**

No. We do ask that they be practicing Christians in their own denomination.

### **Do sponsors have to be present for the Baptism?**

Normally, the intention is for the sponsors to be present. The important aspect of sponsorship is taking the responsibilities seriously. Sponsors not present still receive a certificate signed by the pastor. A proxy may stand in for the absent sponsor to present the child and to respond on behalf of the child and the sponsor.

## Photography

### **Are photographs permitted during the service?**

Photographs are not appropriate during a worship service. The pastor would be happy to pose for pictures after the service with the family. Video taping from the side of the Worship Area is acceptable.

## **Baptismal Remembrances**

### **Do we receive a Baptismal Certificate?**

Yes. LCC provides a certificate showing the date and place of the Baptism, names of sponsors, and the address of the church. Please put the certificate in a safe place or frame it and hang it in a place of honor for it is part of the child's faith story!

### **Do we keep the candle presented at Baptism?**

Yes. You may wish to light the candle each year on the anniversary of the Baptism as a reminder to continue to "let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

### **Do sponsors also receive a certificate?**

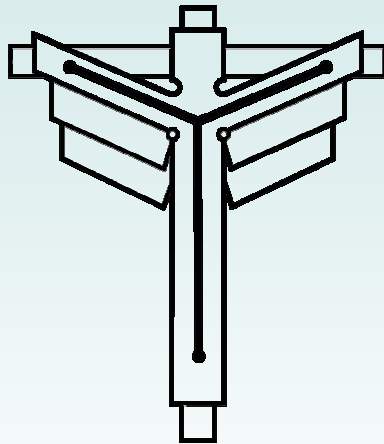
Yes. These can be helpful reminders of the child's baptismal anniversary and the need for prayer on the child's behalf.

### **What about flowers for the service?**

If there is the desire for altar flowers, such as the full bouquets used at the sides the altar, please sign up on the flower chart in the Lobby or contact Sarah in the church office (525-8364). Arrangements will be made to include a dedication in the church bulletin. Cost for the altar bouquets is \$60.

### **Some of our relatives are not Lutheran; may they commune with the family at LCC in the service?**

Yes. We welcome to the Lord's Table all baptized Christians who wish to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Those with questions about the Lord's Supper and its meaning should contact one of the pastors prior to communing. Those who do not commune are still welcome to come to the Table for a blessing. A newly baptized child would also receive a blessing.



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*Pastor David E. Swenson*  
*Pastor Mark R. Schlenker*

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