



Community Reformed Church

Helping all people find and follow Jesus.

Guidelines and information for individuals who want to receive Baptism, and for parents who want their children to receive this Sacrament.



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

As understood by our congregation and the Reformed Church in America

1. Baptism is a sacrament. It's an outward, visible sign of an inner spiritual reality, Matthew 3:11
2. Baptism is a sign of God's promises (covenant). It reminds us that while we are by nature sinful and guilty before God, we are also saved from sin's consequences, included in God's family, and given the gift of eternal life by our faith in Jesus Christ. Titus 3:4-7
3. Baptism is in continuity with the Old Testament sign of circumcision, first given to Abraham, the father of God's covenantal family. This sign is changed to baptism in the New Testament to signify the accomplishment of God's redemptive plan in Christ and the full revelation of His grace which includes Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. Genesis 17:1-14; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 2:11,12
4. The water of baptism symbolizes the washing away of our sins by Christ's blood and sacrificial death on the cross. Acts 2:38
5. The vows made in conjunction with baptism are statements of our understanding that as believers, we are given new life in Christ (born again) and called to a new obedience to His Word. Romans 6:3,4
6. The receiving of baptism by adults is preceded by the receiving of the Holy Spirit by faith and a joyful celebration of God's saving work. Acts 11:15,16
7. Baptism should also be received by the children of

believers. Our children are included in God's promises to His people and His covenantal family. The baptism of children must be accompanied by parental vows to teach, pray for, and lead children toward faith in Christ. Neither baptism nor parental effort are guarantees that such faith will develop, but both are important steps toward that end. Child baptism is a celebration of new life and responsibilities and of God's gracious promises. Romans 2:28,29; Acts 2:39

8. Baptism is an important public statement of faith in Christ. It is a necessary part of our grateful response for His salvation, but it's not necessary to that salvation and does not, in itself, have any effect on a person's spiritual state. It's not to be a matter of superstition or magic. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:9; Acts 8: 14-24
9. Baptism for adults must be accompanied by a personal confession of faith in Christ and commitment to active membership in this church. Acts 16:31-33
10. In baptism, we are joined spiritually with all those who have participated in God's covenant: with Noah and his whole family whom God saved from the flood, with the Patriarchs and Prophets, and with all those from every nation who have called Jesus "Lord." It is a symbol and sign of our unity in Christ. Genesis 9:1-17; Ephesians 4:4,5

BAPTISM AS PRACTICED IN OUR CONGREGATION

1. All baptisms are celebrated by the authority of the elders of our congregation.
2. Baptism is celebrated in the congregation during a worship service. It's a church family sign and a sacrament for all of God's people. Those participating directly in baptism affirm their faith in the presence of the congregation. Congregational members affirm their own baptismal vows and their commitment to include those being baptized in the fellowship of the church.
3. There is one Sacrament at Baptism, applied to both children and adults. The essential meaning is the same, but the difference between adults and children have some practical implications:
 - a. Baptism for children normally occurs when at least one parent is an active member of the church. Exceptions to this are made at the discretion of the elder board.
 - b. All parents presenting children for baptism for the first time in this congregation need to meet with a pastor.
 - c. Baptism of adults may be by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. Sprinkling, with the candidate kneeling, is the most common method. Pouring or immersion will require baptism services on a site removed from our church sanctuary. This can be arranged according to the desires of the individual involved.
 - d. Baptism of children is by sprinkling.
 - e. Baptisms involving children would normally be scheduled for 1-3 months following a birth.
4. A baptismal certificate is given to each person who is baptized in our congregation and a permanent record is kept in our church office.
5. Close family or friends may participate in services of baptism. This

may be discussed with a pastor.

6. We believe that the Bible teaches that Christian believers should have their children baptized and so child baptism, as described in these guidelines, is the belief and practice of our church. We do recognize that some Christians in good conscience, may not wish their own children to receive the sign of baptism until they make a personal confession of faith in Christ. We choose to not make this an issue of membership or exclusion in our congregation's life. Questions related to this matter should be directed to a pastor.
7. There are no fees for baptism.
8. Generally, adults would not be "re-baptized" if they were baptized as children. However in some situations, such a re-baptism may be desirable by those who have come to faith in Christ as an adult. This matter and all other questions, concerns or "irregular requests" are a part of ministry in which our pastor and elders joyfully involve themselves. Baptism is a celebration of God's love and a means of grace for His children. Our goal, therefore, is to help each other participate in it with glad and grateful hearts not allowing it to be a source of worry or division.

PARENTAL BAPTISM VOWS

Do you acknowledge that although our children are by nature sinful and guilty before God, they are sanctified in Christ and therefore, as members of his Church invited to be baptized?

Do you accept the doctrines of salvation, which are contained in the Old and New Testaments and as stated in the Apostle's Creed, and which are taught in this church?

Do you promise to instruct this child in the truths of God's Word and in the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; to pray for him/her and teach him/her to pray; and to train him/her, as God may give you grace, in all holy living, to the end that he may enjoy eternal life both in this world and in the world to come?

ADULT BAPTISM VOWS

- 1) Do you affirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior?
- 2) Do you commit to following God's direction as revealed in His Word?
- 3) Do you promise to use the gifts and resources God has given you to further the work of the church, which includes your commitment to CRC?

OFFICE HOURS

Church office hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 - 4:00 p.m.

and Friday 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Please have all bulletin material turned in to the office by 11:00 a.m. each Thursday. *(during holiday weeks the deadlines are subject to change)*

Contact Information

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