

# THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S.A.

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## What is baptism?

Baptism is one of two sacraments which are celebrated in worship as a sign and seal of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ. In baptism we are symbolically cleansed as we are welcomed into the family of God as brothers and sisters in Christ.



*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 (NRSV)

## Who can be baptized?

The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church emphasizes the responsibility of parents in presenting their **infant** or **child** for baptism. Christian parents, who profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and are active members of the congregation, bring their child to receive baptism as a mark of belonging to God's people.

- Parents who are members of First Presbyterian but have not been active must realize that baptism of their child will call for a new level of active involvement in the life of the church.
- Parents who are not yet members of our congregation are encouraged to join and become active members. A Welcome Class is offered each season.
- Parents who worship at another congregation may find it more meaningful and appropriate to have their child baptized in their own congregation – the family of faith in which the child will be nurtured.
- Parents who wish to keep their membership at another church must have their pastor request in writing that First Presbyterian perform the sacrament of baptism on their behalf.

**Teens** who have not been baptized as infants or children may be baptized when they make their public profession of faith at Confirmation (usually in 9<sup>th</sup> grade) and assume the responsibility of active church membership.

**Adults** who have not been baptized may receive the sacrament after making a profession of faith on the day they join the church.

## A Sample Baptismal Liturgy

**Words of Scripture** (Child Reader)

**Statement of Purpose** (Minister)

**Presentation** (Elder)

On behalf of the Session, I present (child's name), child of (parents' names) to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

**Renunciations & Affirmations** (Minister)

To the person being baptized or her/his parents

Do you desire that (name) be baptized?

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

Do you promise to be faithful members of this congregation, share regularly in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service, and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Relying on God's grace, do you promise to live the Christian life and to teach that faith to your child?

To the children in the congregation

Do you promise, through prayer and example, to help (name) become a friend of Jesus?

To the congregation (Elder)

Do we, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture (name) by word and deed, with love and prayer encouraging him/her to know and follow Jesus Christ, and to be a faithful member of this church?

**Baptismal Prayer** (Minister)

**Baptism** (Minister)

(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Welcome**

**Blessing** (Minister)

## How do I request a baptism?

- **Contact the church office to let us know of your child's birth.** A pastor and nursery committee member will visit with you and send you a letter about our baptism process. If we have missed the opportunity to celebrate your child's birth, please call the church office to request information about Baptism.
- **Attend a Baptism Orientation Session** with the Reverend Craig Foster. Craig will teach the meaning of the sacrament, review the baptismal vows, and introduce resources to you that will help you to keep these vows as you raise your child in the Christian faith. You may bring your infant child with you. If you have already completed a baptism orientation at First Presbyterian with an older child, you do not need to repeat it.
- **Complete a baptism request form.** indicating a first and second choice, at either the MorningSong, Chapel (where applicable), or Sanctuary Sunday morning services. Your request date will not be confirmed until it is approved by our Worship Committee and our governing body, the Session.
- After the Session meeting, you will **receive a confirmation email** of the approved baptism date and service time. Please wait to make plans and to invite out-of-town family members until you receive this confirmation from the church office.

If you have any questions regarding our baptism process at First Presbyterian Church Spartanburg, please feel free to contact:

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# PRESBYTERIAN BELIEFS ABOUT



# the SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

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