

Dublin Street United Church

68 Suffolk St. W., Guelph, ON N1H 2J2
Tel: 821-0610 Fax: 821-3531
dublin@bellnet.ca www.dublin.on.ca



Baptism: Our Belief and Practice

Introduction

This booklet offers an overview of the Sacrament of Baptism as understood in the United Church of Canada and lived out in the congregation of Dublin St. Church. Many people consider baptism as an important moment turning point in their lives. For some it comes with the birth of the new baby – marveling at the miracle of new life which has been entrusted to their care and nurture. For others, it comes after a period of spiritual struggle and growth, arriving at a place where they want to say “yes” to Christ’s invitation to follow in God’s way. Whatever the occasion, we are pleased to welcome new brothers and sisters in Christ into this congregation. What follows is an outline of our understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism and the ways we celebrate it in this Christian community.

What is baptism?

- Baptism is our response to Christ’s invitation to follow in God’s way.
- In baptism we become part of God’s family – Christ’s body – the Church.
- Baptism is an act of welcoming, blessing and belonging as we become part of this new family.
- Baptism, at whatever age it is administered, is an important starting point in our journey as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is therefore both individual and communal, as reflected in our baptism service.

What we believe about baptism ... and what we don’t ...

- Baptism is a sign of God’s acceptance, love and grace shown to us in Jesus Christ. It is not magic; even if it feels magical. It is the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith to discover the height and depth, breadth and length of God’s love for us and the world.
- God’s gift of baptism does not depend upon our ability to understand it. We can never fully understand it. Therefore we baptize all whom God has called, both infants and adults, and everyone in between.
- Baptism is not a requirement for God’s love: we believe we are already beloved children of God our Creator. Baptism is our “yes” to that love. We do not believe that those who are not baptized are in any way “damned” or “doomed.” All are in God’s care.
- We are not only baptized into a lifelong spiritual journey, but also welcomed into a faith community that is also journeying to do God’s will in the world. We believe the Holy Spirit is our guide in this journey. We believe this Spirit leads the community into deeper faithfulness and maturity as disciples of Christ.
- Therefore we administer baptism to those who have an intention of sharing their life and gifts, as brothers and sisters, in the community we call the Church.
- We recognize that there are some special bonds or family roots that may draw us back to a specific congregation such as Dublin Street for baptism. We are happy to welcome “home” these persons and perform a baptism with the hope that they will be part of a Church community where they now live, where faith will be nurtured, and where they can offer and share their God-given gifts.



Some Practical Matters

We are pleased you wish to have your child/ren welcomed into God's family by baptism. We encourage families or individuals considering baptism, and who may be unfamiliar with the Church's life and ways, to spend some time participating in its worship life to see if this is the setting in which they would like to live out their baptismal faith. It adds to the specialness of the service as we join with others we know.



In the matter of requests for infant/child baptism, the United Church normally asks that one or both parents be baptized/confirmed members of a Christian Church, not necessarily the United Church. Where this is not the case, one or both parents may be encouraged to take this step first. This will be the opportunity for parents to make and model a commitment to the faith they are seeking for their child.

Inquiries about baptism may be directed to the minister. The minister, along with the congregation's Worship Committee work with you to make this first step of faith meaningful. They may have suggestions and ideas to help you and your family benefit more from this special time.

Prior to the service of baptism, candidates and their families will be invited to attend an orientation evening or a meeting with the minister where any questions can be answered and the service reviewed in some detail.

No fee is charged for administering baptism. The Sacrament is part of who we are and what we do as a Christian congregation. Some families honour the service with a tax-receiptable donation to the church. We appreciate your thoughtfulness as financial gifts allow our community to live God's love in the community and the world.

The Service:

All baptisms take place in the context of public worship. We do not perform 'private' baptisms. Occasionally, in exceptional circumstances; e.g., in a hospital setting, we will perform baptisms outside of the context of Sunday worship.

The Service of Baptism has the following elements:

- A brief introduction/explanation of baptism;
- Questions to the parents/candidate(s) as to what he/she believes and promises;
- Likewise for godparents/mentors (godparents/mentors are optional and certainly not required);
- Promises of the congregation;
- Declaration of our shared faith as stated in the United Church Creed;
- The act of baptism with a sprinkling of water on the head and the declaration of the ancient and universal words of baptism used by most denominations;
- A concluding blessing and exchange of symbols of fellowship and baptism.

Some Concluding Thoughts: Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism is always a special event for you, the family and the congregation of Dublin Street Church – an occasion of gratitude and joy. Safe to say, we often feel the beauty in the power of the Holy Spirit during the ceremony. It is our hope and prayer that all present will experience this as we worship God as followers of Jesus Christ.

Dublin's Mission

*As followers of Jesus,
we are called to live God's love:
enact it as a congregation,
share it in the community, and
nurture it in our world.*