

*Parents/caregivers, and/or other family members may respond with words such as the following.*

God our Creator, thank you for the waiting and the joy, thank you for the new life and for parenthood, thank you for *(Name)*. entrusted to *my/our* care. Make *me/us* patient and understanding, ready to guide and forgive, that in *my/our* love, *(Name)*. may know your love. May *he/she* learn to love your world and the whole family of your children; through Jesus Christ. Amen.  
*Or*

Creator God, Maker of all that is: we praise you for the wonder and joy of creation. We thank you from our hearts for the life of our *son/daughter (name)*, [for a safe delivery,] and for the privilege of parenthood. Help us to be open to your grace, as we delight in and nurture *(name)*., through your child, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

### **Blessing of the Child**

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*For more information about the Sacrament of Baptism or steps in the journey of faith, please contact the Minister. We welcome you to explore your faith and the joy of committing your life to Christian discipleship within our congregation.*



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**Our Mission:  
To be a Christ-centered, growing, supportive  
community**

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"Welcoming, Blessing, and Belonging"

Baptism Guidelines  
For Parents of Young Children  
and for Adult Seekers

We are delighted that you are considering Baptism for your child / children or for yourself. As one of the two Sacraments of the United Church of Canada, baptism is both a serious and joyful commitment to God and to the Church of Jesus Christ. These Guidelines are intended to help you understand Baptism, to answer some of your questions about this process of initiation, and to help you decide if Baptism is right for you at this time.

### **The Covenant of Baptism**

Baptism is an important step in our journey of faith. It celebrates God's initiative and our response. It is God's "Yes" to us and our "Yes" to God. It is a sign of the Divine – human covenant. Baptism flows from God's unmerited grace and pours out in lives of gratitude and commitment. As initiation into the Church, the Body of Christ, baptism is an act of welcoming, blessing and belonging. In our baptism we are claimed by God, and called and commissioned into Christ's ministry. Baptism is a once and for all time Sacrament. -adapted from "Celebrate God's Presence"

### **Questions About Baptism**

#### **Who can be baptized?**

Any child (under the age of 13) or adult (age 13 +) who has not previously been baptized is a candidate for this Sacrament.

#### **What is the process?**

a) For children under the age of 13, parents or guardians make a profession of faith and a commitment, on behalf of the child, to walk with Jesus. It is the hope of the Church that when the child is old enough, she/ he will make their own profession of faith through Confirmation.

In accordance with The Manual of the United Church of Canada, sect. 010(b), at least one of the parents / guardians must be a baptized and confirmed member, in good standing, of the United Church of Canada. Exceptions may be made only with the consent of the Spiritual Oversight Working Group (SOWG) of our church.

### **Blessing and Welcoming a Child**

The following is a liturgy to welcome the arrival of a child by birth or adoption, when parents have chosen not to have the child baptized at this time. It may be adapted to welcome a child who has been or will be baptized elsewhere.

#### **Statement of Purpose**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, to welcome a child into a family is a joyous and solemn occasion. It is also an occasion for rejoicing beyond the family—in the community and in the church. We are all children of God. Let us join with N. [and N.] (parent(s), caregiver(s)) in giving thanks to God for the arrival of a son/daughter [and with N. [and N.] for a new brother/sister].

#### **Presentation**

We welcome you, N. May God's joy be in your heart, God's love surround your living, and God's presence strengthen you day and night. As you grow and learn, in times of joy and sorrow, in all your beginnings and endings, may God keep you and bless you always. **Amen.**

#### **Signs of Welcome**

Signs of welcome may be presented by adults and/or children, for example a rose bud, potted plant, toy, story book, or a kiss.

#### **Prayer**

O God, like a mother who comforts her children, you sustain, nurture, and strengthen us; like a father who cares for his children, you look upon us with compassion and goodness. We give you thanks for N. and for the joy which has come to this family. We praise you for a lively sense of your presence, reminding us of all that is true and noble, just and pure, lovely and gracious; through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**C. Commitment to Follow the Way of Jesus Christ**

Will you proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, in your words and actions?

**R: I will, God being my helper.**

**D. Commitment to the Mission and Ministry of the Church**

Will you join with your brothers and sisters in this congregation to share in the life, work, and ministry of Jesus Christ?

**R: I will, God being my helper.**

**E. Commitment of Parent(s) or Sponsor(s) on behalf of infant children**

Will you pray for N. (and N.), encourage him/her/them by your words and actions, and walk with him/her/them in the way of Jesus?

**R: I will, God being my helper.**

**F. Commitment of Godparents (Godparents are optional in the United Church)**

Recognizing that many persons nurture and influence the life of a child, will you support N./ these children and his/their parent(s) as they grow in faith?

**R: I will, God being my helper.**

**G. Congregational Commitment**

We have heard the will of this/these person(s). We receive N., [and N.] in Christ's name, as we ourselves have been received. We all belong to the one household of faith in Jesus Christ. Will you support these N., [and N.] with constant love, wholesome example, Christian teaching, and faithful prayer?

**R: We will, God being our helper.**

Parents/guardians begin the process by meeting with the Minister, and when possible, a member of the SOWG, to discuss why you are seeking baptism at this time. The Minister will provide you with information about the nature of this Sacrament of the Church, discuss your faith journey, and how you will keep the vows that you will make at the font. After the meeting, your request will be brought to the SOWG for approval.

On the day of the baptism, a member of the SOWG will stand with you and your child at the font, and present you with a Baptismal candle and certificate after the blessing.

**b) For adults (age 13+),** the process begins with a meeting with the Minister. Adults make their own profession of faith at baptism, and to help them prepare for this important step in their journey, they are required to participate in a series of Adult Baptism / Confirmation classes that are held in the late winter / spring. Adult candidates choose a mentor (a baptized and confirmed member of Fairview United Church in good standing) to help them learn and grow in their faith.

Upon completion of the classes, the names of adult candidates are brought to the SOWG for approval. Adults are baptized / confirmed on Pentecost Sunday. The mentor stands with the candidate when they are baptized, and the candidate is presented with a Baptismal candle and certificate after the blessing.

**What promises are made in Baptism?**

In baptism, parents / guardians profess their faith in the triune God and make commitments to live a Christian life as they raise their child / children to know Jesus and walk with Him in His way. Adult candidates for baptism make these commitments for themselves. These are serious promises made before God and the Church, and as such, baptism should not be entered into without prayerful consideration.

Included in these Guidelines is the "Baptismal Profession of Faith and Promises" (please see page 4) made by parents / guardians and adult candidates. These should be read and considered carefully.

**Can we have Godparents?**

The role of Godparents in the United Church of Canada traditionally has been filled by the whole congregation. However, some parents or candidates may choose to call upon the support of special family members and friends. Godparents are optional.

**Could we have a private ceremony?**

The celebration of Baptism takes place within the regular Service of Worship on Sunday morning. The congregation has a role to play in the service, pledging their support and love to the baptized, and welcoming them into the church.

In exceptional circumstances (such as serious illness) a baptism may be performed outside of regular worship. This is at the discretion of the Minister and the SOWG.

**When are baptisms held?**

Every year we set aside specific Sundays for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. Usually these are in early January, late February, mid May, mid June, and Thanksgiving weekend. Please contact the Minister to confirm the specific dates.

**We're not sure that we are ready to make this commitment with our child but our family still expects a celebration. Is there something else we can do?**

Yes! Not everyone chooses baptism for their child. Some parents prefer to let the child make that faith commitment for themselves when they are much older. We offer an optional liturgy of Welcoming and Blessing of a Child (please see page 6). Like baptism, this is celebrated during regular Sunday worship.

**We have moved away but would like to come home to have our child baptized. Is this possible?**

Yes, if you have a historical link to Fairview United Church, it may be possible for you to come home for the baptism. Like all baptisms, your request will be considered by the Spiritual Oversight Working Group. After you have spoken with our Minister, we require that you complete baptism preparation sessions with your regular congregation and that your minister or Clerk of Session provide us with a letter indicating that you have done this.

**If our child is not baptized, will she/ he be barred from heaven?**

We believe that all persons are loved by God whether or not they are baptized. Not participating in the rites and rituals of the Church does not separate us from the love of God. The Minister welcomes your questions about this.

**Is there a charge for this service?**

Never! The Sacrament of Baptism is a free and joyful gift of grace from God.

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**Baptismal Profession of Faith and Promises**

*(Questions asked to parents of children and to adult candidates)*

**A. Profession of Faith in The Triune God**

Do you believe in God, who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the Spirit?

**R: I do, by the grace of God.**

**B. Commitment to Seek Justice and Resist Evil**

Will you follow in the way of Jesus Christ, resisting oppression and evil, seeking justice, and witnessing to God's love for all creation?

**R: I will, God being my helper.**