



First Congregational Church of Hudson



SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HUDSON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Guidelines for Christian Baptism

The people of the First Congregational Church of Hudson rejoice in being able to share with you the celebration and commitment of the sacrament of baptism. Christ instructed the church to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). All people and their children who wish to confess their faith in Jesus Christ are invited to baptism. We hope that the following information will help answer your questions.

Who can be baptized?

All who love Jesus Christ and recognize him as their Lord and Savior are invited to accept the sacrament of baptism. If you have been baptized previously, you need not be baptized again in this church; but if you wish to be baptized here, we will be glad to do so. When requesting baptism for yourself, the designation *Believer Baptism* is used. The baptism of the children of believers is referred to as *Infant* or *Child Baptism*. The presentation of your child for baptism is the act of accepting the promises of God on behalf of your child. The sacrament of baptism welcomes all into the church family and is therefore celebrated during the Sunday morning worship service.

What should I expect on the day of baptism?

You will want to arrive around 10-15 minutes before the service so that you and your guests can be seated together towards the front of the sanctuary on the pulpit side. At the time of the baptism (ordinarily right after the children's message) you will be called forward. Siblings are welcome to come forward with you and may either leave for Sunday school after the baptism or remain with you. Children of your guests are also welcome to attend Sunday school or go to child care.

An infant may be held by either parent, by their sponsor or by a godparent. Sponsors and godparents are not necessary, but may be a part of the service if you so choose. We ask that there be no photography or videography during the service. We videotape our services and you may request a copy of the service if you wish.

What questions will be asked in the baptism?

To the parents:

In presenting your child(ren) for baptism, you confess your faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You acknowledge that your child(ren) is a gift of God and desire to dedicate them to the Christian life.

You promise to share your faith with your child(ren) by teaching and by your life and to participate habitually with your child(ren) in your church so that he/she and you may be in full communion with the Church and know God's love.

Aware of the implications of your vow, is it your desire that your child(ren) be baptized?

Parents respond: *It is.*

To the siblings:

You play a large role in your brother's/sister's life. Will you help your brother/sister know God's love? Siblings respond: I will.

To the sponsors/godparents:

By standing here in witness, you too confess your faith in Jesus Christ and vow to use your good influence to ensure that this child(ren) may know, experience and be a part and member of the living body of Christ. Do you so promise? Sponsors respond: I do.

To the congregation:

The worshippers are asked to be a part of this sacrament by promising to provide a place of nurture and care for you child(ren).

MEANINGS OF INFANT BAPTISM IN OUR CHURCH*

BAPTISM IS A PROMISE. In the words and water of the baptism, God's promises of love and acceptance are proclaimed. The water of baptism signifies an inner or spiritual cleansing. God's love and acceptance of our children is celebrated. Whatever our age, we are children of God.

BAPTISM IS A BIRTH. Baptism is an act of God's grace in our lives. The sacrament is a sign of being born into the Christian family of faith.

BAPTISM IS A SACRED OBLIGATION. When parents present their child for baptism, they are carrying out the task of parenting as a sacred trust. This is God's child, in their care. The promise is to place their personal claims and ambitions for their child in line with God's hopes and plans for their child to be a lover of life, an instrument of peace, a maker of justice ... in the life of a child of God.

BAPTISM IS A CHURCH FAMILY EVENT. You are not raising your child without help. Baptism celebrates the community into which your child (and you) enters through Jesus Christ. In baptism, the whole church enfolds your child in love and caring.

BAPTISM IS A CONFESSION. In the sacrament you confess your faith in God. We are not only spectators, but participants. We declare our faith in God's power, plan and love through Jesus Christ. We are joined in covenant with you and your child in the family of God.

BAPTISM IS A BEGINNING. Life continues. Love grows. In the nurture of the family of faith, your child will grow to an age of making his/her own confession of faith in God's power and love through Jesus Christ. In confirmation (usually around 9th grade) your child will have the opportunity to confirm the vows you made on his/her behalf as an infant. Baptism is the seal of Christ upon a child of the covenant. In confirmation your child may claim this promise for him/herself.

*Adapted from Ron Cole-Turner, "Your Child's Baptism" and Oliver Powell, "Child of the Covenant—through Baptism."

*Wherever you are on your journey ...
... you are welcome here.*

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