

# **A Guide to Understanding Baptism**

(infant)

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your interest in a baptism for your child at Peace Lutheran Church. This page is intended to help you with the planning of this important event in the life of your family and of your child. Hopefully, it will answer questions you may have at this time. Our goal is to help you understand the meaning of baptism and the procedures followed at our church for the planning and performance of a baptism.

## **A CRITICAL FIRST STEP**

We believe that baptism is a critical first step in the Christian life of every believer. We believe that baptism brings individuals into the family of God. It forgives our sins and makes us a member of God's family. Baptism is the first step on a life-long journey of faith. The faith that begins at Baptism must be nurtured and strengthened for a lifetime. This is done through regular worship and fellowship with God's people. This is done through the regular study of God's Word, the Bible. The Bible reminds us that if this faith is neglected, it may die. We can think of Baptism as God planting the seed of faith in the heart of a child, and then God watering it, through the work of the Church, to help that faith grow and flourish.

## **A MEETING WITH A PASTOR**

To help your family understand the meaning of Baptism in the Lutheran Church, one of our pastors will set up an appointment with you to study what the Scriptures have to say about Baptism. At this time, the pastor will explain the meaning of the Baptism service in the church and answer any questions. This meeting will help you understand the Baptism Service and the promises that you and your Baptismal Sponsors (or God-parents) will be asked to make before God and His people.

## **PARENT'S PROMISES**

At the time your child is baptized, you will promise to bring your child to Sunday School, and to worship services, and when they reach the age of puberty (around grade 7), to bring them to the Confirmation Program of our church, so that, your child may learn the basics of the Christian faith. This instruction will eventually lead your child to another very important part of the Christian life, which is the participation in the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

## **SPONSORS/GOD PARENTS**

You will be asked to think about the tradition of having Baptismal Sponsors or God-parents present at the Baptism of your child. Your Sponsors/God-parents will promise to care for the spiritual needs of your child if you are unable to do so. Your Sponsors/God-parents will be Christian people who are willing to keep the promises that they will make on the day of your child's Baptism. We will provide you with Sponsor/God-parent responsibilities and ask that you give it to your Sponsors/God-parents so that they will know their role in the life of your child.

### **CONNECTED TO THE WORSHIP LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

Baptisms are normally performed in the church – as part of a Christian worship service – before a group of gathered believers. Because Lutherans believe that Holy Baptism brings an individual into the family of God, the church (the family of God gathered in worship), will want to be part of this important event. God's gathered people will promise, along with you and your sponsors, that they will pray for you and for your child. After all, your child will become a member of Peace and thus, a member of the One Holy Christian Church throughout the world.

### **THOSE WHO LIVE OUT OF TOWN**

For those who do not live within the neighbouring area of Peace Lutheran Church, it is the practice of our congregation – once the baptism of a child or an infant has been performed, to send his or her membership within 30 days to the closest Lutheran Church – Canada congregation and ask the pastor of that congregation to offer the services of the church to that family. It is so important for the spiritual welfare of your child to remain connected with a church.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

All baptisms take place in the church sanctuary. As you make plans for the date of the baptism, please be advised that because of the structure of our worship services, the first, second, or third Sundays of the month are preferable. Also, plan to invite a lot of your friends to the celebration, just let us know ahead of time so we can manage the seating. If you want to take pictures, fine. Just not during the service. We will gladly accommodate re-enactments and family photos after.

There is no charge for a Baptism at Peace. This is part of our ongoing ministry to our members, their families, and to our community. We pray that God would use this special event to strengthen your own faith and your commitment to His Church. A baptism is a wonderful opportunity for renewal and re-dedication to God for all the members of your family. May God bless the important decisions and plans you are making at this time. Please don't hesitate to contact one of our pastors if you have any further questions, or if you would like to set up an appointment.