

**BAPTISM**  
**at**  
**St. Andrew's United Church**

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**Our Church Staff**

Rev. Michael Brooks, Pastoral Ministry  
Barbara Robbins, Treasurer  
Victoria Bechard, Secretary  
Harold Baughman, Caretaker

When you come to St. Andrew's United Church seeking baptism, either for yourself or for your child, you are coming to a community of faith.

The baptismal ceremony is set in the context of the Sunday morning worship service. It has roots in the biblical theme of "Covenant". Promises are made by those seeking baptism, parents seeking baptism for their children, and the gathered community. Baptism is, therefore, a public and communal act.

The role of the community of faith is to pray for you and your family, and to offer support in your Christian nurture and, if applicable, the upbringing of your child(ren). You will be assigned a Visiting Elder, who is an experienced member of the Church community. This person will hold your family in his/her prayers, and offer follow-up support. He/she will also participate in the Baptismal Ceremony.

Since our identity as Christians is rooted in our baptism, the community of faith will, from time to time, offer opportunities for all members to renew their baptismal promises.

Your relationship with the community through this time will include:

## 1. Initial interview with the minister – *As soon as possible*

This is to determine if Christian baptism is your true desire. Book early at the church office. This meeting will typically last about one hour. Both parents (if applicable) of the child must be present. You will obtain a *Baptismal Information Form*, a Keepsake Booklet, (for infant and child baptism) and an outline of the baptismal service. No baptism date will be set until after this interview.

## 2. Baptismal Preparation

Depending on your familiarity with the church community, the minister may recommend some additional reading and/or sessions to help you explore your faith and deepen your familiarity with the faith community. Membership discussion groups are offered from time to time. The minister will provide you with details at the interview.

## 3. Appointment to finalize ceremony details with the minister – *Two weeks before the ceremony*

At this meeting, the minister will discuss with you the ceremony, promises you will make, and your responses in the Keepsake Booklet. This may involve a brief rehearsal in the worship space. You are to bring your completed *Baptismal Information Form* and Keepsake Booklet to this meeting.

## 4. Baptismal Ceremony

This will take place during a normal Sunday morning worship service at 10:30 a.m. Some seasons of the year are more appropriate for baptism than others. Normally, baptisms will not be scheduled during Advent or Lent. A representative from the church's Membership and Pastoral Care Committee will greet you in the chapel **15 minutes before the service begins** and answer any last-minute questions.

## 5. Follow up

Following the baptism, we will continue to hold you in our prayers and offer you support as appropriate and possible. Baptism involves making promises of faith, with the help of a faith community. It is, therefore, our expectation that you will be active in the life of the church community through worship, study, prayer and action.

## Details...Details...Details

### Do I have to be a member of the Church?

In the case of infant and child baptism, normally at least one parent of the child to be baptized should be a member of the church. In situations where this is not the case, the Membership and Pastoral Care Committee of the church will appoint a **sponsor** (normally a Visiting Elder) to assist in the upbringing of the child in the Christian faith. In both cases, it is the expectation of the church that parents will raise the child in the Christian faith, be involved in the life of the church community, and encourage their child to seek confirmation at a later point.

In the case of adult or adolescent baptism, a program of preparation and study will normally be required. Adults and adolescents automatically become full members of the church at baptism.

In the case where persons are not resident members of St. Andrew's, but have strong family roots in the church, they will be encouraged to seek baptism or, at the very least, a church home in the community in which they live. The minister can assist in finding a suitable church home.

Please note that the final decision regarding all baptisms rests with the Church Council.

### Photography

As baptism is set within the context of Christian worship, photography is not allowed during the ceremony. Video cameras may be set up in the balcony. Services of worship are normally recorded, and a videotape of the service can be delivered to you following the service. It is possible to have pictures taken in the church after the service.