

# Celebrating Baptism

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19)

“One Body, One Baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

## Why Water?

Human Significance of Water: life, death, power, terror, peace, transportation, scarcity, abundance, baptism, formation, mixing, recreation, transformation, cleansing, fear.

Baptism for the early church came to mean death of the old self, new birth into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the terror of judgment, the joy of redemption and power of reformation, re-creation, transformation.

Biblical Stories around Water:

Creation

Noah

Moses floating in the River

The Plagues

The Red Sea

Rocks into Water Spouts

Israel crossing the Jordan to the Promised Land

Jonah

Paul Journeys across the waters

Jesus' birth

Jesus' baptism

Jesus heals with water

Jesus Walks on Water

Jesus turns water in wine

Jesus calms the storms

Jesus sends possessed pigs into the water

Jesus calls himself “living water”

Jesus Thirsts

The Waters of Baptism symbolize the great sweep of salvation history from God's mighty acts of creation through covenant making with Israel, redemption in and through Jesus Christ, the gift of the Spirit and birth of the church, to Christ's promised return and the fulfillment of God's reign.

Celebrating Baptism re-presents these stories.

## What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ; a sign of cleansing from sin; a mark of belonging to a community of saints that extends beyond time and space.

Baptism is not something “we do” but something “God does.” In baptism God claims us, and seals us to show that we belong to God.

“Baptism is both God’s gift and our response to the gift of God’s saving grace, not a means of securing salvation for ourselves and our children.” (CBCW)

## What are the Theological Implications of Baptism?

In baptism, we believe we participate in Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In baptism, we believe we die to what separates us from God (sin) and are raised to newness of life in Christ.

We believe Baptism points us back to the grace of God expressed in Jesus Christ, who died for us and who was raised for us.

In Baptism, we believe the Holy Spirit binds the Church in covenant to its Creator and Lord. The water of Baptism symbolizes the waters of Creation, the Flood, and of the Exodus from Egypt.

## What does Baptism symbolize?

Baptism signifies the faithfulness of God, the washing away of sin, rebirth, putting on the fresh garment of Christ, being sealed by God’s Spirit, adoption into the covenant family of the Church, resurrection and illumination in Christ. Baptism signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit working among us to comfort, strengthen, and empower us in God’s service. Baptism is the bond of unity in Christ. Baptism unites the people of God with each other and with the church of every time and place.

## Who is Baptized?

All believers of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and their children, are included in God’s covenant love. Children are called to be baptized without delay. Whether presented to an adult professing their own faith or to children who are presented, baptism is one and the same.

## Where does Baptism take place?

Baptism is traditionally celebrated in a service of public worship. Baptism is a community act, containing promises from the church body to love, nurture, and support the baptized and their families.

# Baptisms @ FPCLY

At FPCLY, the celebration of Baptism is by the request of parents of children or by individuals wishing to be baptized as a public profession of faith. Opportunities to meet with a pastor to discuss baptism in more detail is available.

What does the Celebration of Baptism look like Liturgically in Worship?

**Presentation** (Name of Parents, Child being baptized, or Adult presenting themselves)

It is customary at this time to also introduce the Elder(s) representing the baptized.

**Scripture Readings** from Matthew and Ephesians

**Questions to the Parents/ God-Parents** (Child Baptism)... Asked by an Elder.

**Questions of Renunciation and Profession of Faith** (Adult Baptism)... Asked by an Elder.

**Questions to the Congregation**... Asked by an Elder.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Water** (Inviting the Holy Spirit to be present in the water and the act)

**Act of Baptism**

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

**Introduction of Baptized and Charge to the Congregation**

If a child, it is customary for the pastor to carry the child (or walk with the child) down the center aisle for all in the congregation to see the child closer and hear words of encouragement to love and support the child and the family.

**Prayer and Welcome**... led by an Elder.

**Sing “Jesus Loves Me”**

It has become a tradition at FPCLY to sing the hymn “Jesus Loves Me” as a response to all Baptisms.

\*Note: All Children in the congregation are invited to come forward and have a seat on the floor in front of the baptismal font. This provides them with a closer view and invites them to be a part of the celebration up close and personal.

## Confirmation

What does Confirmation have to do with Baptism?

Confirmation (8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students)- process of reaffirming baptism... a journey to dig deeper and learn more about what it means to be a faithful member of God’s church and prepare to establish a personal statement of faith representing a snapshot in time and serving as a foundation for a life-time.

Confirmation is a grace-filled season for learning to swim more deeply in baptismal waters: a season and rite to remember their baptism, to reexamine the gifts of grace received through baptism and the claims baptism made upon them, to chart a course for their future navigations upon baptismal waters. (book, bath, table, and time)