

Baptism for Children

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Old Bridge, NJ

Scheduling your Child's Baptism

Scheduling your child's baptism can be done by contacting one of our pastors. Our pastors will set up a time to meet with the you (usually about an hour) to review the basics of our belief and practice in regards to baptism.

Through baptism, a child is being brought into the community of faith. Therefore, baptisms are held during public gatherings of God's people, typically Sunday morning worship. We allow baptisms to be scheduled almost any Sunday throughout the year with few exceptions. Children or adults may be baptized at any age.

Parental Commitment

Baptism is the beginning of a new life in Christ for your child. It is the start of a covenant relationship, much like marriage. You play a very important role in helping your child develop this new relationship and to realize the full benefit of their baptism.

You will be making the promise before God and the church to *“place in your child's hands and on their heart, the Word of God (the Bible) and its teachings, bring them regularly (weekly) to worship in God's house, and provide for their instruction in the Christian faith.”*

What this means you will be making a commitment to 1) nurture your child's relationship with God, the church, its pastor and members. 2) bring your child to worship on a weekly basis. 3) teach your child to pray at meals, bedtime, and other occasions. 4) provide for their Christian instruction at home, in Sunday School, and other children's programs provided by the church. 5) Bring your child to confirmation. 6) Celebrate your child's baptismal birthday. 7) Provide an example of a Christian life. 8) Provide them with a Bible at the appropriate age and help them to read it.

To fulfill these promises, families who plan to baptize their children at Good Shepherd ought to be members who are actively involved in the ministry of the church. If you are not a member of Good Shepherd, we ask that you would attend Sunday morning worship for two months prior to the baptism and make plans to attend our next new member orientation to become members.

Baptism is a gift that God gives to us. But with any gift, if the gift is not opened up, it is a wasted gift. We want you to be able to fully open this gift and discover the full blessing of baptism.

Sponsors / God Parents

Sponsors are to be baptized and with good standing membership in a Christian Church. Otherwise it would be difficult for them to take responsibility for the promises that they and the parents make at baptism.

As parents choose sponsors, they should consider individuals who would be role models and would take seriously the Christian nurture of the child. When at least one sponsor is a member of Good Shepherd a special relationship with the faith community can develop. Though this is not required, it is an option parents ought to carefully consider.

In addition to sharing the responsibilities above, the sponsors could help make the anniversary of the child's baptism an important occasion by giving cards or gifts or doing something special on that day.

Pictures

Good Shepherd does allow pictures and video during the baptism. We just ask that pictures are taken in a discretionary manner and that the use of flash is limited. We advise the one family member be designated as the official photographer and to share the pictures with other family members.

Adult Baptism

Adults desiring baptism are asked to participate in our new member orientation. These orientations are offered several times throughout the year. For more information please contact one of our pastors or visit our website.

Good Shepherd's Baptismal Order of Service

Today we are observing the command and promise of our Lord Jesus Christ as He says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." God's Word stresses the importance of making disciples and baptism as it speaks of our need for Christ, and the forgiveness God offers when our faith and trust are placed in Him.

In order that all might come to know the truth in Christ Jesus, God has given us His Word and baptism as means by which an individual can be brought into a life lived in relationship with God through Christ. It is the beginning of a life tapped into the greatest resource available to the world. In baptism, this child is being brought into contact with the source of God's love and power, and are being adopted into a large and wonderful family. This child is also being brought into a caring community that promises to stand by these parents as they assume the role of raising their child to know the unchanging Christ in a rapidly changing world.

Through baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, God is able to make baptism what Paul calls it in Titus 3, "The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Baptism is not magic, nor is it an automatic "fix" or an eternal insurance policy to be claimed at death. It is not simply a religious ceremony or ritual to guarantee that the child will remain a lifelong Christian. Baptism is a GIFT! It is a visible sign of God's acceptance, forgiveness, adoption, and love. In this washing, GOD is establishing His covenant relationship and gives assurance of His faith-creating power and the forgiveness of sins.

Because you have been called to faith by God through His Word, I now ask you as Christian parents to respond with and for your child, to bring her to the Lord Jesus, and also confess with the Church what God works in and through Baptism. And so I ask all of you:

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, who sent His Son as the Savior of all people? If so, answer Yes, I do believe.

Yes, I do believe.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who gave His life for you, so that through faith, you can receive forgiveness and everlasting life? If so answer, Yes, I do believe.

Yes, I do believe.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought you to faith; that Christ is seeking to impact the world through the Christian Church, of which you are a part; in your partnership with others of the communion of faith, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting? If so answer, Yes, I do believe.

Yes, I do believe.

And will you place in your child's hands, and on her heart, the Word of God and its teachings, bring her regularly to worship in God's house, and provide for her instruction in the Christian faith, that she may know Christ, and follow Him. If so answer, Yes, with the help of God.

Yes, with the help of God.

In accepting the responsibility of sponsors, and as you confess faith as well in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are bearing witness publicly that this child has been baptized, and that through Holy Baptism, God is creating in her the saving faith in the One true God. It is your privilege and responsibility then, after she has been baptized, to remember your godchild in your prayers, remind her of her baptism, and whenever possible, support her in mind and heart, especially if she should lose her parents, so she may be brought up in the true knowledge and fear of God.

Do you intend gladly and willingly to assume this responsibility? If so answer, "Yes, with the help of God."

Yes, with the help of God.

As members of Good Shepherd, you also have the privilege and responsibility of praying for this child and for helping to bring her to the Lord. Will you then, keep this child and her family in your prayers, and support her in whatever way possible, so that as she grows, her faith and love for the Lord may also grow and mature? If so, answer, Yes, we will, with God's help.

Yes, we will, with God's help.

Almighty and Eternal God, we pray that you would give this child, here at her Baptism, your everlasting love in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Honor her, O Lord, according to Your Word and promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"; so that she may obtain the everlasting gift of this heavenly washing and come to the Kingdom which you have promised; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Your Child's Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom you are born again of water and of the Spirit, and who has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life everlasting. Amen.

Peace be with you.

We thank you, Gracious Father, for receiving **(Your Child's Name)** through Baptism into the covenant and kingdom of your grace, in which we have forgiveness of sin and the hope of everlasting life. We pray that, being buried to sin with Christ in Baptism, she may be as St. Paul says in Romans 6: "dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness," that in the end, together with all believers, they may obtain the promised inheritance in heaven. Strengthen us all in our own

baptisms, so that we may share eternity together, and the salvation you have given us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the God of salvation bless you and keep you in His care. Amen.

What About Holy Baptism?

Suppose for a moment that there was a doctor who had such incredible talent that he could prevent people from dying, and bring those who had died back to life, never to die again. Just imagine how people would do whatever they could to be treated by this doctor! Now consider that in Holy Baptism, God actually does give us the gift of eternal life! Let's learn more about this marvelous blessing.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's Word.

What's so special about a handful of simple water?

Nothing, until God connects His Word to it! In Baptism, that is exactly what God is doing. He combines His life-creating and life-giving Word with the waters of Holy Baptism, and thereby we are born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).

What is that Word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Our Lord commands Baptism. It is not optional, nor is it simply a nice "extra." God's Word takes on many forms, according to His good and gracious will. The Word is preached, taught, and proclaimed. It is read, studied and meditated on. It is shared by Christians, with non-Christian and fellow believer, alike. And it is that Word of God, His promise, that makes Baptism what it is.

God Himself is present as His name is joined to the water, with all His power and all His blessings of forgiveness, life and salvation. Christ consecrates the water of Baptism with His Word, so as we in Baptism stand with Christ in the water, the Father calls us His beloved children, the Holy Spirit is given to us, and heaven is opened to us.

Those who receive Baptism after they have been brought to faith by the preaching or teaching of the Word also receive all the blessings God has attached to Baptism.

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare. Which are these words and promises of God? Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned”(Mark 16:16).

In and through Baptism, God cleanses us from all of our sins, snatches us from the power of Satan, and gives us everlasting life. It is all God’s doing as He gives us His blessing. It is His promise. In Baptism, our Triune God imparts to each of us personally the gifts the Lord Jesus Christ won for the world through His life, suffering, death, and resurrection. Please see especially Gal.3:27; Col.1:13–14; 1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5–7 and 1 Cor. 6:11.

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s Word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying” (Titus 3:5–8).

Of course, simple water can’t do such great things, but the water of Baptism is not simple water! Baptism is one very special way God delivers to us the blessings Christ won for us. Baptism is not something we do, but something God does. Therefore, it is far more than a symbol. It is a sacred act in which God Himself is at work forgiving sins, giving new life in Christ and bestowing on us the Holy Spirit with all of His gifts. Baptism gives us the faith through which we receive these gifts. God the Holy Spirit works faith in the promises attached to Baptism.

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. Where is this written? St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through Baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom.6:4).

In Baptism we are buried with Christ, and in Baptism we are raised with Christ. His death and resurrection are made our own, and because of that fact, through our entire life, we are able to say, “I am baptized!” Having been buried with Christ into His death we do not have to be afraid of the tomb in which we will rest one day. Christ has already been there. In Holy Baptism we have

passed through His grave into His resurrection. As Luther says in his Large Catechism, “If I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body. . . . No greater jewel can adorn our body and soul than Baptism Baptism is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps, just as the Lord Christ upon the cross is not a human work, but a treasure comprehended and offered to us in the Word and received by faith.”

What does Baptism have to do with our daily life?

Everything! Our entire life is a life lived trusting in the promises of God, given to us in and through Holy Baptism. We are constantly returning to Baptism. In moments of temptation and suffering in our lives, when all seems to be crashing down on us, and in particular in those moments when our sin and the guilt of those sins haunt us, we are able, as Luther says, to “Pull out our Baptism and wave it under the devil’s nose and say, ‘I am baptized...I have God’s bath. It is Christ’s own blood.’ It is a bath blessed and mixed with the blood of Christ.” We can’t return to the cross of Christ, nor should we attempt to imagine ourselves back there. No, we turn instead to the “here and now” reality of God’s work in our lives. We return to our Baptism. For it was there and then that God buried us with Christ and raised us with Him to a new life.

In his Large Catechism, Luther says, “Every Christian has enough to study and to practice all his life. He always has enough to do to believe firmly what Baptism promises and brings—victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sins, God’s grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts.” And: “If you live in repentance, therefore, you are walking in Baptism, which not only announces this new life, but also produces, begins and promotes it. In Baptism we are given the grace, Spirit and power to suppress the old man, so that the new man may come forth and grow strong. Therefore, Baptism remains forever. . . . Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism.”

Why are infants and young children baptized?

They are baptized for the same reason adults are baptized—because of the command and promise of God. What is promised in Baptism is given to all who receive it; therefore, infants and young children also have the promise of God. They, too, are made children of God. They, too, are included in the words “all nations” (Matt. 28:19). Jesus specifically invites little children to come to Him (Luke 18:15–17). But most important, as sinners, infants need what Baptism gives.

By His word, God created all that is seen and unseen. By His word, our Lord Christ called a dead man from the tomb (John 11:43–44). The unborn child, John the Baptist, leaped in his mother’s womb when he heard the word of God (Luke 1:41–44). Why is there any doubt that in and through the Word and the promise of Baptism, God works a similar gift of faith in the infant? If we misunderstand Baptism to be our work, then we will always cast doubt on it. When we recognize that it is not our work, but God’s gracious promise and work, we realize that infants are to be baptized and receive the treasures offered in and through Baptism.

Sadly, there are individuals and church bodies that deny Baptism to young children and infants. They do not believe that these little ones need what Holy Baptism gives. They do not believe what the Bible teaches so clearly, namely, that God saves us through Baptism. As a result of these false teachings, they deny both to themselves and to others the power, blessing and comfort of Holy Baptism. That is tragic, for it is a most serious offense against God to deny what He plainly declares in His Word: “The promise is for you and your children”(Acts 2:39) and “Baptism now saves you” (1 Peter 3:21).

Conclusion

“We see what a great and excellent thing Baptism is, which snatches us from the jaws of the devil and makes God our own, overcomes and takes away sin and daily strengthens the new man. It always remains until we pass from this present misery to eternal glory”(Large Catechism).

The meaning, power and promise of Holy Baptism rest entirely on the One who lived perfectly in our place and who suffered and died as the sacrificial ransom for the sins of the world. He rose victorious over death and the grave. In Holy Baptism, we receive all the blessings of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Thank God for His gift of Holy Baptism!

Dr. A.L. Barry
Former President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

For more information on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, please consult [Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism](#). Or visit www.lcms.org and search “baptism.”

Baptismal Information Form

Requested Baptism Date: _____

Circle one: 8:30am or 10am

Child's Full Name: _____

Circle one: male or female

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Parents Names

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____

Best Contact Number: _____

Best Time to Contact: _____

Sponsors / God Parents:
