

Trinity Lutheran Church Baptism Preparation

We are so excited to be entering in a time of baptism preparation with you! This is a special time for you and your child(ren). Please take time to read over all the provided materials and become aware of Trinity's expectations surrounding baptism.

"Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing." said Martin Luther. We continually strive to build our faith and live in response to God's teachings.

Martin Luther says "...in baptism the external ceremonies are least important...Instead, see to it that you are present there in true faith, that you listen to God's word, and that you pray earnestly....Ah, dear Christians, let us not value and treat this unspeakable gift so half-heartedly. For baptism is our only comfort and doorway to all of God's possessions and to the communion of all the saints." (Luther's Small Catechism, Study Edition)

In baptism God promises to free us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We (Parents, Sponsors & Congregation) promise to...

- *Live among God's faithful people,*
- *Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,*
- *To **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,*
- *To **serve** all people following the example of Jesus,*
- *Strive for justice and peace in all the earth*

The promises made between God and ourselves enter us into a covenantal relationship with one another. While we will never live up to our end of the covenant, we try to keep these promises anyway, knowing that God will help us in doing so. These are our guide for our faith practices for daily living.

How will you build faith practices into your family's daily living?

Trinity Lutheran Church has expectations for the sacrament of Holy Baptism. These expectations are intended to help us hold up our end of the covenantal relationship with God and be a part of the Body of Christ.

1. Receive a packet by contacting Pastor Kim Suhr. Read through the information in the packet and answer the questions on the Parent Questionnaire. Once completed contact Minister Kim to set up a meeting. (See step 3)
2. Attend worship at Trinity Lutheran Church.
3. Attend a baptismal preparation class with Pastor Kim.
4. Set the baptism date.
5. Baptize.
6. Work on fulfilling the promises you will make in baptism including being involved in the life of the congregation.



Included in this packet...

- *Invitation to Baptism & Why Baptism Handout*
- *Parent Questionnaire*
- *Choosing Godparents Handout*
- *Baptismal Information Sheet (Please print off, fill out and bring to meeting with the pastor.)*

Invitation to Baptism

Your precious child is about to be baptized! This child you waited for, prepared for, are continually surprised by, take care of, worry over, and wonder about will—in the company of our faith community—become part of a bigger family: God's family!

You may come to this time of preparation feeling tired (even exhausted), overwhelmed, and full of questions. You may know a lot about baptism or know nothing at all except what the internet or a family member tells you. You may be at a steady place in your own faith journey or in a shaky spot. You may be here because you want to make your parents/spouse/in-laws/grandparents happy. You may be here because you think you and your child should take part in this traditional rite of passage.

Whatever your reasons are to be here right now, know that none of them are wrong. But the overriding reason that our church community offers to you at this time is for your child to become part of God's family and to be named by God as one of God's beloved children. Baptism begins a process of becoming an active participant in the work of God on our earth. Baptism, performed by way of the hands and hearts of others, is an act of God. God reaches out to your child in the gift of love.

Welcome to baptism in the name of our Three-in-One God.
Welcome to what you already know and what you want to learn.
Welcome to the waters of Holy Baptism with your child.



Why Baptism?

1. We need to surround a child with love and promises - God's, the faith community's, the parent's.
2. A child is much more than "mine" or "ours." He or she is God's creation, God's child.
3. Parents are not enough. A child needs to belong to a community, a people of faith who share a history, a way of life, and a hope for the future.
4. A child is part of the human race which is ensnared within self-justifying impulses, self-love run amuck, trusting what is not worthy of trust - all that the Christian faith calls "sin." Every human needs God's forgiving and liberating power.
5. Every child will be shaped by some story, some value system. Baptism is "storied water." It ushers a child into the story of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ.
6. We want a child to be raised as a Christian - living the abundant life of dwelling in Christ (JN 10:10).



Illustration and text created by Pastor Daniel Erlander.



Trinity Lutheran Church

Baptism Preparation Parent Questionnaire

Child(ren)'s name: _____

Because of the importance of baptism and the promises you will be making as a parent, we need you to answer the following questions authentically. This will allow for sincere conversation in the baptism meeting. We do recognize that both parents of a child might not answer each of these questions the same way. Use this as a discussion guide to talk with each other about your own faith and how you will encourage the faith of your child together. There are no wrong answers. This isn't shared with anyone beside discussion with the pastor.

- 1) Why are you requesting the sacrament of baptism? Do you know what it means and how it takes place?
Do you have any questions about baptism?

- 2) Are you active in our ministry (attend worship, participate in learning, share fellowship, serve as volunteer, reach out to others)? If not, what is the reason?
 - a. Are you committed to being actively involved in our congregation and bringing your child(ren) regularly to worship and Sunday School, in order to experience community with other believers, learn to participate in ministry, and allow others to support you in your role of sharing faith with your children?

- 3) Where are you at spiritually in your life? (How is your relationship with God? Are you growing in faith, stuck, or searching? Are you worshipping regularly? Do you pray? Are you serving God?)

Thank you for your time on this, please bring this sheet with you in the baptism prep meeting with pastor.

Choosing Godparents *By Elaine J. Ramshaw Living Lutheran August 16, 2007*

(Or Sponsors as we call them at Trinity. Sponsor/Godparent is an interchangeable term)

Start with the “job description”: A godparent is to develop a special, lifelong relationship with the godchild, communicating faith and values to her or him in word, deed and play, reminding him of his baptism, rooting for her as she grows and questions and struggles.

What qualities suit a person for this role? Someone who:

- Will take a child seriously and invest time in developing a friendship with him or her.
- Listens well, is caring and trustworthy.
- Is a baptized Christian who could share her or his faith with a child (and later an adult) in conversation or action. (If you have someone in mind who isn't baptized please talk with Pastor Kim about it.)

You don't need to have a “matched set” of one man and one woman. You can name just one godparent, or two godmothers or godfathers. It doesn't matter if they are parents. If they are, you can tell how they are with children. But a person without children may value being a godparent all the more because of that.

Relatives or friends?

The advantage of choosing relatives is that they are more certain to remain connected with your child throughout their lives. It can sometimes be a challenge for an uncle or aunt if they're worried about “playing favorites” — being a godparent means they should pay special attention to one niece or nephew, doing more with and for the godchild than for the others. This need not be a problem if they don't get lavish gifts for the godchild and if your other children have godparents who spend special time with them.

The advantage of choosing a nonrelative is that you get an extra person involved deeply in your child's welfare, someone who wouldn't otherwise be a consistent part of their life. You can, effectually, draft that person into your child's “chosen” family.

You want the person to commit to keeping in contact with your child even if distance separates them — even if you and the godparent don't remain as closely connected as you are now.

Sometimes parents feel they have to name certain people as godparents because it's expected — much the same way a person may feel obligated to include someone in their wedding party. The important thing is to put your child's interests first. Who would be most likely to be a great godparent? You can always choose more than two godparents — some Lutherans traditionally have had three. Make sure at least one is “godparent material.”

What if the most spiritual and child-friendly person you know isn't Christian? As far back as we know, godparenthood has been about two things: mentorship in Christian faith and creating close family-like bonds. The difference between medieval times and today is that many of us have loved ones who aren't Christian.

If you want a non-Christian friend or relative to develop a special tie with your child, there's nothing to prevent you from calling that person a godparent within the family. Since they can't share and explore the Christian faith with your child, you'll want at least one godparent who is Christian. Some congregations will provide a Christian sponsor.

At the baptism, the Christian godparent would answer the questions that imply Christian belief. If the pastor says the non-Christian godparent may stand with you at the baptism, you might want to write another question

that he or she could answer honestly about supporting the family and being a spiritual friend and mentor to the child.

Some people believe godparents are expected to raise the child if the parents die. That's been true at some times and places, but in America today godparenthood has no legal status with regard to issues of guardianship. If you want to designate someone to take care of your children in the event of your death, you need to name that person as the legal guardian in your will.

Ideas for Godparents/Sponsors (Names & Why you think they would be good)

Trinity Lutheran Church Baptismal Information Sheet



Trinity Lutheran Church

INFORMATION OF THE BAPTIZED (Please Print Clearly)

Full Name of Person to be Baptized _____
(first) (middle) (last)

Birthdate _____ Birth Place _____ Male ___ Female ___

Address _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

PARENTAL INFORMATION (if applicable)

Parent/Guardian 1 Name _____ Phone # _____
(first) (middle) (last)

Maiden Name (if applicable) _____ Church Affiliation _____

Address (if different from child) _____

E-mail _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Name _____ Phone # _____
(first) (middle) (last)

Maiden Name (if applicable) _____ Church Affiliation _____

Address (if different from child) _____

E-mail _____ Church Affiliation _____

Are parents married to each other? _____

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Sponsor Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone Number _____ Church Affiliation _____

Sponsor Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone Number _____ Church Affiliation _____

Sponsor Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone Number _____ Church Affiliation _____

Please note if any of your sponsors are married to each other or reside in the same household. (For certificate)

DATE REQUEST

1st choice date: _____ 2nd choice date: _____ 3rd choice date: _____