

# What to Expect on the Day of Baptism

A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS, SPONSORS, AND GODPARENTS

Trinity Lutheran Church

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## Getting ready for the worship service that includes baptism

- Plan to **arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the start of the service**. A pastor or baptismal host from Trinity's staff will check in with you to ensure you are comfortable with the service and to answer any questions you might have.
- While there is **no specific reserved seating for baptismal families**, arriving 15 minutes or more prior to the service will ensure that plenty of seats will be available, in the front several rows of the worship center if desired
- There is **no particular dress code for those attending a baptism**. Please note that the sponsors and parents (if a child is baptized) will be asked to stand in the front of the congregation during the baptismal rite.
- **No particular type of dress is essential for those who will be baptized**, although certain kinds of clothing have become traditional. White baptismal gowns are often used for infants, perhaps even passed down from one family member to the next. Toddlers and older children may wear white clothes as well, or they may simply wear something in which they are most comfortable.
- Friends and family members who have no specific role in the baptismal service may be seated with the baptismal party.



## During the baptism

- **The baptism often takes place shortly following the sermon**, and will be noted in the bulletin's order of service. During the song after the sermon, when the pastors approach the baptismal font, that's your cue to join them there. If there are other children in your family, they may come with you so they can see what is going on.
- **Pictures and video** are a wonderful way to help the baptized remember this special day. Family members sitting in the pews are welcome to take pictures during the baptismal rite, but are asked to remain seated while doing so, so as not to disrupt the service for other worshipers.
- **Any spoken responses for parents and sponsors will be prompted by the Pastor** or if a longer responses are required (i.e. the creed), the words of response are on the screen mounted behind the sound booth, located in the Northeast corner of the sanctuary.
- The pastor will ask a few questions regarding your desire for baptism and your intent to support the newly baptized afterward. The answer to these questions is "I do."
- The pastor will ask all worshipers to profess their faith, usually by asking three separate questions: "Do you believe in God the Father?" "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?" and "Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?" Worshipers

respond in each instance with respective portions from the Apostles' Creed (on screen).

- During the actual baptism with water, one of the parents or sponsors may be asked to hold an infant or a young child up to the baptismal font. If your help is needed in holding a child above the font, carefully pull back any clothing that may be covering the child's head and neck.
- The pastor marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of the newly baptized, along with words of God's promise.
- One of the pastors then presents the newly baptized (or a parent or sponsor) with a small candle that has been lit from the Easter (paschal) candle. The smaller candle is a gift to the newly baptized and may be used annually to remember the baptismal anniversary. There is a small box given for the candle that can be used for storing the candle at home.
- The congregation then speaks words of welcome to the newly baptized. Applause often follows the statement of welcome.
- The baptismal party may return to their seats at this time for the remainder of the service.
- If holy communion is a part of the service as well, all baptized Christians are invited to commune. It does not matter if you are a member of Trinity or Lutheran by background. All are welcome. The ushers will help you know where to go when the time comes to receive communion.

### **Following the baptism**

- After worship, there is usually plenty of time to take pictures of the newly baptized along with parents, sponsors, and others who are present following the service.
- No gift or honorarium needs to be given to the pastor or other worship leaders; however, gifts in support of the church's ongoing ministries are always appropriate and may be added to the offering plate as it is passed during the service.
- Be sure to take baptismal certificates, candles, and clothing belonging to the newly baptized home with you following the service. Some churches give small baptismal napkins used to dry the heads of infants following baptism as a reminder of the day, while larger towels used for older children or adults are usually kept at the church.

***Baptism is a special day in a person's faith journey. We are so glad to share in it with you and your family at Trinity!***

