

Infant Baptism

On behalf of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, we are thrilled that you are considering having your child baptized. The sacrament of baptism is a beautiful symbol of God's enduring love and faithfulness. In infant baptism, we celebrate God's amazing grace, which claims us before we are able to respond in faith and welcomes us into the Church.

The Significance of Infant Baptism

Baptism is the holy sacrament that symbolizes our adoption into the covenant family of the Church. It testifies to God's unfailing faithfulness that enables us to be washed of our sins and joined together with Christ. Through Christ's death and resurrection, we are able to be reborn and claimed as God's own.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order* states:

“Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God’s redeeming grace offered to all people. Baptism is God’s gift of grace and also God’s summons to respond to that grace. Baptism calls us to repentance, to faithfulness, and to discipleship. Baptism gives the church its identity and commissions the church for ministry to the world.”

The Significance of Your Baptismal Promises as Parents

When a parent brings their infant or child to be baptized in the church, they are also committing to nurture their child in the Christian faith. As you consider baptism for your child, please prayerfully ponder your own commitment as a parent of the baptized.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order* states:

“Those presenting children for Baptism shall promise to provide nurture and guidance within the community of faith until the child is ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.”

Because the parent's role in bringing up a child in faith is so important, you will be asked to respond to the following questions in worship before your child's baptism:

- Do you profess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and affirm the promises of God made to you and your child in Scripture?
- Do you promise to pray for them and encourage them to pray; to forgive them and challenge them to forgive; to love them and inspire them to love?
- And do you commit to partnering with this faith community to nurture your child in the truth of God's Word and in the way of salvation through Jesus Christ?

Additionally, the congregation, acting as “corporate sponsors,” promises to support, love, and pray for the child, recognizing their role and the necessity of the faith community in the Christian life.

How to Proceed if You Desire to Have Your Child Baptized

Following the theological and ecclesiastical guidelines of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), all baptisms at Fifth Avenue must be approved by the Session, which meets 7 times per year. Taking this into account, applications for baptism should be submitted at least two months in advance. Baptisms occur once a month (usually the second or third Sunday) during the 9:30 and 11 am worship services.

Requirements:

- At least 1 parent must be a member of Fifth Avenue
- Submitted Baptismal Application
- Completed Baptismal Commitment Course

Because of this process, we ask parents not to announce their child’s baptism until it has been approved by the church, confirmed, and scheduled.

Next Steps:

1. Complete and submit a baptismal application form online at fapc.org/baptism. The dates and times for baptisms as well as the dates for the commitment courses are listed on this website.
2. Attend the Baptismal Commitment Course. During this time, the pastor will walk you through the meaning of your child’s baptism and the logistics of the service. At its conclusion, you will be given a tour of our nursery and Sunday School programs and have the opportunity to meet other parents.

If you are unable to attend this course for any reason, you are responsible for scheduling a make-up by contacting Kristia Tolode (ktolode@fapc.org) at least 2 weeks prior to your child’s baptism. Failure to do so will result in postponing your child’s baptism.

Baptismal Certificate

The church provides an official record of your child’s baptism in the form of a certificate. This document lists the name of the child who is presented for this sacrament and is signed by the baptizing pastor and clerk of session. This certificate will be provided to you following the baptism.

Again, we are excited that you are considering baptizing your little one. May the Spirit of God bless and lead you as you prayerfully make this important decision for your child and family.

The Reverend Werner Ramirez | Associate Pastor for Congregational Care & Family Ministries
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