

Baptisms at Hope

Baptized to Belong: Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism at Hope

Register for Baptismal Instruction

We are happy and excited that you want your child to be baptized at Hope Lutheran Church. As soon as you know when you would like your child to be baptized, please call the church office to confirm the date and schedule an appointment with a pastor for baptismal instruction.

Prayer at the Birth of a Child

O Lord our God, creator of all that exists, we thank you for the joy of watching new life begin and for the privilege of sharing with you in your continuing creation. In your mercy grant that these blessings may continue to us and even to our children's children, that generations yet unborn may bless your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

From Evangelical Lutheran Worship

What is Baptism?

Baptism is one of two Sacraments celebrated by the Lutheran Church. The other Sacrament is Holy Communion.

A Sacrament is a means of grace. That is, through a Sacrament we receive God's undeserved and freely given forgiveness and love (grace). God speaks to us of grace through the Word of God in the Bible and especially through the living Word, Jesus Christ. In a Sacrament that Word of God is made visible and tangible with water or bread and wine.

In Baptism, the gracious Word from God is "Yes."

Baptism as God's Yes

First of all, God says, "Yes, you are my child." "Yes, I am your God." Baptism declares a new, living relationship with God—we as God's children, God as our ever-loving parent. Those who are baptized need never doubt that they belong to God! Baptism gives us our identity as children of God and bestows on us the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

Baptism is also God's "Yes" to forgiveness. In Baptism we receive the gift of the forgiveness of sins. We are born children of a fallen humanity. In Baptism our sins are washed away by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who are baptized can always look to their Baptism and remember they have been forgiven, made clean.

Baptism is thirdly, God's Word that says, "Yes, you are a part of my Church." In Baptism we are made members of the Church, the Body of Christ. This Church exists on earth in the form of congregations of gathered people who worship, learn, serve and witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ. This means every child that is baptized becomes a member of the local church in which that Baptism was celebrated. The Church also exists triumphantly as the saints in heaven. Baptism promises us life everlasting with God.

Finally, Baptism is God's "Yes" to us as called servants. "You are my servant," God says. In Baptism we are brought into a life with Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be called into his service. "Follow me," Jesus says to all who are baptized. In a sense Baptism is our "ordination" into the ministry of Jesus Christ. All Christians are ministers, that is, servants of the Lord who have a vocation, a calling, to bring God's Word to others by what they say and do.

Baptism as Our Daily "Yes" to God

Baptism, as God's Yes to us, invites us to begin a daily walk with Jesus Christ, saying our own "yes" to Jesus as Lord and Savior again and again. In the Rite of Confirmation we affirm or say, "yes" to our Baptism. However, Confirmation is not a one-time event. Martin Luther invites us to remember our Baptism every day, celebrating both its many good gifts and responding with a renewed commitment to be a disciple of Christ. When we say "yes" each day to Jesus Christ we also say "no" to sin. As Luther says in his Small Catechism, "our sinful self . . . should be drowned through daily repentance and day after day a new self should arise ..."

Baptism and the Christian Parent

Because Baptism is initiation into the Church and a life of discipleship, it is essential that a Christian parent or parents bringing a child for Baptism should be prepared to do everything in their power, with God's help, to raise this child to be a disciple. So, it is in the Service of Baptism, parents and sponsors are asked very specific questions about their own faith and commitment including their commitment to the Church. Christian parents say the "yes" to Baptism that they pray their child will eventually say for him/herself.

Baptism and Our Age

The Lutheran Church baptizes infants and children because we believe Baptism is primarily an act of God's grace. It is something God does for us and to us. We are saved by grace alone, not by our own efforts. Before God even the most brilliant of theologians and most devout of people are simply children. Whether we are baptized as a child, youth, or adult makes no difference. Of course, the Lutheran Church also baptizes adults. Finally, age is not the issue. The issue is that we are all dependent on God's grace no matter how old we are.

When Does Baptism Take Place?

Infants are typically baptized between the ages of three weeks and three months. Soon after a birth, Christian parents should make arrangements for the Baptism. Please speak with the church office regarding arrangements before contacting family or sponsors with specifics. Because of special services which may be planned, it is possible that you may have to select an alternative date for your Baptism.

What Does the Church Expect of Parents?

When you as parents present your child for Baptism, you promise to teach your child the Christian faith. Your promise means that you are not only responsible for the physical needs of your child, but also for his\her spiritual needs. Spiritual care of your child includes

- providing for the child's Baptism,
- building a family based on the life of Christ,
- teaching the child the basics of the Christian faith - the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Holy Scriptures; and,
- nurturing their spiritual growth by participating with them in worship, learning, and service in the Church.

Since your child first learns by the model you set, it is important that you be involved and participating in a Christian community. Here in the Church, parents can be supported in their faith and learn to shape themselves so as to model the Christian faith for their child.

Who Should Be Sponsors

Sponsors are the representatives of the Church that assume responsibility to see that your child, the newly baptized, is raised in the faith and kept close to Christ and the Church. When sponsors are chosen, they are to be baptized and practicing Christians who are active members of a church which practices infant Baptism. Otherwise, they are unable to share the responsibility for Christian nurturing to which they pledge themselves.

Baptismal Festivals

Hope Lutheran Church traditionally celebrates Baptismal Festivals on:

Baptism of Our Lord- January
Transfiguration of Our Lord-February or March
Vigil of Easter-March or April
Pentecost- May or June
Holy Trinity- May or June
Summer Festival- August
All Saints Day- November

Because Baptism is a worship experience, please do not take flash photos during the service. Discrete videotaping is acceptable, and photos may be taken after the service.