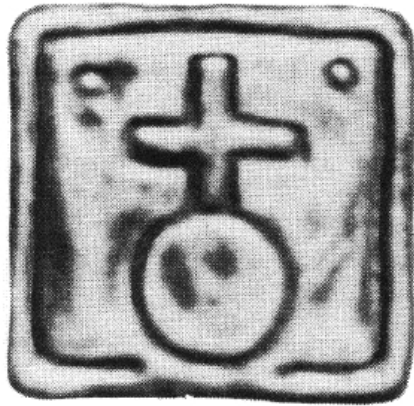


Baptism at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.

-Matthew 28:19

The Reason for Baptism

Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ. Through his own baptism, Jesus identified with sinners to fulfill all righteousness. In his own baptism, Jesus was attested as Son by the Father and was anointed with the Holy Spirit to undertake the way of a servant.

Jesus the risen Lord assured his followers of his continuing presence and power and commissioned them, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age.”

The disciples were empowered by the outpouring of the Spirit to undertake a life of service and to be an inclusive worshipping community, sharing life in which love, justice, and mercy abounded.

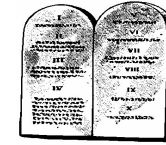


The Meaning of Baptism

In Baptism, we participate in Jesus’ death and resurrection. In Baptism, we die to what separates us from God and are raised to newness of life in Christ. Baptism points us to the grace of God expressed in Jesus, who died and was raised for us. Baptism points us forward to that same Christ who will fulfill God’s purpose in God’s promised future.

In Baptism, the Holy Spirit binds the Church in covenant to its Creator and Lord. The water of Baptism symbolizes the waters

of Creation, the Flood, and the Exodus from Egypt. Thus, the water of Baptism links us to the goodness of God’s creation and to the grace of God’s covenants with Noah and Israel.



The Prophets of Israel, amidst the failure of their own generation to honor God’s covenant, called for justice to roll down like water and righteousness like an everflowing stream. They envisioned a fresh expression of God’s grace and of creation’s goodness – a new covenant accompanied by the sprinkling of cleansing water. In his ministry, Jesus offered the gift of living water. So, Baptism is the sign and seal of God’s grace and covenant in Christ.

As circumcision was the sign and symbol of inclusion in God’s grace and covenant with Israel, so Baptism is the sign and symbol of inclusion in God’s grace and covenant with the Church. As an identifying mark, Baptism signifies:

- a. the faithfulness of God,
- b. the washing away of sin,
- c. rebirth,
- d. putting on the fresh garment of Christ,
- e. being sealed by God’s Spirit,
- f. adoption into the Church’s family,
- g. resurrection & illumination in Christ.

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 to repentance, to faithfulness,

and to discipleship. Baptism gives the church its identity and commissions the church for ministry to the world.

Baptism signifies the beginning of life in Christ, not its completion. God's grace works steadily, calling to repentance and newness of life. God's faithfulness needs no renewal. Human faithfulness to God needs repeated renewal. Baptism calls for decision at every subsequent stage of life's way, both for those whose Baptism attends their profession of faith and for those who are nurtured from childhood within the family of faith.



Who Is Baptized

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love. Children of believers are to be baptized without undue delay, but without undue haste. Baptism, whether administered to those who profess their faith or to those presented for Baptism as children, is one and the same Sacrament.

- ***Baptism of Children***

The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.

- ***Baptism of Adults***

The Baptism of those who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness.

Baptism is received only once. There are many times in worship, however, when believers acknowledge the grace of God continually at work. As they participate in the celebration of another's Baptism, as they experience the sustaining nurture of the Lord's Supper, and as they reaffirm the commitments made at Baptism, they confess their ongoing need of God's grace and pledge anew their obedience to God's covenant in Christ.

The Sacraments

The Presbyterian Church understands Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be Sacraments, instituted by God and commended by Christ. Sacraments are signs of the real presence and power of Christ in the Church, symbols of God's action. Through the Sacraments, God seals believers in redemption, renews their identity as the people of God, and marks them for service.

When does Baptism happen?

Baptism is celebrated in the service of public worship. At House of Hope, Baptism takes place monthly on Sunday morning.

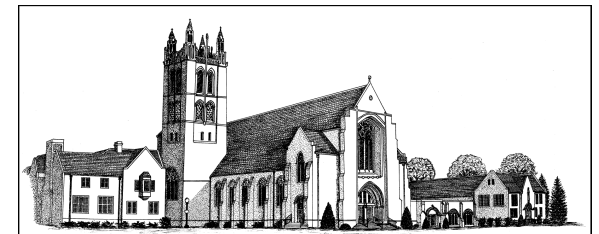
If I have been baptized by another church, do I need to be baptized again?

As there is one body, there is one Baptism. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all Baptisms with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit administered by other Christian churches.

Do I need to be a church member for my child to be baptized at House of Hope?

When a child is being presented for Baptism, ordinarily the parent(s) or one(s) rightly exercising parental responsibility shall be an active member of the congregation. 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. The Session must approve requests to baptize children of parents who are not members of the House of Hope.

For more information about Baptism and church membership for yourself, or to schedule a Baptism for your child, please call the church office at 651-227-6311.



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