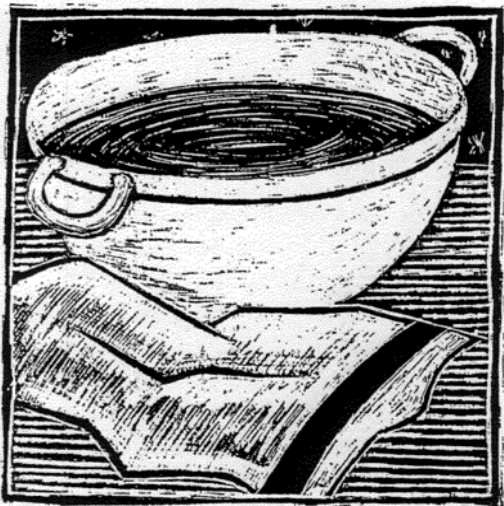


The Sacrament of Baptism



**The Donway Covenant
United Church**

What is Baptism?

Baptism is a symbolic action that signifies the new life God gives us as we join the church community. The United Church of Canada believes that baptism is the sole rite of initiation into the Christian church. Baptism is one of only two sacraments celebrated in the United Church of Canada. The other one is communion.

Why is water used for Baptism?

Water reminds us of Jesus whom John baptized in the Jordan River. Baptism uses water as a symbolic cleansing that signifies the acceptance of new life within the church family.

Who can be baptized?

The United Church offers baptism to all ages. We believe that the gift of God's love does not depend on our ability to understand it, so we baptize infants, children, youth, and adults. Because baptism is an initiation into Christ's church and into a particular community of faith, it is our expectation that all requesting baptism here consider the Donway Covenant their church home. As such, parents requesting baptism of their children will normally be active in the life of our congregation.

I was baptized in another congregation. Do I need to be baptized in the United Church?

No. The United Church recognizes the baptism of people baptized in another church and welcomes them as Christians.

But my spouse is from another church....

That's all right. Baptism is a sacrament we share with all Christian churches. The important thing is that you have decided as a couple to nurture your child in the Christian faith by your own church involvement.

I am prepared to make the vows, but my spouse is not active in church...

That's all right too as long as the spouse will at least support your wish to raise the child in the church. You can make the promises on your own and have your spouse stand with you without making the vows.

Actually, it's our parents who are pushing us to have our child baptized.

You are the ones who make the vows. It's your privilege as parents to decide if you want to raise your children in the church.

We don't go to church, but we want to have our child baptized.

If church is not part of your life now, you can choose to wait until church is part of your life or you can choose to wait and let the child decide for him/herself later. An alternative to baptism would be to have the minister join you and your family in your home to offer a blessing for your child.

What happens to those not baptized?

Baptism is not a requirement for God's love. We believe people who die without baptism are in no way condemned, lost or damned.

What about Godparents?

In the United Church of Canada, every member of the congregation becomes your child's "God Parent". The whole congregation makes a promise to help in the Christian Training of the child. If you choose godparents, they are welcomed at the service and recognized as being selected to have a specific responsibility for the spiritual nurture of the child being baptized.



What are the vows that we make?

Baptism is a serious commitment. Its vows are not to be taken lightly, but rather in a spirit of sincerity, and with integrity. You will be asked:

1. Do you believe in God, who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the Spirit?
(I do, God being my helper.)
2. Trusting the gracious mercy of God, will you turn from the forces of evil, resist their power, and commit yourself to Christ's ministry of love, peace and justice?
3. Will you join with your brothers and sisters in this church community, to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in creation, and to love and serve others?

The congregation is asked to make the following vows:

As members of The Donway Covenant United Church, do you commit yourselves to support and nurture these persons within a Christian community which worships God, loves and serves others, seeks justice and resists evil?
(We do, by the grace of God.)

I want my child to be baptized/ I want to be baptized. What now?

The first step is to contact the church office. By way of preparation we ask that you attend a session with the minister to discuss the meaning of baptism in the Christian Church, the mission, vision and values of the Donway Covenant United Church and the meaning of the vows that you will make during the baptism. It is expected that you will be part of our church.



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