

## ***Planning for Baptism at Westminster United Church***

Baptism is a time of great joy for the individuals being baptized, their loved ones and the church community as a whole. Baptism celebrates God's amazing love for each one of us.

In the United Church of Canada, we baptize people of any age, including infants if their parents or guardians so desire. We believe that baptism is not a requirement for God's love, and that people who die without baptism are in no way condemned, lost or damned. Rather, we believe that baptism is a way of claiming for ourselves and celebrating God's love that surrounds us always.

Remembering our own baptisms and sharing in the baptism of others reminds us of God's divine love in the world, and that every one of us is a beloved child of God.

The congregation is an important part of the baptism service; the congregation pledges their support and care to the person being baptized as well as to his or her family. Consequently, at Westminster, baptism only takes place on Sunday mornings during our regular worship service except in exceptional circumstances.

Baptism in the United Church is recognized by all denominations of the Christian church that practice infant baptism. If people have already been baptized in another church, the United Church also recognizes their baptism and welcomes them to become members of the United Church.

If you are welcoming a child into your home through birth or adoption, and are thinking about baptism, let's talk about that. If you have come to a place in your own faith journey or spiritual life where you are thinking about baptism for yourself (or re-affirmation of baptismal faith if you were previously baptized), let's talk about making that happen.

### **Next Steps:**

For those interested in baptism for their infants/children, the first step is to contact the church office. A meeting with the minister of Westminster is required before any discussion of dates for baptism can take place.

For anyone else interested in baptism for themselves, or in becoming a member of the United Church of Canada, taking part in a membership class is required. Please contact the church office if you are interested in membership.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please call the church office (204-784-1330).



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## Other Details:

**Meeting with the Minister about my child's baptism:** At this meeting, the meaning of the sacrament of baptism and the worship service will be discussed. It is also a time to gather the information needed by the church to record the event. There will also be opportunity to discuss why it is important for you as parents to have your child baptized.

**Adult Membership Class:** In this class, the role and meaning of faith in our lives, and ways to nurture our spirituality will be explored. We will also discuss what the United Church of Canada believes, and what it means to be a member of the church today.

**The Congregation's Role:** For any baptism or reaffirmation of faith to proceed, names must be presented to the Westminster United Church Board (via the Worship Committee) for approval.

In the case of baptizing children, it is the policy of the United Church that at least one parent be a confirmed member of the United Church. Parents who are not confirmed members are encouraged to become confirmed members. In cases where neither parent is a confirmed member of the church, a sponsor may be named by the Church Board, who will take the vows with the parents prior to the baptismal act.

Baptisms take place during Sunday morning worship, and are presided over by our minister. The involvement of other clergy may be discussed with the minister.

**Baptism Sunday:** On the Sunday of the baptism, please arrive at the church by 10:00 am so that the service can be reviewed and last minute details can be taken care of. Our worship service begins at 10:30 am. We request that there be no flash photography during the worship service at any time.

## Our child has been baptized, so now what?

At Westminster we are committed to supporting your family throughout your child's faith journey. Some of the ways we do so are as follows:

**Splash!** – a monthly newsletter mailed to you until your child turns 3, filled with short articles, tips and ideas for including faith growth in your everyday life as a family.

**Westminster Sunday School** – Please call the church office for more information on the Westminster children's Sunday School program.



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