

I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

We Welcome, and God Blesses Those to Be Baptized

A Revised Policy of Baptism at the Federated Church of Ashland 2012

Introduction

Baptism is a once in a lifetime, sacred rite or “Sacrament” of a local Christian church by which the church, together with those who present themselves to be baptized, acknowledge God’s extravagant invitation and welcome, and seeks God’s grace. Baptism signifies that we have become a child of God and have entered into the life and worship of a particular church, as well as into the church universal.

Infant/Child Baptism

In infant or child baptism, there is an expressed commitment by the parent(s) or guardian(s) on behalf of the infant or child, to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to join with the members of the local church, in worship and in service of God and neighbor, through their presence and in their mutual support of the local church.

In the sacred rite of infant/child baptism, parent(s)/guardian(s) make promises on their behalf, as well as on behalf of the child being brought for baptism, before the gathered community of the local church. Later, when the child reaches a responsible age, he or she will be offered the opportunity to confirm the vows/promises made on their behalf when they were baptized.

Believer’s Baptism

In believer’s baptism, which takes place when the person seeking baptism has reached sufficient age to understand and freely choose to be baptized, there is the acknowledgement by the one seeking baptism that he or she accepts Jesus Christ. In addition they commit themselves to be faithful to the Gospel, and to join with the members of the local church, in worship and in service of God and neighbor, through their presence and in their mutual support of the local church.

Role of the Local Church

In both infant/child baptism, and believer’s baptism, the church members promise to welcome the newly baptized into their membership, to provide faithful support, and to provide an environment where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is taught, lived and proclaimed.

Who Is Welcome to Be Baptized

The Federated Church of Ashland chooses to welcome all who enter our doors with a desire and intention to receive God's grace and blessing, to join us in the worship of God and to faithfully live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the case of parent(s)/guardian(s) of an infant/child; who have expressed a desire to respond to God's extravagant invitation and welcome, and seek God's grace on behalf of their child, it shall be considered sufficient to proceed with the baptism of their child.

The Process

The pastor of the church, and a representative of the Deaconate when available, will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s), or candidate, before a date is set for the baptism. The purpose of this meeting is to understand the desire and intention of those involved and to provide Christian education regarding the meaning and nature of baptism when necessary. If it is appropriate to proceed and schedule a date for the baptism, those involved will be familiarized and prepared for the rite of baptism. It is the practice of this church that baptism will ordinarily take place in the presence of a representative of the Deaconate, the pastor of the church who will administer the rite of baptism, and the gathered membership and community of faith present during Sunday Worship.

In choosing a sponsor/s or Godparent/s, care should be made in choosing someone whose own faith life will be an inspiration to the one being baptized.