

UNITY UNITED CHURCH

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE:

BAPTISM, MARRIAGE, AND FUNERAL POLICIES

"In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us." — A New Creed, United Church of Canada

BAPTISM AT UNITY UNITED CHURCH

Thank you for considering Baptism at Unity United Church. In the United Church of Canada, Baptism is one of the two sacraments given to the church by Jesus Christ, the other being Holy Communion. Baptism is the way people of all ages are welcomed into the Christian community and into full membership in the church.

Baptism with water, in the name of God—Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—is a sign of God's love and grace at work in our lives. Through Baptism, we celebrate God's promise to be with us always and our response to live as part of the faith community. At Unity United Church, Baptism is both a joyful celebration and the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith.

The United Church of Canada welcomes people of any age for Baptism—infants, children, youth, and adults. Baptism is not required for God's love, but it is a meaningful way to mark our place within the church family and to commit ourselves to growing in faith together.

Baptism is not just about one Sunday. It is about becoming part of a caring community—joining, participating, sharing, and celebrating life and faith together.

Preparing for Baptism

When an individual or family asks about Baptism at Unity United Church, we take time to walk together through a period of preparation. This helps ensure that everyone understands the meaning of Baptism and feels supported by the congregation.

Those seeking Baptism can expect to meet with the minister on at least two occasions. These conversations are an opportunity to:

- Talk about what Baptism means in the United Church of Canada,
- Plan the baptismal service together, and

- Reflect on involvement in the life of the church.

When infants or children are baptized, parents and/or guardians are asked to affirm their intention to nurture their child in the Christian faith. At the same time, the congregation promises to support the child and family through worship, learning, fellowship, and care. At Unity United Church, faith is nurtured best when families and congregation share this responsibility.

After these conversations, the minister will bring a recommendation to the Leadership Team on behalf of the congregation. In keeping with United Church practice, the Leadership Team approves each Baptism.

Life in the Congregation

Individuals and families preparing for Baptism are warmly welcomed into the life of Unity United Church. They are encouraged to attend worship regularly for about a month as part of the preparation process, allowing time to get to know the congregation and be known by it.

Families with children will be invited to take part in age-appropriate faith formation opportunities, recognizing the shared responsibility of family and congregation in nurturing faith. These shared experiences help build relationships and support growth in faith within the church community.

When Baptism Takes Place

Baptism is usually celebrated during a regular worship service so that the whole congregation can take part in welcoming and supporting the baptized person. Baptisms may take place at any time of the year, once preparation is complete.

A Journey of Faith

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey that continues throughout life. As parents, families, and the congregation live out their baptismal promises, children are supported as they grow in faith and understanding.

At an appropriate age—often around twelve—young people may take part in Confirmation classes and make a public Profession of Faith, becoming full members of the United Church of Canada. Adults baptized later in life may also choose to make a public Profession of Faith as part of their journey.

Unity United Church recognizes Baptisms performed in other Christian churches that practice infant Baptism and welcomes those who have already been baptized without re-baptism.
