

Baptism at Trinity Lutheran Church

Welcome

Thank you for considering baptism for your child in at Trinity. This sacred act is a gift from God, uniting your child with Christ and the Christian community. This handout provides an overview of baptism, its significance, and the steps to prepare.

What is Baptism?

In the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, baptism is a holy sacrament instituted by Christ, where water and God’s Word work together to deliver His grace. It is not merely a symbol but a divine act through which God forgives sins, grants the Holy Spirit, and incorporates the baptized into the body of Christ. Through baptism:

- Your child is cleansed of original and all sin, receiving forgiveness through Christ’s redemptive work.
- The Holy Spirit creates faith, even in infants, connecting them to Jesus’ death and resurrection.
- They are adopted into God’s family, becoming heirs of eternal life and members of the Christian Church.
- God’s promise of salvation is sealed, a gift of grace that does not depend on human effort or understanding but on God’s faithfulness.

Baptism is God’s work, not ours, and it is effective because of His promise. It is a lifelong treasure, assuring the baptized of God’s love and presence. In the LCMS, we baptize infants and adults alike, trusting that God’s grace is for all people, regardless of age.

Scriptural Basis:

- “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).
- “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).
- “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).
- “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).
- “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

Why Baptize Your Child?

At Trinity, we believe that baptism is for all people, including infants, because God's grace is universal and not limited by age or understanding. Infant baptism is a profound act of faith, demonstrating trust in God's promise to work in the lives of even the youngest. Here's why it's important:

- **God's Grace is for All:** Scripture teaches that all are born with original sin (Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity"). Baptism washes away this sin, offering forgiveness and salvation through Christ's sacrifice, regardless of the child's ability to comprehend it.
- **God Works Faith in Infants:** The Holy Spirit creates faith through baptism, even in infants, as God's Word is powerful and effective (Luke 18:15–17, "Let the children come to me... for to such belongs the kingdom of God"). Infant baptism trusts that God can work in hearts at any age.
- **Inclusion in God's Covenant:** Baptism brings your child into God's family, making them part of the body of Christ and heirs of eternal life (Galatians 3:26–27, "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"). This covenant is not dependent on the child's decision but on God's promise.
- **A Foundation for Faith:** Baptism is the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith. Parents and sponsors commit to nurturing the child's faith through teaching, prayer, and church participation, building on the grace received in baptism.
- **Urgency of God's Gift:** The LCMS encourages early baptism to ensure children receive God's grace as soon as possible, trusting His promise of salvation (Acts 2:38–39, "Repent and be baptized every one of you... for the promise is for you and for your children"). This reflects the early church's practice of baptizing entire households, including infants (Acts 16:33).

Infant baptism is not about the child's choice but about God's action. It's a gift of grace, received in faith by the parents and the church, who then nurture the child to grow in that faith.

Parental Responsibilities

As parents, you commit to:

- Pray for your child's faith and growth in Christ.
- Teach them the Christian faith through Scripture, the Small Catechism, and worship.
- Bring them to church regularly to receive God's Word and Sacraments.
- Model a life of faith and repentance.