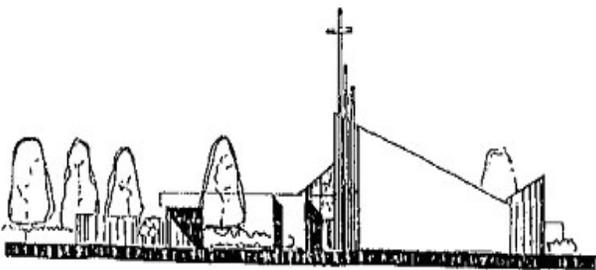


# LOOKING FORWARD TO BAPTISM



CHURCH OF THE ADVENT  
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The Reverend Ken Gray  
Rector and Priest

We are delighted that you are considering Baptism for members of your household. We do hope you will find the information in this leaflet helpful as you journey closer in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

It often comes as a surprise to discover that the historical way of entering the Christian faith was for an adult to present him or herself to the local Christian Community (church) and request Baptism. Indeed, many adults continue to present themselves for the sacrament of baptism. Here at the Church of the Advent, adults, youth and children are often baptized at a single ceremony.

Baptism is the start of a way of life centered in Jesus Christ, and lived out in relationships with other Christians in a local Christian community (a church congregation). For many of us, this all began when our parents brought us, as infants, to be baptized. Baptizing infants has always been part of the Church's way. This way is grounded however on the parents exhibiting a lively practice of the Christian faith.

The American Theologian, Dr. John Westerhoff poses the question "will our children have faith?" The answer is quite simple, yes they will—if parents and sponsors attend to the nurture of their own faith and share with those younger than themselves.

## WHO MAY BE BAPTIZED?

Those who consciously and actively reject evil and respond positively to God's grace are invited to undertake Holy Baptism. The rite itself includes specific commitments which are spoken on the day of baptism but must be lived out each and every day. Holy Baptism is not something "done once" but an orientation and challenge to a new way of holy living. It is not to be lightly undertaken.

Adults are admitted to baptism on the strength of their own repentance and faith. Children are admitted to baptism on the strength of their parents' and godparents' repentance, faith and promised support.

## WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

In Baptism, a person is sacramentally

**consecrated to God** -Father, Son and Spirit (see Matthew 28:16-20);

**washed** by water and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16-16);

**made God's heir** by adoption and grace (Romans 6:1-14, 8:12-17);

**born again** into the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-8);

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set on the path of Christian pilgrimage which extends beyond human life into eternity (Revelation 7:9-17).

Baptism is a richly symbolic sacrament with roots in our Jewish heritage, and links to the rites of most ancient peoples. Christian baptism is the means by which we become members of the Body of Christ.

### *WHAT DOES THE CHURCH EXPECT OF PARENTS WHO PRESENT A CHILD FOR BAPTISM?*

At the Church of the Advent, we understand Baptism as being the entry into the Christian community. When parents wish to have their child baptized into this Christian community, they are proclaiming that they want to have their child belong and participate in the life of this community.

For this to be possible in real life, the child needs to have one or both parents already active in the worship and fellowship life at Church of the Advent.

Where a family, living at some distance from our church, seeks to have their child baptized here, it is necessary that some member of their extended family be active in the life of this church.

### *WHAT ARE GODPARENTS/ SPONSORS?*

Godparents or sponsors are baptized adult members of any Christian Church who present the candidates for baptism, and thereby enter into a special relationship with them, and who offer prayer and support for their life in Christ. Sponsors should not be chosen simply because they are relatives or friends. Any person, however, may be invited to stand with parents and godparents as a witness before God to the vows being made. Parents, may, if they desire, be the only sponsors.

### *WHAT PREPARATION IS NECESSARY BEFORE BAPTISM?*

Parents (and sponsors wherever possible) enroll in a series of three informal meetings (which include a "dress rehearsal" of a Baptism). We schedule the preparation meetings in the month preceding a Baptism. Adult candidates for Baptism participate in these three meetings, and also gather for other more reflective meetings to review the practice of living the Christian life.

### *WHEN IS BAPTISM ADMINISTERED?*

Baptism is to be administered on Sundays or other major feast days, at the

main service of the day when the congregation is assembled for worship. We reserve Baptism for a few special occasions during the year, so that it becomes a highlight of parish life. The dates for Baptism and preparation meetings are announced in our Church Calendar.

### *COST*

There is no cost for baptismal preparation or the ceremony itself. It is however customary to offer a gift to the church as for a wedding or a funeral.

### *OTHER QUESTIONS?*

Please telephone the Church Office at 474 3031, and speak with the Rector.

