

Infant Baptism Policy

University United Methodist Church

Background

Baptism, in the United Methodist Church, is a sacrament – an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. As a sacrament, baptism marks the “birth” of a disciple of Jesus Christ. It marks the entrance of a human being into the covenant community of grace that is the Church. As one of only two sacraments recognized by the church (the other being Holy Communion) it is held in high regard by the clergy and membership of the church. Because of its sacramental nature, baptism is overseen by ordained and licensed clergypersons who have been duly appointed by the bishop and authorized to order the spiritual life of the church.

The United Methodist Church believes that “Persons of any age are suitable candidates for baptism because Christ’s body, the Church, is a great family that includes persons of all ages.”¹ Therefore, University United Methodist Church offers baptism to infants, children and adults. Because infants and young children are incapable of making the decisions required to publicly profess faith and commit to a life of discipleship, the parents are asked to make those commitments on their behalf. This means that at least one parent must already be an active member of the church.

The following policy is not intended to be legalistic. It is an attempt to give due reverence to the sacrament and ensure parents who make decisions on behalf of their children are making them with an understanding of their implications

Requirements

- At least one parent (or guardian) must be an active, participating member of University United Methodist Church prior to scheduling the baptism.
- Parent(s) (or guardian) must meet with Campus Pastor of the campus they wish the baptism to be performed. If that pastor is not available, the parent(s) must meet with the pastor’s representative.
- Parent(s) (or guardian) must be in worship at least two times in the six week period prior to scheduling the baptism. (Attendance may be recorded either by signing an attendance form or submitting the University News bulletin for the two services.)

¹ The United Methodist Book of Worship, p. 82

Process

1. Parent(s) (or guardian) contacts the Baptism Coordinator (Elizabeth Mooy-Fink), who will check membership status.
2. Baptism Coordinator will forward information included preferred dates Campus Pastor's assistant. **Prior to date of baptism**, parents meet with the Campus Pastor. This meeting should be schedule by the parent(s) (or guardian) with the pastor's administrative assistant.
3. Baptism date will be **confirmed after** parents' meeting with Campus Pastor
4. One week prior to the baptism date, the Baptism Coordinator will contact you to confirm the baptism date again and confirm the information on the Request Form (for the Baptism certificate)

Final Note

Baptism is under the authority of the presiding pastor. This policy serves as a guideline. The pastor retains the authority to amend, suspend or change any part of this policy depending on circumstances.

