

## **Blessing/Naming and Baptism**

We rejoice in God's unconditional love of all of creation and every living being, during worship through:

- The Blessing/Naming Ritual of a Child,
- the Sacrament of Baptism (infant and adult) and
- the Service of Renewal of Baptismal Faith (Confirmation/Being received into full membership).

### **Blessing/Naming Ritual: A Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child**

A service of blessing for the gift of a child celebrates the miracle & wonder of a child's birth, and can provide an opportunity to a family to receive a blessing for and to name their child in community. Whereas baptism marks the entry of a child into a congregation through vows made to each other and God by the parents and the congregation, a *Blessing/Naming Ritual* does not require any ongoing commitment from the parents/guardians. This service is offered as an act of joyful hospitality to new or existing parents who wish to celebrate their child in a supportive faith community, with the hope that the family may feel at home in the congregation and know they have an extended family as needed.

### **The Sacrament of Baptism – Infant and Adult**

*Baptism* (both adult and infant) is one of the two sacraments that are acknowledged in the United Church of Canada. As a sacrament, baptism unites us ecumenically with the other denominational members of the World Council of Churches. For this reason, it is offered with reverence, great care, and exuberant celebration.

*Infant baptism* is a sacrament that does two things: Firstly, it celebrates the miracle and wonder of a child's birth. Secondly, it is the way a person of any age joins a congregation and acknowledges the faith responsibilities incumbent both upon the people raising the child as well as the congregation. The people raising the infants are asked for their commitment to raising their child within the congregation in a manner that provides opportunities for him/her to learn and grow in faith. Also, the congregation is asked to renew their commitment to providing opportunities for the child to grow in his/her faith and to be the child's faith family.

*Adult baptism* is a sacrament for those who have not been baptized before and who wish to join the congregation. The person to be baptized publicly proclaims their faith by answering particular questions in the affirmative. In addition, the person is encouraged to offer a personal faith testimony. As the congregation is required to provide an ongoing place for spiritual growth and service, they are asked to renew their commitment to being a loving and nurturing spiritual environment for the new member.

## **Renewal of Baptismal Faith (formerly Confirmation/Being received into full membership)**

Renewal of Baptismal Faith is a service that celebrates the work of the Spirit in the lives of those who have experienced an awakening to a deeper understanding of the promises made in their baptism.

This service is for those baptized persons who wish to reaffirm the commitment made previously by their parents or for those at a particular moment in their life who are now making a public profession of faith in order to join a congregation, (for example, transferring membership from other denominations or congregations, in response to a specific life experience, or when returning to active participation in a congregation after a period of little contact or involvement).

In this service, the congregation renews its commitment to provide ongoing opportunities for spiritual growth and service. In addition, the person is encouraged to offer a personal faith testimony. While there is no age requirement for a first public profession of faith, it is not usually offered until the person is able to make an informed decision. Once a person publicly professes their faith, they become a formal member of the congregation.

**For more information about these services**, please contact Rev. Bethan.

*Before conscious thought or action on our part,  
we are born into the brokenness of this world.*

*Before conscious thought or action on our part,  
we are surrounded by God's redeeming love.*

*Baptism by water in the name of the Holy Trinity  
is the means by which we are received, at any age,  
into the covenanted community of the church.  
It is the ritual that signifies our rebirth in faith  
and cleansing by the power of God.*

*Baptism signifies the nurturing, sustaining,  
and transforming power of God's love  
and our grateful response to that grace. –*

From ***A Song of Faith, United Church of Canada.***