

Guidelines for Baptisms

You will need to meet with the Pastor prior to the Baptism. Normally these meetings are held early Sunday afternoon. Call to set up an appointment with the Pastor and one or more Deacons, if possible.

On the day of the Baptism, please arrive 20 minutes before the start of the worship service, which begins at 10 A.M. through most of the year (9:30 in July and August).



Please help us preserve the sanctity of our worship service by refraining from using flash photog-

raphy during the Baptism. Please inform all who will be attending about this restriction.

Videography and non-flash photography are allowed, provided the photographer remains seated in a pew and does not use artificial lighting. You are welcome to remain after the service to take family photos.

Nursery Care

Nursery care and Sunday School are available for children of visitors, if desired.



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First Congregational Church of Billerica

Member of the
United Church of Christ

About the Sacrament of Baptism



BAPTISM

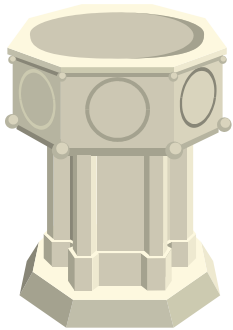
“We’d like to have our child baptized.”

What is Baptism?

Baptism is one of the two sacraments recognized by most Protestant churches, the other being Communion. Through Baptism we follow the example of Jesus, who was baptized by John in the Jordan River.

Baptism is a symbolic act in which water is used as a visible sign of God’s grace entering our lives. Baptism celebrates the fact that we are children of God and makes us disciples of Christ. It also marks the beginning of our growth into a full Christian faith and life.

In Romans 6 (verses 3-4) Paul speaks of Baptism as an act of rebirth in which we are joined



to Christ, as we die to our natural selves and rise again as a new creation in Christ. Thus, Baptism brings us into union with Christ, as well as with other Christians joined together as part of the Body of Christ.

What happens during the Baptism Service?

The Pastor asks the parents, and godparents if any, to vow before God and the congregation

to raise the child in the Christian faith. You are expected to take these vows seriously. After a prayer and a blessing, Baptism is performed by making a cross three times on the child’s head with water, while naming the three persons of the



Trinity. The congregation then promises to help your child in his or her faith. Following the Baptism, a Deacon will carry your child into the Sanctuary to be greeted by the congregation.

Who can be baptized?

Children of any age (as well as adults) can be baptized. Children baptized at an early age have an opportunity to affirm the choice made by their parents through the rite of Confirmation, which, in this church, is offered to eighth graders.

What if my child is baptized here and then we join a church of another denomination?

The Pastor acts as a representative of the whole Christian Church, the church universal. A Baptism performed in one Protestant church is usually accepted by other churches, in recognition that God’s grace is given for all time.

Do I have to be a member to have my child baptized here?

By choosing to have a child baptized, parents are promising to raise their child in the Christian faith. Therefore we require that at least one parent should be a member in good standing of a Christian church and that the family have a spiritual

relationship with our congregation. (That relationship is usually expressed through a period of regular attendance at worship.) A request for an exception can be brought to the attention of the Pastor, who will prayerfully consider it and discuss it with the Deacons.

Do I need Godparents?

Godparents are not required but are encouraged. They should be members of a Christian church, since they are expected to take responsibility for helping your child grow in the Christian faith.

Do we have to do the Baptism in a church service?

Baptism is not only a personal and family celebration; it is also a central event in the life of our congregation. For this reason, Baptism normally takes place in the presence of the community of faith during Sunday morning worship.

How often are Baptisms done?

Baptisms are ordinarily scheduled for one Sunday of each month. Contact the Pastor for information about dates.

Is there a fee?

Since Baptism is a sacrament signifying God’s grace, freely given, there is no fee for doing a Baptism. However, we welcome donations in support of the church’s ministries, among which are its Christian Education program.