

Guidelines for Christian Baptism

The members and friends of the Congregational Church of Brookfield rejoice in being able to share with you the celebration and commitment of the sacrament of baptism. We are pleased to be able to welcome all who seek Christian Baptism for themselves or their children. The following are some simple guidelines on the sacrament of baptism as celebrated in the Congregational Church of Brookfield.

When can you or your child be baptized?

Baptism is welcoming an individual into the Church and is therefore held during Sunday worship with members of the congregation present. Scheduling of baptisms should be arranged with the ministers. Please do not set a date for the baptism until you have spoken with one of the ministers.

At what age should you be baptized?

Our church typically practices infant baptism, with the infant's parents confessing a faith in Jesus Christ for their child. We also practice believer baptism for older youths or adults.

What should I know about worship at The Congregational Church of Brookfield?

You are invited to consider coming a bit early for the service so that you and your family and guests can be seated together. We try our best to reserve seats near the front of the Meetinghouse for our baptismal family and guests. As baptisms are a part of the Sunday morning worship, it is expected that you and any guests with you will remain for the entire worship service.

However, sometimes babies and children become restless and need to leave the service. One of you may wish to take responsibility for going out to the nursery and staying there as company in case the child is new or feeling uncomfortable.

The baptism is scheduled early in the service, and Church School children will be present, leaving later for their classes. Guest children are welcome in Church School and may leave with the others, if desired. That is also a good time to take infants and toddlers to the nursery if you plan to make use of child care.

Is there a fee for baptisms?

While there is no fee for baptisms at the Congregational Church of Brookfield, if your family chooses to make a donation it will be used to purchase Bibles for children who are baptized, as well as for our Confirmands and new members. If you wish to make a donation you can make a check payable to "CCB" with "Baptism Donation" in the memo line.

What else should I know about baptisms?

In infant baptism, the child may be carried by either parent, or by the sponsor or godparent. Your child's brothers and sisters are invited to come forward with you at the invitation to the baptism. If the child is wearing a hat, it should be removed before the actual baptism. *We ask that no photos be taken during the service.* If you wish to pose for photos later, we will be happy to make time available after the service. All of our worship services are taped for viewing on Public Access Television, so your family will receive a copy of the DVD from the morning's worship service.

What questions will be asked in the baptism?

These or similar questions may be asked.

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS (and sponsors):

Addressing Parents:

- In presenting your child for baptism do you confess your faith in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- Do you promise, with God's help, to provide a Christian home for your child, and to nurture him/her in the fellowship of Christian community, that by your teaching and example she/he may be guided to accept God's grace, to profess his/her faith openly, and to lead a Christian life?

Addressing Sponsors: (if applicable)

Do you, the godparents/sponsors of this child, confess your faith in God, and do you undertake to help the parents of this child in every way you can to bring him/her up in the faith of the Gospel and the fellowship of the Church?

QUESTIONS TO SIBLINGS: (if applicable)

As the big sister/brother, do you promise to love and play with your brother/sister and to teach him/her all the things you have learned about God?

THE CONGREGATION WILL BE ASKED:

Do you, as a congregation of God's people, promise to play your part in the Christian upbringing of this child by providing instruction in the Gospel of God's love, the example of Christian faith and character, and the strong support of the family of God in fellowship, prayer, and service?

THE CONGREGATION WILL SAY:

With joy we welcome you into Christ's church. Your baptism is not the end, but the beginning of a journey of discovering how much God loves you. This is our blessing to you: "Grow in grace and wisdom and do not fear, for the Lord is with you. Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God."

Meanings of Infant Baptism in Our Church:

- X **Baptism is a Promise.**
In the words and water of the baptism, God promises love and acceptance. The water of baptism symbolizes an inner or spiritual cleansing. God accepts the person baptized. From baptism on, we never need wonder about being loved and accepted by God. God accepts us all, as we are. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

- X **Baptism is a Birth.**
Your child has already been born into God's creation, a citizen of a particular nation, member of your family. There is another community into which your child is born - The Christian Community, the Church of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a birthing into the Christian life for your child. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

- X **Baptism is a Sacred Obligation.**
As parents present their child for baptism they view their task in parenting as a sacred trust. This is God's child, in their care. They promise to subordinate their personal claims and ambitions before the high expectations written in God's hope and plan that their child be: a lover of life, a maker of peace, an instrument of justice . . . in the name of Jesus the Christ. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

- X **Baptism is a Church Family Event.**
It's not your child and your family against the world. Baptism celebrates the community into which your child enters through Jesus Christ. In baptism, the whole church enfolds your child in love and caring. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

- X **Baptism is a Confession.**
In the service of baptism you confess your faith in God. Baptism is worship. We are not spectators only, but participants. We declare our faith in God's power, plan and love through Jesus Christ. We are joined in covenant with you and your child in the family of God. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

- X **Baptism is a Beginning.**
Life continues. Love grows. In the nurture of family and church, we pray that the child baptized will one day make a personal confession of faith in God's power and love in Jesus Christ. A believer's affirmation of the promises his or her parents made at baptism is called confirmation. In confirmation, the church again offers prayer and support for the strengthening of a young person's faith for the journey of life. With or without confirmation, baptism is a seal of Christ upon a child of covenant. *Baptism is a mark of being part of Christ's family – His church.*

Debt is acknowledged to Ron Cole-Turner, "Your Child's Baptism"
and Oliver Powell, "Child of the Covenant - through Baptism."

Sacrament of Baptism



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BROOKFIELD
United Church of Christ
Brookfield, Connecticut