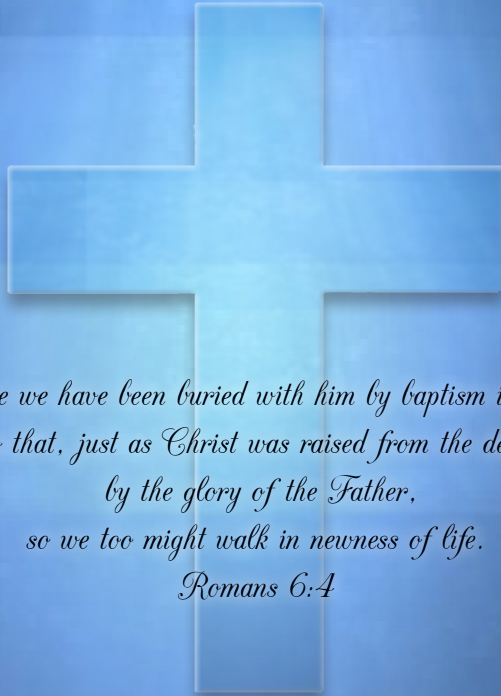


Baptism



Sewickley Presbyterian Church



*Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
so we too might walk in newness of life.
Romans 6:4*



Baptism at Sewickley Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church (USA), as a part of the Reformed Tradition, understands there to be two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Jesus Christ for the Church. Through these Sacraments, God seals us in redemption, renews our identity as the people of God, and marks us for service in the Church.





What is the significance of Baptism?

Baptism is the sign and seal of our incorporation into the body of Christ. In Baptism, we participate in Christ's death and resurrection. We die to sin, are cleansed of all that separates us from God, and are raised to new life in Christ. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit binds the Church in covenant with God, giving the Church its identity and commissioning the Church for its ministry.

Baptism enacts and seals what God's Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace offered to all people. Baptism is God's gift of grace and also God's summons to respond to that grace. As such, Baptism is the sacrament which marks entry into the Christian life and the family of faith, and therefore is received only once. Though we human beings are often unfaithful to God and in need of renewal, God's faithfulness to us is unshakable and needs no renewal.

Water is the key element in Baptism because it symbolizes the living water of union with Christ; the spiritual cleansing of our earthly bodies; the vitalizing force to all God's creation; and an ever flowing stream of God's justice and righteousness. Further, it symbolizes the waters of Creation, of the Flood, and of the Exodus from Egypt.

Why is Baptism performed during a worship service?

The sacrament of Baptism involves the entire congregation because it is an individual's adoption into the body of Christ, which is the church. Through Baptism, God's promises of covenant faithfulness are sealed and renewed in the family of faith. Those being baptized, or parents on their behalf, profess their faith in Jesus Christ; renounce evil and affirm their reliance on God's grace; promise to actively participate in the worship and mission of the church; and promise to raise their child in the Christian faith. At the same time, the congregation promises to teach and nurture within the community of faith all who are being baptized. Only in the most extraordinary circumstances may a Baptism be administered apart from the worship of the whole congregation.



Who may be baptized?

Baptism is appropriate at any age, as both believers and their children are included in God's covenant of grace. Baptizing those who are making their own profession of faith points to the truth that God's grace calls for a response of faithfulness on our behalf. Any youth or adult who wishes to make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ may request to be baptized. Baptizing children points to the truth that God reaches out to us in love and claims us as God's own before we are even able to respond in faith. As Jesus said, "You did not choose me but I chose you" (John 15:6).

Parents who wish to present their children for Baptism should do so without undue haste or undue delay. Many parents find that six months is a good age to have their infants baptized.

As it marks the believer's incorporation into the body of Christ, the sacrament of Baptism is received only once. Therefore, the Presbyterian Church (USA) recognizes all Baptisms with water that have been administered by other christian denominations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Is membership at Sewickley Presbyterian Church a requirement for Baptism?

Baptism is a declaration of Christian faith whether professed by an adult or by a child's parent(s). The promises made in Baptism lose their meaning apart from the expectation that the one being baptized will be raised and nurtured within the community of faith. Any adult who wishes to be baptized may do so in conjunction with making a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and becoming an active member of the church. In the Baptism of a child, ordinarily at least one person who is acting as parent or guardian of the child should be a Christian and an active member of Sewickley Presbyterian Church.



Who participates in the baptism service?

Ordinarily one of the pastors and one of the Ruling Elders of Sewickley Presbyterian Church conduct the sacrament. The candidate for Baptism, or parent(s) acting on behalf of the candidate, may request a particular pastor and Ruling Elder depending on availability of that person on the specified date, or we may help in determining which pastor or elder might participate.

Why doesn't the Presbyterian Church (USA) use Godparents in the baptismal service?

In Baptism, we are adopted into the family of the Triune God. In our tradition, the entire congregation acts as the godparents. On behalf of the Church Universal, the congregation accepts the responsibility of guiding and nurturing in the faith those who are baptized.

When do baptisms take place at Sewickley Presbyterian Church?

Baptisms are normally scheduled on the second Sunday of each month, preferably at the 11 AM service between Labor Day and Memorial Day, or at the 10 AM service during the summer months. Ordinarily, up to three Baptisms may be scheduled during any service.

All Baptisms must be approved by the Session of the church. If you would like to schedule a Baptism, please contact the church office at least six weeks prior to the date desired to ensure sufficient time for Session approval and to schedule a meeting with a pastor.



Is there a fee for Baptism?

No fee is charged for Baptism. Baptism is an integral part of a Christian worship service.

What if my baby cries or is fussy during the Baptism?

Our dear Lord loves all children, happy ones and crying ones. The fretful ones will probably make the congregation smile all the more. Babies who join the family of faith smiling or kicking and screaming are equally welcomed.

What if family traditions, such as baptismal gowns, are important to us?

Family traditions are special and may be incorporated with prior approval of the pastor.

What if my family wants to photograph the Baptism?

The Sacrament of Baptism is a sacred and holy act that takes place during a service of worship of Almighty God. As in all of our services of worship, photography is not permitted during a Baptism.

Following the worship service, photo opportunities are welcome. If so desired, the participating pastor will gladly remain after the service to join in for pictures.



Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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