

Bethel United Church – Moosomin Pastoral Charge

Seeking God's Way as Community

Baptismal Policy

To be reviewed annually.

Confirmed by the Board August 2019

The United Church of Canada's Beliefs about Baptism

The United Church of Canada believes that baptism is a symbolic action that signifies the new life God gives us as we join the church community.

Baptism uses water as symbolic cleansing that signifies the acceptance of new life within the church family. The sacrament of baptism is the single rite of initiation into the Christian community, the church.

The United Church offers baptism to all ages. We believe the gift of God's love doesn't depend on our ability to understand it, so we baptize people as infants right up through adulthood.

With children, instruction is given to parents or sponsors to equip them for the child's Christian nurture. During the ceremony, everyone in the congregation pledges support for the child and his or her parents.

Baptism is not a requirement for God's love. We believe people who die without baptism are in no way condemned, lost or damned.

Baptism in the United Church of Canada is recognized by all denominations of the Christian church that practice infant baptism. Similarly, if people have already been baptized in another church, the United Church recognizes their baptism and welcomes them as Christians. (Source: www.united-church.ca/beliefs/overview)

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism symbolizes the new life God gives us as we join the Christian community.

Choosing baptism for your child or for yourself is an important expression of your relationship with God and with this Christian faith. In helping you prepare, we feel both blessed by your trust and awareness of the amazing responsibility involved in celebrating God's infinite love for your children and for you.

In the case of infant baptism, the parents of the infant, before the congregation, agree to a series of statements about the beliefs of the United Church on behalf of their child. They also promise to encourage the child to seek full membership at an appropriate time. The members of the congregation also promise the parents that they will help to raise the child in a Christian community. The minister then places water on the candidate's head three times (expressing the trinity of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) and traces a cross on the person's forehead with water.

Making Arrangements for a Baptism

- To begin making arrangements please contact the Church office at your earliest convenience. Your request will be received by our minister, who is responsible for submitting the names of those to be baptized to the Church Board for approval. It is helpful to have two or three optional dates in mind. We will do our best to meet your request.
- The minister will schedule time to meet with you before the baptism takes place. At this time the purpose and meaning of baptism will be discussed. Baptisms are to take place during public worship, so that the whole community of faith might welcome the child (ren) and support them and their families on this occasion. The worshipping congregation, in faith, promise to offer Christian nurture to the child (ren) at the time of their baptism.
- Adults, children, and/or infants may be baptized at home or in hospital in special health circumstance. At least two Board members will be in attendance.
- One or both parents must be member(s) of the United Church; otherwise the child would be sponsored by a member of the United Church.
- Godparents are welcome to be part of the sacrament of baptism and are encouraged to offer ongoing support, encouragement, and care in the spiritual life of the individual. They will be contacted by the minister or lay leader for a conversation prior to the baptism service.
- The family shall undertake to have one or more meetings with the minister prior to the baptism.
- Parents living outside of Moosomin Pastoral Charge shall be encouraged to participate in a congregation near to their place of residence.
- The Board will seek the parents' permission to send a letter of introduction to a congregation where they might worship, near to their place of residence.
- Two announcements of upcoming Baptismal services will be made in the church prior to the date of baptism.
- Children will be invited to participate in the baptism.
- Bethel United Church requests that no photographs be taken during the service, but welcomes anyone to take photographs following.

Bethel United Church

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